An Introduction to Eaquals Accreditation

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Our Association

Eaquals 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 Eaquals Accredited Membership from language teaching institutions that are committed to achieving excellence.

Eaquals Accreditation

Accreditation by Eaquals enables providers of language education to demonstrate that they meet high international standards. Eaquals accreditation is for all types of language teaching organisations, both private and public, and applies to the teaching of all languages in any country. Accreditation by Eaquals is awarded after a rigorous quality assurance process including an on-site inspection.

Eaquals accredits a wide range of institutions and runs three inspection schemes:

Eaquals Inspection Scheme Version 7.2 is aimed at:

- stand-alone language schools
- groups of language schools
- foreign language departments of mainstream education schools
- corporate training centres

Eaquals Inspection Scheme for Higher Education is designed to accredit university language centres and language departments which offer language training programmes to undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students. It is addressed at:

- universities where completion of language programmes is a requirement for graduation
- English as a Medium of Instruction universities which run foundation programmes

Eaquals Inspection Scheme for Online Providers is addressed at language centres which offer online language training programmes. delivered synchronously, asynchronously or both. Language courses offered by Online Providers must include a significant proportion of tutor moderation and student interaction in addition to online content. The Scheme does not apply to language centres which offer face-to-face tuition in addition to online or blended courses. They are accredited under 7.2 Version of the Inspection Scheme.

The Eaquals Charters

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

Support and Development

Eaquals accreditation is more than just a system for inspecting 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. Eaquals inspection reports include recommendations for further improvements and offer a blueprint for future development.

The Eaquals Accreditation Process

What is inspected?

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

Who are the inspectors?

International teams of inspectors. Eaquals inspectors are language education professionals with considerable managerial and international experience. Before being appointed they undergo training and must demonstrate a good knowledge of the Eaquals Inspection Scheme together with the capacity to objectively evaluate an institution's performance against the Quality Standards.

How are institutions assessed?

Eaquals assesses the institution in its own particular context and inspectors evaluate evidence from different sources to verify that the Eaquals Quality Standards are being met.

What are the main elements of an Eaquals inspection?

- Meetings with management and academic managers
- Meetings with students and teachers, and where applicable, other stakeholders
- Interviews with members of staff
- Observation of a representative selection of the teaching
- Checking that academic management and administrative systems work in practice
- Checking key documentation and academic resources – including material stored online and the main website
- Inspection of premises, facilities and accommodation where applicable

How are Eaquals inspections conducted?

Eaquals inspections can be conducted in three formats:

- a site visit for the Inspection Scheme Version 7.2 and the Scheme for Higher Education
- a blended inspection combining a site visit with an inspection online, it applies to all three Schemes
- an online inspection: the Scheme for Online Providers.

What sort of standards are applied?

The Eaquals 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 Eaquals standards are higher than local regulations, Eaquals 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?

Accreditation and Membership fees are posted on the Eaquals website. Costs depend on the size of the institution and the Secretariat will provide further information. Eaquals is a not-for-profit association and candidate institutions cover the inspectors' professional fees, daily subsistence, 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 Eaquals provide?

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

How long does the Eaquals accreditation process take?

This will vary slightly for each institution. It normally takes up to 18 months 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 Eaquals Self-Assessment Handbook to benchmark its systems and processes against Eaquals standards.
- A follow-up consultation with the Eaquals Director of Accreditation and Consultancy is arranged to agree the next steps.
- An on-site or online Advisory Visit is conducted by an Eaquals 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 Eaquals Quality Standards.
- The candidate receives a written report after the Advisory Visit and has a follow-up discussion with Eaquals.
- The institution implements further developments in line with the recommendations from the Advisory Visit.
- The institution applies to Eaquals for a first inspection at least 2 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 Eaquals and benefits from all the advantages of joining our Association's international network. Members pay an annual membership fee and participate in Eaquals events and academic projects.

What if an institution does not meet every standard?

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

How long does accreditation last?

Accreditation is granted for four years and members of Eaquals 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 and Consultancy. Please write to **info@eaquals.org**

The Eaquals Inspection Scheme Version 7.2: Quality Standards

The Eaquals Quality Standards are derived from the Eaquals Charters and are a practical expression of the philosophy of the Charters. They are arranged in 12 Categories, grouped in 5 Sections, which correspond to different aspects of the language centre's activities. 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 Eaquals.

Section A – Institutional Management and Governance

1   Management and Administration

1.1   The language centre has been established and operates in compliance with all relevant international, national and local legislation.

1.2   There is an institutional mission which provides the foundation for the language centre's activities.

1.3   The management and organisational structure of the language centre support this mission and the achievement of its objectives.

1.4   There is a strategic approach to management with an awareness of the educational and economic environment.

1.5   There are effective administrative systems which support the delivery of the language centre's services.

2   Quality Assurance

2.1   There are systems and procedures to foster a culture of quality and to improve all aspects of the student experience through continuous evaluation, reflection and action.

2.2   The learning experience is fully monitored by management systems, including regular lesson observation, which are used to improve the quality of all services.

2.3   There are procedures which enable students, staff and other stakeholders to give regular feedback on all aspects of the learning experience, and this feedback is used to drive continuous improvement.

3   Communication with Staff

3.1   The responsibilities, lines of accountability and channels of communication between members of management and staff are clearly defined and documented.

3.2   There is formal, documented communication and consultation between staff and managers, scheduled as appropriate.

3.3   Information is available to staff about the language centre, its mission and any planned developments.

3.4   Information about Eaquals and its resources is available to staff.

4   Communication with Students and Clients

4.1   All promotional materials accurately describe the language centre's products and services.

4.2   Contractual information provided to students, clients and other stakeholders is accurate and complete, and expressed in easily understood language.

4.3   There are effective measures to respond to any concerns raised by students, clients or other stakeholders, including a formal complaints procedure.

4.4   Accredited members make information about Eaquals publicly available: they display the Eaquals Guarantees publicly, and use the Eaquals logo correctly.

Section B – Academic Management

5   Course Design and Supporting Systems

5.1   There is a statement of the language centre's educational philosophy and its pedagogical approach.

5.2   Courses are designed to be coherent, relevant to student needs and aims and have specified learning objectives and content.

5.3   All course programmes are specified by levels which refer to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), the Global Scale of English (GSE) or another internationally recognised language learning scale: learning objectives for each level are related to the global descriptors of one of these scales.

5.4   There is an academic administration and coordination structure, with systems which ensure the efficient delivery of course programmes.

5.5   There are systems for teacher induction and support which ensure the effective implementation of the language centre's educational objectives.

6 Teaching and Learning

6.1 The pedagogical approach and methods reflect the language centre's stated educational philosophy.

6.2 Lessons are planned with reference to the relevant learning objectives, and the learning and motivational needs of individuals and the group.

6.3 The quality of teaching consistently provides opportunities for effective language learning.

6.4 The opportunities offered for learning are varied, making good use of available resources and technology.

6.5 Students have the opportunity to develop study skills and to share responsibility for their own learning.

7 Assessment and Certification

7.1 Assessment content and procedures are compatible with the course learning objectives and with student needs.

7.2 Systems for assessing language competence provide valid, reliable, and fair means of evaluating progress and achievement.

7.3 Formative assessment is used to provide students with feedback and advice on their learning.

7.4 Student reports and certificates provide a reliable statement of student achievements in terms of the level and course learning objectives.

8 Academic Resources

8.1 Core and supplementary course materials are appropriate for the course types taught, the learning objectives and the pedagogical approach.

8.2 There is a system for monitoring the use of resources, together with advice to teachers and students about their effective application.

8.3 To ensure their ongoing relevance and quality, there are systems to review, update and develop resources as required.

8.4 Learning resources are available, accessible, and used as appropriate.

Section C – Student Services

9 Student Services

9.1 Information and advice is available to students and other stakeholders throughout the course.

9.2 Welfare support, including safeguarding arrangements where appropriate, is provided to students.

9.3 There are effective systems for administering and monitoring leisure programmes, if provided.

9.4 There are effective systems for administering and monitoring accommodation provision, if provided.

Section D – Staff

10 Staff Profile and Development

10.1 The competences, experience and qualifications of managers, teachers and administrative staff are relevant and appropriate for each area of responsibility.

10.2 There are systems to provide appropriate support and guidance for all staff including a regular staff performance review.

10.3 There is a formal framework to ensure appropriate continuous professional development for all staff.

10.4 Conclusions from regular class observation are used developmentally to inform performance reviews and the teacher development programme.

11 Staff Employment Terms

11.1 All staff hold current employment contracts; these conform to local requirements, as confirmed by the statutory declaration of the language centre.

11.2 The terms and conditions of employment offered to staff are fair and conform to local requirements.

11.3 Grievance and disciplinary procedures are in place and known to staff.

Section E – Learning Environment and Facilities

12 Learning Environment

12.1 The teaching and study environment meets the requirements of course programmes and students.

12.2 Any non-pedagogical facilities and/or online spaces required for the services offered are fit for purpose and well maintained.

12.3 All electronic and other equipment is easily accessible and well maintained; electronic connectivity is reliable and available for staff and students.

12.4 Arrangements are in place to protect the health and ensure the safety of students and staff.

The Inspection Scheme for Higher Education Institutions: Quality Standards

The Eaquals Quality Standards are derived from the Eaquals Charters and are a practical expression of the philosophy of the Charters. They are arranged in 12 Categories, grouped in 5 Sections, which correspond to different aspects of the language centre's activities. 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 Eaquals.

Section A – Institutional Management and Governance

1 Management and Administration

1.1 The language centre has been established and operates in compliance with all relevant international, national and local legislation.

1.2 There is an institutional mission which provides the foundation for the language centre's activities.

1.3 The management and organisational structure of the language centre support this mission and the achievement of its objectives.

1.4 There is a strategic approach to management with an awareness of the educational and economic environment.

1.5 There are effective administrative systems which support the delivery of the language centre's services.

2 Quality Assurance

2.1 There are systems and procedures to foster a culture of quality and to improve all aspects of the student experience through continuous evaluation, reflection and action.

2.2 The learning experience is fully monitored by management systems, including regular lesson observation, which are used to improve the quality of all services.

2.3 There are procedures which enable students, staff and other stakeholders to give regular feedback on all aspects of the learning experience, and this feedback is used to drive continuous improvement.

3. Communication with Staff

3.1 The responsibilities, lines of accountability and channels of communication between members of management and staff are clearly defined and documented.

3.2 There is formal, documented communication and consultation between staff and managers, scheduled as appropriate.

3.3 Information is available to staff about the language centre, its mission and any planned developments.

3.4 Management foster positive relations with relevant institutional departments to support achievement of the language centre's objectives.

3.5 Information about Eaquals and its resources is available to staff.

4 Communication with Students and Other Stakeholders

4.1 All student recruitment materials accurately describe the language centre's courses and services.

4.2 Contractual regulations regarding admissions, progression, discipline and completion are communicated to students and other stakeholders and consistently applied.

4.3 There are effective measures to respond to any concerns raised by students or other stakeholders, including a formal complaints procedure.

4.4 There is formal, documented consultation between management of the centre and students, scheduled as appropriate.

4.5 Accredited members make information about Eaquals publicly available: they display the Eaquals Guarantees publicly, and use the Eaquals logo correctly.

Section B – Academic Management

5 Course Design and Supporting Systems

5.1 There is a statement of the language centre's educational philosophy and its pedagogical approach.

5.2 Courses are designed to be coherent, based on student needs and have specified learning outcomes and content.

5.3 All course programmes are specified by levels which refer to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), the Global Scale of English (GSE) or another internationally recognised language learning scale: learning outcomes for each level are related to the global descriptors of one of these scales.

5.4 There are systems in place to monitor and review programmes regularly.

5.5 There is an academic administration and coordination structure, with systems which ensure the efficient delivery of course programmes.

5.6 There are systems for teacher induction and support which ensure the effective implementation of the language centre's educational objectives.

6 Teaching and Learning

6.1 The pedagogical approach and methods reflect the language centre's stated educational philosophy.

6.2 Lessons are planned with reference to the relevant course objectives, intended learning outcomes and the language and academic needs of the students.

6.3 The quality of teaching consistently provides opportunities for effective language learning.

6.4 The opportunities offered for learning are varied, making good use of available resources and technology.

6.5 Students have the opportunity to develop transferrable study skills and to share responsibility for their own learning.

7 Assessment and Certification

7.1 Assessment content and procedures reflect the language centre's educational philosophy and are appropriate for the learning content.

7.2 Comprehensive information is provided to students regarding assessment requirements.

7.3 Systems for assessing language competence are valid in that they evaluate progress and achievement in a way that is in alignment with course learning objectives.

7.4 Systems for assessing effective language competence are reliable, designed and applied by appropriately trained and qualified staff.

7.5 Assessment promotes learning and is used to provide students with feedback and guidance on how to improve performance.

7.6 Student reports and certificates provide a reliable statement of student achievements in terms of the level, course objectives and intended learning outcomes.

7.7 There are systems in place for regular evaluation and review of the effectiveness of all aspects of assessment methods, to ensure they remain ft for purpose.

8 Academic Resources

8.1 Core and supplementary course materials are appropriate for the course types taught, the learning objectives and the pedagogical approach.

8.2 There is a system for monitoring the use of resources, together with advice to teachers and students about their effective application.

8.3 To ensure their ongoing relevance and quality, there are systems to review, update and develop resources as required.

8.4 Learning materials are available, accessible, and used as appropriate.

Section C – Student Services

9 Student Services

9.1 Advice and support is available to students throughout the course.

9.2 There is close liaison between the language centre and the wider institution in order to provide welfare support to students.

9.3 There are effective systems for administering and monitoring the provision of any extra-curricular programmes provided by the language centre.

Section D – Staff

10 Staff Profile and Development

10.1 The competences, experience and qualifications of managers, teachers and administrative staff are relevant and adequate for each area of responsibility.

10.2 There is collaborative relationship between the language centre and the HR department of the wider institution for recruitment matters to ensure adequate staffing provision.

10.3 There are systems to provide appropriate support and guidance for all staff including a regular staff performance review.

10.4 There is a formal framework to ensure appropriate continuous professional development for all staff.

10.5 Conclusions from regular lesson observation are used developmentally to inform performance reviews and the teacher development programme.

11 Staff Employment Terms

11.1 All staff hold current employment contracts; these conform to local requirements, as confirmed by the statutory declaration of the language centre.

11.2 The terms and conditions of employment offered to staff are fair and conform to local and the wider institution's requirements.

11.3 Grievance and disciplinary procedures are in place and known to staff.

Section E – Learning Environment and Facilities

12 Learning Environment

12.1 The language centre operates within the fabric and broader activities of the wider institution with designated teaching and learning facilities.

12.2 The teaching and study environment meets the requirements of course programmes and students.

12.3 Any non-pedagogical facilities and/or online spaces required for the services offered are fit for purpose and well maintained.

12.4 All electronic and other equipment is easily accessible and well maintained; electronic connectivity is reliable and available for staff and students.

12.5 Arrangements are in place to protect the health and ensure the safety of students and staff.

The Eaquals Inspection Scheme for Online Providers: Quality Standards

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1.2 There is an institutional mission which provides the foundation for the language centre's activities.

1.3 The management and organisational structure of the language centre support this mission and the achievement of its objectives.

1.4 There is a strategic approach to management with an awareness of the educational and economic environment.

1.5 There are effective administrative systems which support the delivery of the language centre's services.

2 Quality Assurance

2.1 There are systems and procedures to foster a culture of quality and to improve all aspects of the student experience through continuous evaluation, reflection and action.

2.2 The learning experience is fully monitored by management systems, including regular observation of synchronous and asynchronous tutor-student and student-student interaction, which are used to improve the quality of all services.

2.3 There are procedures which enable students, staff and other stakeholders to give regular feedback on all aspects of the learning experience, and this feedback is used to drive continuous improvement.

3. Communication with Staff

3.1 The responsibilities, lines of accountability and channels of communication between members of management and staff are clearly defined and documented.

3.2 There is formal, documented communication and consultation between staff and managers, scheduled as appropriate.

3.3 Information is available to staff about the language centre, its mission and any planned developments.

3.4 Information about Eaquals and its resources is available to staff.

4 Communication with Students and Clients

4.1 Published information accurately describes the language centre's products and services.

4.2 Contractual information provided to students, clients and other stakeholders is accurate and complete, and expressed in easily understood language.

4.3 There are effective measures to respond to any concerns raised by students, clients or other stakeholders, including a formal complaints procedure.

4.4 Accredited members make information about Eaquals publicly available: they display the Eaquals Guarantees publicly, and use the Eaquals logo correctly.

Section B – Academic Management

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5.1 There is a statement of the language centre's educational philosophy and its pedagogical approach.

5.2 Courses are designed to be coherent, relevant to student needs and aims and have specified learning objectives and content.

5.3 All course programmes are specified by levels which refer to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), the Global Scale of English (GSE) or another internationally recognised language learning scale: learning objectives for each level are related to the global descriptors of one of these scales.

5.4 There is an academic administration and coordination structure, with systems which ensure the efficient delivery of course programmes.

5.5 There are systems for tutor induction and support which ensure the effective implementation of the language centre's educational objectives.

6 Learning and Learning Management

6.1 The pedagogical approach and methods reflect the language centre's stated educational philosophy.

6.2 Sessions are planned with reference to the relevant learning objectives, and the learning and motivational needs of individuals and the group.

6.3 The quality of course delivery and learner management consistently provides opportunities for effective language learning.

6.4 The opportunities offered for learning are varied, making good use of available resources and technology.

6.5 Students have the opportunity to develop study skills and to share responsibility for their own learning.

7 Assessment and Certification

7.1 Assessment content and procedures are compatible with the course learning objectives and with student needs.

7.2 Systems for assessing language competence provide valid, reliable, and fair means of evaluating progress and achievement.

7.3 Formative assessment is used to provide students with feedback and advice on their learning.

7.4 There are systems in place to ensure security of assessment.

7.5 Student reports and certificates provide a reliable statement of student achievements in terms of the level and course learning objectives.

8 Academic Resources

8.1 Core and supplementary course materials are appropriate for the course types taught, the learning objectives and the pedagogical approach.

8.2 There is a system for monitoring the use of resources, together with advice to tutors and students about their effective application.

8.3 To ensure their ongoing relevance and quality, there are systems to review, update and develop resources as required.

8.4 Learning resources are available, accessible, and used as appropriate.

Section C – Student Services

9 Student Services

9.1 Information and advice is available to students and other stakeholders throughout the course.

9.2 Welfare support, including safeguarding arrangements where appropriate, is provided to students.

Section D – Staff

10 Staff Profile and Development

10.1 The competences, experience and qualifications of managers, tutors and administrative staff are relevant and appropriate for each area of responsibility.

10.2 There are systems to provide appropriate support and guidance for all staff including a regular staff performance review.

10.3 There is a formal framework to ensure appropriate continuous professional development for all staff.

10.4 Conclusions from observations of segments of synchronous and asynchronous tutor-student and student-student interaction are used developmentally to inform performance reviews and the tutor development programme.

11 Staff Employment Terms

11.1 All staff hold current employment contracts; these conform to local requirements, as confirmed by the statutory declaration of the language centre.

11.2 The terms and conditions of employment offered to staff are fair and conform to local requirements.

11.3 Grievance and disciplinary procedures are in place and known to staff.

Section E – Learning Environment and Facilities

12 Learning Environment

12.1 The learning environment and non-pedagogical facilities meet the requirements of course programmes, students and the services offered.

12.2 Online tools and all electronic equipment are state-of-the art technology.

12.3 Online tools and all electronic equipment are easily accessible and well maintained; electronic connectivity is reliable.

12.4 Arrangements are in place to protect the health and ensure the safety of students and staff.

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