

Guidelines on assessing *Teaching and learning*

What follows is a series of guidelines for ELT providers designed to illustrate how this section is evaluated during inspection for British Council accreditation. It should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the *Accreditation UK Handbook* (2.2 *Inspection criteria* and 4.2 *Academic staff qualifications*) and the *Criteria, requirements and guidance* document (CRG)

THE SECTION STANDARD

Inspectors are required to make a judgement on the extent to which the following is the case:

The academic staff team has a professional profile (qualifications, experience and continuing professional development) appropriate to the context. Teachers receive sufficient guidance to ensure that they support students effectively in their learning. Courses are structured and managed to provide the maximum possible benefit to students. The teaching observed meets the requirements of the Scheme.

In order to do this, inspectors look at:

- a range of indicators of teacher performance (including preparation, classroom performance and student feedback)
- a range of indicators of academic management performance (including academic staff qualifications, teacher support, course design, deployment of teachers, student feedback, monitoring student progress and monitoring teacher performance).

Attention is paid to the sustainability of the academic management systems that support continuous satisfactory classroom performance to the benefit of students.

ASSESSING ACADEMIC STAFF QUALIFICATIONS (ACADEMIC STAFF PROFILE)

Accredited providers are expected to employ appropriately qualified teachers. This is in the interests of students, their teachers, the provider and the UK ELT sector as a whole.

- The qualifications normally expected of staff working for accredited providers are clearly laid out in the CRG (T1, T2, T4). Only in exceptional circumstances (detailed below and for which a full rationale must be provided) will non-compliance be acceptable.
- In all cases, all teachers must have a high enough educational level, sufficient and appropriate teaching skills and a sufficient knowledge of the linguistic systems of English to operate satisfactorily as a teacher of English language.
- Any description in publicity of the level of qualifications held by the teaching staff must be accurate (M28)
- Although the recruitment and deployment of teachers is the decision of the provider, inspectors will be looking for evidence that this is being carried out appropriately (M10).
- It is the provider's responsibility to demonstrate to the inspectors that the qualifications held by their staff are appropriate, a *Qualifications evaluation* form is available to facilitate this (see <https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation/information-centres/inspection-support>), it should be completed with reference to *Handbook*, Section 4.2 *Academic staff qualifications*.

The British Council does **NOT** validate or accredit any teacher training qualifications and we cannot comment on specific courses. The Accreditation Scheme for UK English language providers (run jointly by the British Council and English UK) assesses qualifications solely for the purpose of deciding whether an organisation meets its requirements for the *Teaching and learning* criteria of the Scheme. For this purpose, we identify two main levels of TEFL qualifications:

- TEFLI certificate in ELT/TESOL – an entry/first-level qualification, usually taken by teachers with little or no ELT/TESOL experience who wish to enter the profession.
- TEFLQ diploma in ELT/TESOL – a higher-level qualification usually taken by teachers with relevant experience who wish to follow a career in ELT/TESOL.

To be considered by the Scheme as a **valid certificate in ELT/TESOL** a qualification must:

- be externally validated* by a reputable examination body (usually a university or recognised examination board) and/or accredited by a national accrediting body such as Ofqual in England;
- contain at least six hours' supervised teaching practice (i.e. teaching practice where a qualified and standardised assessor observes the trainee teacher teaching real TEFL students and gives feedback to the trainee on his/her performance);
- contain at least 100 hours of ELT/TESOL input.

A **valid diploma in ELT/TESOL** must:

- be externally validated* by a reputable examination body (usually a university or recognised examination board) and/or accredited by a national accrediting body such as Ofqual in England;
- require candidates to have prior EL/ESOL teaching experience;
- contain at least five hours supervised teaching practice (i.e. practice where a qualified assessor observes the trainee teacher teaching real TEFL students and gives feedback to the trainee on his/her performance);
- contain at least 100 hours of ELT/TESOL input.

*The Scheme requires external validation (accreditation) to ensure consistency and rigour of standards. Where a certificate course leads to an international award, there needs to be a system to ensure consistent standards between courses within a centre and between course providers. Reputable examination bodies (amongst other things) set standards for the syllabus and course content, for the appointment of course trainers with respect to their qualifications and experience, for the training of the assessors of both written and practical work. They also train external moderators of the course who visit each course and moderate the awards. The examination board also provides an external complaints procedure. The procedures provide a level of externality that can show trainees that a certificate has the same worth regardless of where or when it was taken. [See the glossary for some basic definitions of terms used in relation to qualifications.]

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The inspectors will consider exceptional circumstances within the context of the performance indicators detailed above.

Unqualified teachers without a first degree or equivalent relevant professional qualification (please see below) are not considered acceptable.

An academic staff profile containing certificate-level (TEFLI) teachers without a first degree or equivalent or teachers who are unqualified will only be considered satisfactory in exceptional circumstances. In arriving at an evaluation of these exceptional circumstances, inspectors may consider:

- the teacher's depth of teaching experience relevant to the needs of their students
- the strength of teacher support
- deployment of the teacher in line with course type and student profile, in the case of ESP courses, other qualifications may be more or equally appropriate
- the qualifications held by the rest of the teaching staff
- the provider's publicity.

For teachers of students under the age of 18, Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) will be acceptable, provided the subject specialism is related to English language teaching (e.g. modern languages or English) or the teacher has primary QTS, and that relevant ongoing academic support is provided.

Sole academic managers or academic management team leaders who are not qualified to diploma-level (TEFLQ) will only be considered satisfactory in exceptional circumstances. In arriving at an evaluation of these exceptional circumstances, inspectors will consider his/her track record in ELT and/or academic management (including managing the development of teachers), the qualifications and experience of the rest of the academic management team and the distribution of roles within the team (T4). A rationale is required for any members of an academic management

team without TEFLQ. This will include a statement about the structure of the academic management team and the responsibilities of the individual and will normally be accepted provided that they have an appropriate teaching qualification and that their role within the team is appropriate and is suitably monitored and supported.

For all the exceptional circumstances detailed above, the starting point for the inspector is that it is normally unacceptable to employ academic management and teaching staff who are not appropriately professionally prepared and it is the responsibility of the provider to demonstrate that the deployment of any such teachers is appropriate.

EAP COURSES

EAP refers to courses preparing students for undergraduate and postgraduate study and not to general English courses that incorporate examination preparation classes. However, courses that are titled and advertised by the institution as EAP will be evaluated as such.

Teachers on EAP courses will be qualified to at least diploma-level (TEFLQ) and have a first degree. Exceptionally, the employment of academic staff in this area without a TEFLQ qualification may be acceptable with the provision of a valid rationale.

ASSESSING ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT, THE INDUCTION, SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

To assess whether T5 is met or not, inspectors will ask for evidence that the provider has carried out an evaluation and deployed teachers accordingly. Please note that inspectors are not expected to investigate student needs and expectations themselves but to ask the provider for evidence that they have done so.

For T9 to be met, teacher support will be available both to newly- or less-qualified teachers and opportunities provided for continuing professional development for teachers who qualified some time ago. For T10 to be met, observation and monitoring of teachers' performance will be carried out by a TEFLQ academic manager for all teachers (new, experienced, part-time and full-time).

THE TEACHING SUMMARY

In this section inspectors give an overall judgement on teaching. Inspectors will state clearly whether the criteria T23–T30 were met in most lessons observed.

STRENGTHS

A point of strength will be awarded in T2 where the range of qualifications held substantially exceeds the minimum requirement for the type of courses taught. Typically a higher ratio of:

- diploma-level qualified (TEFLQ) to certificate-level qualified (TEFLI) teachers (on general English courses)
- certificate/diploma-level qualified (TEFLI/Q) plus QTS to certificate-level qualified (TEFLI) teachers (on courses for juniors)
- certificate/diploma-level qualified (TEFLI/Q) plus ESP qualification to certificate-level (TEFLI) teachers (on ESP courses)
- diploma-level qualified (TEFLQ) plus MA (relevant discipline) to diploma-level qualified (TEFLQ) teachers on EAP courses.

'Academic staff profile' will appear in a provider's publishable statement as an area of strength only if none of the criteria T1–T4 are 'not met' and two of T2, T3 or T4 have been awarded a point of strength.

A rationale must be provided for any teacher who does not have a first degree or equivalent (T1) or who has a teaching qualification which does not meet the requirements of the Scheme (T2). The respective criterion will not be met if inspectors do not accept the rationale for one or more, or consider the proportion of such teachers is too high.

Publishable statements can also include strengths in the following areas within *Teaching and learning* if at least 50% of the eligible criteria are considered a strength and there are no criteria in the section 'not met': academic management, course design and implementation, learner management, teaching.

GLOSSARY – SOME BASIC DEFINITIONS

Specific to the *Accreditation UK Handbook*

TEFLI: TEFL Initiated – holding a certificate level qualification in teaching English as a foreign/second language which meets Accreditation UK requirements (see above).

TEFLQ: TEFL Qualified – holding a diploma level qualification in teaching English as a foreign/second language which meets Accreditation UK requirements (see above).

General terms

Accreditation: The qualification may be accredited by the national curriculum authority, and/or by an independent organisation. That is, the national curriculum authority or the independent organisation gives assurance that the qualification is of an appropriate standard.

Awarding body: (See Examination board or awarding body)

Course Provider: The school or institution that teaches a course.

Examination board or awarding body: The body that sets and marks the examinations and/or assessment procedures needed in order to obtain the qualification. The 'awarding body' is the institution whose name will appear on the certificate that is given as a result of success on a course.

Monitoring: The course may be monitored by the examination board or by an independent awarding body. That is, the examination board or awarding body checks to ensure that the course is taught to an appropriate standard. In turn, the examination board or awarding body may be monitored by the national curriculum authority.

Recognition: The qualification can be recognised by employers and/or by other educational institutions as an appropriate preparation for employment or further study. That is, the employers or educational institutions accept that the qualification is a reliable indicator of the teaching competence of any holder who is seeking employment or who wishes to undertake further study.

Teaching practice: An opportunity for the trainee teacher to teach genuine learners of English under the guidance of properly qualified trainers or mentors; an essential part of any initial teacher training course, even for teachers already qualified to teach other curriculum subjects, since teaching a language is unlike teaching any other subject.

Validation: The course can be validated by the examination board or by an independent awarding body. That is, the examination board or awarding body checks the course to ensure that the curriculum as offered is appropriate.