

Introduction

Accommodation providers may apply to be registered with the British Council through the Accreditation UK Scheme by undergoing a separate inspection to English Language centres. This is a registration rather than an accreditation. Successful providers can market themselves as 'Registered by the British Council as an accommodation provider'.

Application for registration is open to accommodation providers that have supplied student accommodation for three or more British Council-accredited organisations on a regular basis for at least one year. The purpose of registration is to avoid duplication of the inspection process for accommodation providers working with multiple accredited clients.

Accommodation providers are inspected against the inspection criteria relevant to the range of accommodation and services provided. Please see the *Accommodation criteria, requirements and guidance (ACRG)* document for the inspection criteria and additional guidance. All accommodation types offered to accredited language centres may be inspected on a sampling basis; feedback will also be collected from the accommodation provider's British Council-accredited clients.

Application

Interested providers should contact accreditation.unit@britishcouncil.org with any questions concerning this accommodation provider application pack. A completed application form should be submitted along with any publicity (three copies if printed publicity) and a completed information sharing agreement. The deadlines for application submission are the same as for language centres seeking accreditation and can be found on the website: www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation.

Length of inspection

Inspections will usually be carried out by two inspectors and will last one day or more, depending on the range and geographic distribution of accommodation. Inspections will be arranged at the earliest convenient date. Once an inspection is set up, the inspection confirmation letter will give an estimate of the length of the inspection, and the reporting inspector will confirm this once he/she has read the Stage 2 documentation.

Preparing your staff

Please inform all your staff about what to expect during an inspection. It is useful if those people with responsibilities who are not familiar with the Scheme are given a copy of the inspection criteria (ACRG) before the inspection and are referred to the website address above for a general overview of the process of language centre accreditation, which the registration of accommodation providers supports.

Stage 1 documents

First-time applicants should refer to the 'Inspection documentation' list at the end of the ACRG document (page 19) for relevant documentation and submit Stage 1 documentation to the Accreditation Unit with the application form.

Stage 2 documents

Please refer to the 'Inspection documentation' list (ACRG page 20). These need to be sent directly to the inspectors at least ten working days before the agreed start of the inspection. Documents should be sent electronically, though any documents which are normally stored in paper form may, of course, be presented in this way. Please number and label according to the list of documentation and include an explanatory note if you do not have something or think that it is not relevant. Please refer to the *Guidance for sending documentation* for instructions on sending your documentation to the inspectors.

Make sure that you complete the *People to be seen* form, which is included in this application pack and indicate if any of the people to be interviewed are on a different site or have limited availability. If there are any updates to the staff lists, send details to both inspectors.

Accreditation UK is the quality assurance scheme for English language providers in the UK, managed by the British Council in partnership with the professional association, English UK. For further information about the Scheme, please contact:

Accreditation Unit | British Council | UK | accreditation.unit@britishcouncil.org | www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation

Stage 3 documents

Please refer to the 'Inspection documentation' list ([ACRG page 22](#)) for relevant documentation and make sure Stage 3 documentation is available to inspectors during the inspection.

Costs

A breakdown of costs is detailed on our Fees sheet 2025-26, which is included in this pack. Accommodation providers pay for inspection (cost recovery) **but do not currently pay an annual accreditation fee.**

Length of inspection is calculated as follows:

- Head office visit – half day (In-person/ remote)
- Home visits to a sample of homestay accommodation – half/full day per area visited (in-person/remote)
- Visits to any residences managed by the accommodation provider and used by accredited language centres – as required (in-person/remote)
- Visits to a sample of any other type of accommodation used by accredited language centres – as required (in-person/remote)
- Where the accommodation provider covers several geographical areas, the inspection will cover at least two of these areas, usually one in four, including any regional office and accommodation visits – additional half/full day per area depending on the range of accommodation offered.

For example, a Manchester-based accommodation provider with a Head office in Manchester, homestay accommodation and a residence in the Manchester area, plus a small homestay offer in Liverpool and Chester, should expect the inspection to last from one and a half to two days.

Inspection

During the inspection, inspectors will together visit the accommodation provider's head office, carry out interviews with key staff, assess procedures and documentation, contact accredited language centre clients, and then separately carry out visits to a sample of homestay homes and any other accommodation offered. The sampling structure for inspecting homestay accommodation is as described below.

In the case of samples marked*, the inspectors may select suitable alternatives where precise criteria do not apply.

The inspectors will expect to see the following cross-sample of homestay homes:

- at least one home which has been used for at least ten student weeks* in the year preceding inspection **and**
- at least one home which has been used for fewer than three student weeks* in the year preceding inspection **and**
- at least one established home which has been used for more than one year* **and**
- at least one recently recruited home which has been used only within the six months* preceding inspection **and**
- at least one further home.

All homes inspected must be on the current register; the sample will include at least two homes currently accommodating students at accredited language centres.

If accommodation is offered for students under the age of 18, sampling must include homes and any other form of accommodation provided for under-18s.

Information for English language centre clients

When an accredited English language centre using an accommodation provider registered by the Scheme is inspected, the inspectors will be notified that a registered accommodation provider is in use and will receive a copy of the latest report. Where there is no provision other than that offered by the accommodation provider, the language centre's inspection will not need to include a visit to the accommodation provider's head office or, in most cases, any accommodation.

Inspectors will utilise the relevant information from the accommodation provider's inspection report and interview relevant people at the language centre to assess the standard of provision. If necessary, inspectors will be able to contact the accommodation provider for further information and reserve the right to visit the accommodation.

Where there is additional accommodation provision (managed by the English language centre itself or a non-registered accommodation provider), this will be inspected in the normal way and the inspection report will reflect all the accommodation provision, but direct re-inspection of the registered accommodation provider will not normally be necessary.

Base room

The inspectors will need to consult in private at times during the inspection, so they would appreciate a room being made available for them. For security reasons, they would prefer a lockable room or lockable cupboard within the room, with a key for each of them if possible. It is useful to have any paper-based Stage 3 documentation available in the base room, so that the inspectors can look through it during Stage 3 documentation reading time. This room should have a good Wi-Fi signal.

Inspection results

The inspection report will be written within four weeks of the last day of the inspection and submitted to the Accreditation Unit for checking. The report will then go to the next available Accreditation Scheme Advisory Committee meeting for moderation. There are six of these meetings per year.

A letter notifying the accommodation provider of the inspection result will be sent within five working days of the committee meeting. The full report will follow within six weeks of the committee meeting, and the provider will have five working days to highlight any factual inaccuracies. Each accredited language centre using the services of the accommodation provider will receive a copy of the finalised inspection report for their information. Other accredited language centres can request a copy of the inspection report from the accommodation provider or Accreditation Unit.

Registered accommodation providers are listed on the Accreditation UK website (information for language centres) and can market themselves as 'Registered by the British Council as an accommodation provider'; specific wording will be confirmed by the Accreditation Unit.

Maintaining registration

To maintain registration, the accommodation provider is responsible for the following:

- submitting an *Annual declaration* to the Accreditation Unit by the specified deadline
- undertaking full re-inspection every four years
- undertaking a spot check inspection in the event of any significant change to the provision
- informing the Accreditation Unit of any new accredited clients
- informing the Accreditation Unit of any changes to provision (offering a new type of accommodation, expanding into a new location).

Interim visits

To ensure that standards are maintained between inspections, each year several providers will receive unannounced interim visits. These are carried out at the Scheme's expense.

Accommodation types (as described within Accreditation UK)

1. **Homestay:** the hosts treat the student as a full member of the household, eating together and sharing the common living areas; no more than four students will be accommodated in homestay accommodation at any one time (homes accommodating more than four students should not be described as homestay accommodation).
2. **Private home:** accommodation in a private home, living with the hosts; more than four adult students may be accommodated in the home, and there may be less direct contact with the host(s). Accommodation may be catered or self-catering. Not suitable for under 18s.
3. **Residential:** halls of residence or hostels, catered or self-catering. Residential accommodation which is self-catering or where there is no overnight supervision is not normally suitable for under-18s.
4. **Student house:** house or flat share with no resident host. Not normally suitable for under 18s.
5. **Other:** any accommodation provided which does not fit into the definitions above (please provide a description for the Accreditation Unit).