The Eaquals Advisory Guide to Accreditation
The Scheme for Higher Education Institutions

The Eaquals Advisory Services Guide to Accreditation

The Scheme for Higher Education Institutions

Content

Email: **info@eaquals.org**
www.eaquals.org

Eaquals Accreditation

Accreditation by Eaquals is the primary means by which a provider of language courses can demonstrate its compliance with Eaquals' values as set out in the Charters and with high international standards designed specifically for language learning services. The inspection process, based on the Quality Standards and the Detailed Criteria, verifies that all the promises made to staff, students and other stakeholders are respected by members or prospective members. An institution is eligible to apply for Eaquals accreditation when it has been in operation for at least 24 months. An institution which meets all the Eaquals Quality Standards is granted accreditation and becomes an Accredited Member. The **accreditation** period lasts **four years** and in order to be re-granted accreditation and maintain membership, members undergo a re-inspection every four years.

Eligibility for Accreditation

Eaquals accreditation applies to the teaching of all languages in any country. To accredit a wide spectrum of language teaching institutions Eaquals operates the following three inspections schemes.

The Eaquals Inspection Scheme for Language Centres which is addressed at:
- language schools: stand-alone and groups of schools
- foreign language departments of mainstream education schools
- corporate training centres

The Eaquals Inspection Scheme for Higher Education Institutions is targeted at
- universities where completion of language programmes is a requirement for graduation
- English as a Medium of Instruction universities which run foundation programmes.

The scheme is designed to accredit university language centres and university language departments which offer language training programmes to undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students.

The Eaquals Scheme for Online Providers
- Language centres that provide 100% online courses.
- A substantial element of the course must include live synchronous language lessons.

N.B. centres that provide only asynchronous resources are not currently eligible for Eaquals accreditation.

The Eaquals Accreditation Process

Eaquals Standards are demanding and therefore Eaquals offers advice and support to institutions which are considering applying for Accredited Membership.

Eaquals Advisory Services are designed to be supportive and constructive, and their main aim is
- to help an institution to review its standards and practices in line with the Eaquals requirements
- to enable it to make a considered and realistic judgement on whether to proceed with the application for Eaquals Accreditation
- to avoid the risk of applying before it is fully ready.

The Eaquals accreditation process consists of four main stages: Self-Assessment, Consultancy online, the Advisory Visit and the First inspection.

Institutional Self-Assessment

The Self-Assessment is designed to facilitate a review of all aspects of the institutions' work and to help it decide whether to
- pursue accreditation by Eaquals
- seek further advice from Eaquals in preparation for a successful inspection outcome.

The Self-Assessment process includes a review of systems, processes and standards of the institution in relation to the Eaquals Quality Standards and it aims to:
- encourage reflection and initiate an internal dialogue about quality
- facilitate the institution's internal development
- make an informed decision whether and when to proceed with the application for Eaquals accreditation and draw up an action plan.

Self-Assessment mirrors the structure of the Eaquals Inspection Scheme and includes its Quality Standards. *The Eaquals Self-Assessment Handbook for Higher Education Institutions,* which can be acquired from the Eaquals Secretariat, covers the following sections:

- the Self-Assessment Questionnaire
- Self-Assessment Activities
- the Guide to Developing an Action Plan
- the Eaquals Glossary

Self-Assessment is a **mandatory phase** in the accreditation process and a completed Self-Assessment Questionnaire – submitted to Eaquals – is reviewed by the Director of Accreditation. The conclusion of the Self-Assessment forms the basis of the institution's discussions with Eaquals about the next steps of the Accreditation process. Priorities and an action plan are agreed as well as the time frame to implement it.

Post Self-Assessment Consultancy

Online consultancy is based on the outcome of Self-Assessment and is not limited to online meetings and ad hoc help and support. It may also include extensive document revision and support in developing documentation, e.g. course programmes, tests, CPD programmes, performance review procedures, etc. The scope of the online consultancy is agreed with the Director of Accreditation.

Pre-inspection Advisory Visit

Pre-inspection Advisory Visit is not mandatory but highly recommended. It **forms the core** of the Eaquals Advisory Services. It is conducted by one of Eaquals senior inspectors and its scope and focus relate to the findings from Self-Assessment conducted prior to the Visit. The length of the Visit is determined by the size of the institution and the number of venues, and varies from one to three days. The aim of the Visit is to see 'the institution in action', assess implementation of the academic systems, and conduct class observations to make an informed decision whether a candidate institution is ready for the First Inspection. The written report defines the time frame of the accreditation project and formulates action points, i.e. what needs to be done before the inspection. It also includes suggestions for further improvement.

The outcome of the Advisory Visit is discussed with the Director of Accreditation and, if required, **further consultancy** on preparation work is provided, e.g. assistance with the review of documentation or training for teachers.

First Inspection is carried out by two Eaquals inspectors who are familiar with the institution's academic context and the result of the Advisory Visit (if applicable) as well as conclusions from Self-Assessment. The inspection report delivered by inspectors and moderated by the Accreditation Panel, includes a verdict statement, recommendations for further development, and if applicable requirements to meet the Eaquals Quality Standards.

If the **inspection is successful, accreditation** is granted for the period of **four years**. It is the university language centre and not the wider institution which is accredited by Eaquals. Re-accreditation is subject to a re-inspection conducted at the end of the fourth year of the accreditation cycle. Accredited members are also required to carry out a mid-cycle self-review and submit a report to Eaquals to ensure standards are maintained, and to report on changes and new developments.

If the result of **the inspection is a referral**, an institution is given **a deadline to meet the requirements.** A follow up inspection is required only if it is the quality of teaching which is not compliant with the Eaquals Standards. In the case of other areas of the Scheme submission of documentation is sufficient.

Eaquals Inspections

Methodology

Eaquals inspections are based on a principled and effective methodology, which combines direct observation of all aspects of the institution's activities with inspection of documentation and other evidence. The Eaquals inspection includes a site visit which is conducted by 2 inspectors and generally lasts 2 days (3-4 days in the case of larger centres). The inspection could be also conducted in hybrid format if a high proportion of teaching is delivered online. Inspectors look for evidence of systems which can ensure sustained and consistent quality of services.

The inspection verifies that all the promises made to students, staff and other stakeholders are respected. Inspectors evaluate whether the institution complies with the Eaquals Quality Standards in a given Category referring to detailed criteria.

Eaquals Inspectors

Eaquals inspectors are expert practitioners with considerable experience in management of language education institutions. 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. They are required to comply with the professional Code of Conduct, follow the established inspection procedures and respect the Scheme's principles.

Principles

The aims and ethos of Eaquals govern the way in which inspections are managed and carried out and the following fundamental principles are to be respected by institutions and Eaquals inspectors.

Confidentiality

Eaquals promises to fully respect the right of institutions to confidentiality with respect to all aspects of their operation and of their inspections and re-inspections. All written and orally communicated information about the institution undergoing inspection – including the outcome of the inspection and any requirements and recommendations – is kept confidential and only discussed between the inspectors concerned, the Accreditation Panel and the Director of Accreditation. Eaquals does not publish inspection reports and such reports are only provided to the institution under inspection. Inspection reports are kept on file in the Eaquals Secretariat for further reference and rules of confidentiality apply as stated in the Eaquals Privacy Policy. Eaquals publicly announces the names of new Accredited Members only when accreditation has been granted following a successful inspection.

Impartiality and fairness

Complete impartiality and fairness are the overriding principles of Eaquals inspections and reports. The inspection is a formal process and a professional distance between the inspectors and the institution's staff is maintained, with over-familiarity avoided at all times. Inspectors must not allow themselves to be influenced or biased by prior knowledge of any staff concerned.

Consistency and reliability of inspections

In order for inspections to be valid and reliable, the Eaquals Quality Standards must be applied consistently across different institutions, and from inspection to inspection, including re-inspections of the same institution. Consistency and reliability of inspections is promoted in a number of ways:

- transparent and rigorous criteria for selecting inspectors, together with a thorough induction and regular compulsory training and standardisation;
- the grading system which is based on clearly defined Quality Standards and detailed criteria;
- thorough moderation of all reports by the Accreditation Panel, which is responsible for ensuring that standards are applied consistently;
- the right of institutions to comment on the factual content of the inspection report before it is finalised; the Accreditation Panel and the Director of Accreditation consider any comments with the inspectors, who amend the report when appropriate.

Comprehensiveness

The Eaquals Quality Standards cover every aspect of the institution's work. All the Standards must be met, and each relevant aspect of the operation is inspected and assessed with equal thoroughness.

Professional collegiality and support

Eaquals inspections are carried out in a spirit of professional collegiality and supportiveness. The primary purpose of the inspection is to establish that the Eaquals Standards are being met. However, the inspection process is also an opportunity for professional exchange between inspectors and inspected, often involving a consultative element.

Regardless of how, in the inspectors' view, the inspection is going, inspectors are required to remain objective and non-judgmental at all times.

Continuous improvement

One aim of the inspection process is to 'hold up a mirror' to the institution and to enable it to benefit from the experience and to improve where possible, whatever the outcome. In addition to providing the evidence needed for Eaquals accreditation, the inspection plays a key role in maintaining the momentum of continuous improvement, and providing independent advice as to how this may be achieved. Consultative advice discussed during the inspection is expressed as 'Recommendations' in the report.

The scope of the Eaquals Inspection

Eaquals accreditation applies to the language centre, the school of languages or a language department which is an integral part of the university later referred to as the wider institution. All activities of the language centre related to the provision of language learning services must be included in the inspection, as well as all sites where teaching takes place.

Eaquals inspections therefore include:

* all language courses and programmes delivered face-to-face and online
* teacher training courses that are not separately accredited by international awarding bodies recognised by Eaquals

Teacher-training (e.g. Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults – CELTA) and other courses, which have internationally recognised awarding bodies or are accredited by international bodies recognised by Eaquals, are not part of the Eaquals inspection and classes/training sessions are not observed. However, the staff teaching on any such courses should be included in teacher focus groups and/or other meetings.

Inspection procedures

The inspectors look for evidence that all services provided by the institution meet the Eaquals Quality Standards.

They:

* hold meetings with management and academic managers
* meet focus groups of students and teachers, and where applicable, other stakeholders
* interview members of staff
* observe a representative selection of the teaching
* check that academic management and administrative systems work in practice
* check key documentation – including material stored online and the main website
* inspect premises and resources.

Documentary evidence

Gathering evidence of compliance with the Quality Standards by inspecting documentation and online applications is an essential element of the inspection. Institutions are required to provide a range of supporting documentation in advance and during the inspection visit.

Meetings

The meetings held during the inspection provide further important evidence of compliance with the Quality Standards and help to assess the way the institution operates in practice.

The Eaquals Quality Standards: Overview

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. In the Inspection Scheme there are references to the language centre and to the wider institution. The language centre refers to a unit, i.e. a school of foreign languages, a language centre or a department which is an integral part of an institution of higher education. The wider institution refers to an institution of higher education, i.e. a university or similar of which the language centre is an integral part.

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 leadership, 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 fosters 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; 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 transferable study strategies and academic literacy 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 the methodological approach.

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 outcomes.

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 fit 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 resources 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 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 appropriate 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 continuing 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 as well as to promote care for environment.

The Eaquals Quality Standards and a Guide to the Inspection Process

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 leadership, 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.

Inspection procedures

Inspectors check the structures and systems which support the management and administration of the language centre. They look for evidence of leadership and strategic planning, and of co-ordination between the language centre and the wider institution, between management and administrative activity, by inspecting documentation and in meetings with senior management and key administrative staff.

Documentary evidence

- **Inspection Application Form**
- **Declaration of Statutory Compliance**
- Any documentation supporting the Declaration in areas such as **registration of the wider institution, insurance, employment** and **data compliance**
- Data management policies and protection systems including GDPR compliance if applicable
- Any document including the language centre's policy regarding the **sourcing and use of technological systems**
- Any documentary evidence of compliance with **copyright laws**; for example any agreement with a national or international copyright licensing agency with regard to hard copy publications and materials uploaded on to any online platforms e.g. publisher permissions to put copyright materials onto online platforms.
- Mission **statement** or similar statement of the philosophy of the language centre (this may be part of the curriculum or other management strategy document)
- AI policy detailing the **principles, guidelines, and procedures** governing the **development, deployment, and oversight** of AI technologies.
- Environmental or Green Policy
- Organigram or organisational chart
- **Job descriptions of key members of staff,** including generic descriptions for teachers and other team members
- **Risk assessment** and **crisis management** documents
- **Management** and **HR policies** including non-discrimination and inclusion policies
- **Any** documentation which demonstrates **strategic planning procedures** and systems for review and analysis of the language centre's performance and/or change management
- **Enrolment** and **student services administration systems and documentation**

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.

Inspection procedures

Inspectors look for evidence of a culture of commitment to quality and improvement, and check the structures and procedures which support this. They gather evidence through inspecting documentation and by conducting meetings with management, academic managers, teachers and students.

Documentary evidence

- Reports/records of any additional **audits/reviews/inspections** apart from Eaquals – either internal or by other organisations
- Any written evidence of the language centre's **approach to quality enhancement,** such as internal quality assurance procedures, self-assessment documents
- Written evidence of systems for reviewing **the quality of course content, materials and delivery**
- Written evidence of systems for **lesson observation** and the way they help to develop and improve teaching and learning
- **Lesson observation records** (for quality control) and other related documentation such as observation checklists, observation feedback sheets, records of any follow-up action
- Written evidence of systems for collecting feedback from students and other stakeholders including **completed student feedback questionnaires, analysis of feedback and records of any follow-up action**
- Written evidence of systems for collecting feedback from staff, such as **records of meetings with staff and/or staff surveys**

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 fosters 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.

Inspection procedures

Inspectors check the structures and procedures which support communication with staff within the language centre and between the language centre and wider institution's academic and administrative departments. They look for evidence that staff are well informed and feel valued and respected, by reviewing relevant documents and in meetings with managers, teachers and administrative staff.

Documentary evidence

- **Any records of regular briefings** such as meetings or newsletters from management to staff on development plans
- Any evidence of a system **of two-way communication and consultation** between staff and managers such as agendas and minutes/notes of regularly held meetings
- Arrangements for **staff representation** and any unions, if applicable
- **Staff Handbook** or other document/s including information about the status of the language centre within the wider institution, and information on systems and procedures of relevance to employees
- **Organigram, organisational charts** and/or job descriptions which define line management and **communication channels**

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.

Inspection procedures

Inspectors check the communication systems and materials used to promote the language centre and to facilitate communication with students and other stakeholders. The systems are also checked at meetings with students, managers and staff responsible for admission and communication.

Documentary evidence

- The language centre's **website, social media and all hard copy promotional materials**
- Student **admission documentation**
- **Student Handbook**
- **Contracts** provided to students and/or sponsors and any other documents stating **terms and conditions** regarding tuition and other services offered
- Written evidence of **complaints procedures** for students and other stakeholders

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.

Inspection procedures

Inspectors check how the language centre's educational philosophy informs course design, and how closely day to day course planning relates to prescribed learning objectives. They also check systems for teacher induction and support. Evidence of compliance is gathered by reviewing academic planning documents and at meetings with academic managers and teachers. Lesson observation is the practical realisation of academic management systems and also contributes important evidence for this Category.

Documentary evidence

- **A statement of the language centre's educational philosophy**
- **Course programmes,** levels with learning outcomes including for online provision when applicable
- **Schemes of work** (work plans): weekly/monthly/termly as appropriate
- Any forms and documents related to **needs analysis** showing how these are conducted and applied
- **A description of the language centre's level system**, including how this maps on to CEFR levels or GSE or another internationally recognised scale
- **Teacher Handbook** and/or any documentation giving guidance and information to teachers on the language centre's educational philosophy, the methodological approach and course programmes and arrangements for cover classes, and administrative tasks expected of teachers
- **Student Handbook** and/or any documents giving information to students on the language centre's educational philosophy, the methodological approach and course programmes
- **Website, social media** and **any publicity material** giving information on course programmes, levels and the methodological approach
- **Job descriptions of the academic manager(s) or Director of Studies** including any supporting staff such as assistant academic managers, examinations officers, etc.
- Timetable and description of **induction programme** for new teachers
- Administrative documentation such as **completed records of work** and **student attendance, teaching and cover timetables**

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 transferable study strategies and academic literacy skills and to share responsibility for their own learning.

Inspection procedures

Inspection procedures for this Category include lesson observation, reviewing lesson plans and other academic planning documents and meetings with academic managers, teachers and students.

Lesson observation

Inspectors aim to observe **all levels and course types, including synchronous and asynchronous online teaching. Teacher-training courses** which are accredited by internationally recognised awarding bodies recognised by Eaquals (e.g. CELTA), are not part of the inspection and classes/training sessions are not observed. However, the staff teaching on any such courses are included in meetings with academic managers and/or with teachers.

- Inspectors attempt to observe as many as possible of the teaching team and in smaller language centres this usually includes all teachers. In a big multi-centre language centre it may be necessary to do some sampling. Inspectors aim to observe **at least 70% of all teachers timetabled to teach during the inspection.** Inspectors should ensure that lessons **observed cover a representative spectrum of languages, course types and levels.**
- The focus of observation is on the teaching in general and not the performance of individual teachers, i.e. inspectors aim to carry out an overall assessment of the language centre's teaching.
- Students should be informed about the purpose and conduct of lesson observation and reassured that they are not being evaluated.
- Inspectors normally **observe a lesson for 15 to 20 minutes**.
- Inspectors are **provided with lesson plans and copies of teaching materials.** For face-to- face observations, lesson plans are provided as hard copies, while for online observations plans are sent to the inspectors electronically.
- The first one or two observations are done by both inspectors together, who take time to discuss their views and reactions to the initial observations in order to ensure a common interpretation and assessment of those which follow.
- Individual teachers may be observed on more than one occasion.
- Inspectors will not take part in the lesson.
- In addition to observing teaching and evaluating lesson plans and other related documentation, inspectors also check numbers of students in the class, homogeneity of levels, and the quality of teaching equipment and, when applicable, the virtual learning environment.

Observation of online lessons

Lessons delivered online will normally be observed by the inspectors working from their home base, with access to the language centre's online teaching platform. The observation of any online teaching and the monitoring of any online platforms etc. may be carried out prior to the inspection visit.

Special arrangements

In certain special circumstances, and in agreement with the language centre, inspectors will not be present on site in the classroom, **but will observe face-to-face lessons remotely via live online viewing**. The language centre sets up online live viewing and makes access available to inspectors, for example via zoom invitation.

Documentary evidence

- **Lesson plans**, weekly/monthly/termly plans and/or schemes of work
- **Attendance** records, **records of work** completed
- Copies of all **learning materials** to be used during the lesson
- **Online resources** when they form an integral part of the course programme
- **Classroom displays**, including notice boards
- Any **written guidance to teachers on methodology and/or approach**, for example, use of technology, teacher handbooks or similar

7. Assessment and Certification

7.1 Assessment content and procedures reflect the language centre's educational philosophy and the methodological approach.

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 outcomes.

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

7.5 Assessment promotes learning 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 fit for purpose.

Inspection procedures

Evidence of compliance is gathered by reviewing assessment and certification documents and in meetings with academic managers, teachers and students. Inspectors examine test and assessment instruments and check their compatibility with the course programmes. They check procedures for any in-house test design and implementation, including any relevant training for staff as well as procedures to prevent academic misconduct and cheating.

Documentary evidence

- Written description of the language centre's **assessment policy**
- **Placement tests** and guidelines
- Written procedures for dealing with **misplaced students** (Teacher Handbook, Student Handbook or any other documents)
- All **progress and end-of-course tests**
- Access to any online tests and assessment tools
- Regulations and procedures regarding **high stake assessments** including where relevant **AI policy** detailing the **principles, guidelines, and procedures** governing the **development, deployment, and oversight** of AI technologies in assessment
- **Teacher Handbook** and/or any documentation giving guidance and information to staff on assessment aims and procedures
- Records of **induction, training and standardisation** for staff responsible for designing assessment instruments and administering assessment
- Students' **assessment records**
- Sample **reports and/or certificates** issued by the language centre for all course types
- Any **website, social media or publicity material** concerning the language centre's educational and/ or administrative services with regard to external examinations
- **Notice boards:** any notices and/or posters giving information on internal and/or external tests and examinations

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.

Inspection procedures

Inspectors check the provision and use of all teaching and learning materials and equipment, including online resources (platforms and applications and any other e-learning facility). Inspectors visit teachers' work rooms, libraries, computer rooms and/or self-study centres and any spaces set aside for student study, and interview academic staff and students on the relevance and quality of resources.

Documentary evidence

- **Policy statement** and **guidelines** on the use of published resources including digital resources
- Any **written guidelines for students** on learning resources
- **Lists of all teaching and learning** material including digital resources
- Inspector access (as teachers and students) to **online resources and platforms**
- Written procedures for review and development of resources

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 extra-curricular programmes provided by the language centre.

Inspection procedures

Inspectors check the language centre's advice, support and welfare arrangements, as well as any extra-curricular programme, by reviewing all relevant documentation. Discussion of these services is included in meetings with students and with staff responsible for student welfare and extra-curricular programmes.

Documentary evidence

- Written procedures for dealing with **absence, lateness and discipline**
- Written guidelines on the use of **online tools and resources** where applicable
- Written guidelines for staff on serious student welfare issues such as **bullying, harassment or significant distress** and procedures for dealing with these
- All documentation describing the language centre's **safeguarding policy**
- Student **Handbook** or any other documents including welfare and safeguarding procedures and advice to students on how to get support and help
- Samples of **extra-curricular programmes**
- **Documented systems and guidelines for staff** for the effective planning, administration and monitoring of the delivery of any extra-curricular programmes
- If applicable documents including **risk assessment, accident and emergency procedures** in relation to extra-curricular programmes
- **Publicity materials** related to any extra-curricular programmes, including the website, social media and online applications

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 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 continuing professional development for all staff.**

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

Inspection procedures

Inspectors check personnel files and documentation related to performance reviews, CPD programmes, and developmental lesson observations. Meetings with management, academic managers, teachers and administrative staff, as well as lesson observation conducted by the inspectors, also provide evidence of compliance for this Category.

Documentary evidence

- **Up-to-date list of staff** with their experience and qualifications, as seen on the Inspection Application Form
- **Staff CVs**
- Copies of staff qualifications: **diplomas and certificates**
- Any **policy documents** on recruitment (e.g. qualifications/experience required), deployment, induction, etc.
- **Performance review documents for teachers** including signed records of reviews
- **Any** documents relating to the use of the European Profiling Grid (EPG) or the Eaquals Framework for Language Teacher Training and Development if relevant
- **Performance review documents** for administrative staff and managers including signed records of reviews
- Written policy and descriptions of systems for **staff training and development**
- Records of **in-service or/and on-the job training** for teaching and administrative staff
- Records of any **external training** undertaken by academic or administrative staff, and policies on **funding**
- Records of developmental **lesson observation**, peer and self-observations and evidence of how they link to the programme of continuing professional development

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.

Inspection procedures

Inspectors gather information on staff employment terms and conditions in meetings with managers and staff and by reviewing related documentation. They check whether there is full compliance with the declaration made by the language centre regarding proper payment of salaries, income taxes and any social security or other legally required contributions to the relevant authorities.

Documentary evidence

- **Declaration of Statutory Compliance**
- **Up-to-date list of staff** employed at the time of the inspection, as provided in the Inspection Application Form, showing number of years employed by the language centre and their employment status
- Samples of **contracts for full-time and permanent staff**
- Samples of **contracts for casual/hourly paid staff** and those on short-term contracts
- Letters of employment/appointment for **freelance/self-employed** staff
- Employment **terms and conditions**, if documented separately in addition to contracts
- Written staff **grievance and disciplinary** procedures
- Any additional documentation, for example appendices to contracts, **staff handbooks**, guidelines, job descriptions
- Any **salary scales** or documents dealing with reward systems for staff

Section E – Learning Environment and Facilities

12.   Learning Environment

12.   **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 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 as well as to promote care for environment.**

Inspection procedures

Inspectors inspect all premises and facilities used by the language centre, and check documentation on emergency evacuation and other health and safety arrangements. They check that these procedures are correctly applied in practice during meetings with management, staff and students.

Documentary Evidence:

- Equipment **maintenance records**
- **Insurance certificates**
- **Any fire certificate** issued by local authorities
- **Any health and safety** documentation including records of **fire/evacuation** practices and **first aid** training
- **Displayed notices** of emergency procedures and escape routes
- **Any statutory notices** required by legislation
- **Any risk assessment** document related to the premises
- **Analysis of carbon footprint** and **environmental action plans**

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