

Organisation name	University of Bradford, The Language Centre
Inspection date	7 August 2018
Current accreditation status	Accredited
Reason for spot check	Routine: newly accredited institution

Recommendation

We recommend continued accreditation. The next inspection falls due in 2021; there are no grounds for bringing this forward.

Changes to the summary statement

No changes need to be made to the summary statement.

Summary Statement

The British Council inspected and accredited the University of Bradford (The Language Centre) in February 2017. The Accreditation Scheme assesses the standards of management, resources and premises, teaching, welfare, and care of under 18s and accredits organisations which meet the overall standard in each area inspected (see www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation for details).

The English language teaching department of this university offers courses in academic English for adults (17+).

Strengths were noted in the areas of quality assurance, learning resources, academic staff profile, course design, teaching, care of students, accommodation, and leisure opportunities.

The inspection report stated that the organisation met the standards of the Scheme.

Organisation profile

Inspection history	Dates/details
First inspection	2017
Last full inspection	2017
Subsequent spot check(s) (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent supplementary check(s) (if applicable)	N/a
Subsequent interim visit(s) (if applicable)	N/a
Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre	N/a
Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a
Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates	N/a

Student and staff profile	At inspection	In peak week: August
Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)	40	90
Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)	19	17
Typical age range	20–39	18–40
Typical length of stay	6 weeks	6 weeks
Predominant nationalities	Chinese	Chinese
Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses	5	9
Total number of managers including academic	1	1
Total number of administrative/ancillary staff	1	1

Premises profile	
Address of main site	The Language Centre, University of Bradford, Richmond Road, Bradford BD7 1DP
Additional sites in use	N/a
Additional sites not in use	N/a
Sites inspected	The Language Centre

Introduction

Background

English language tuition and academic skills development have been provided for international students since 1992, delivered by the Language Centre originally through an academic faculty, but more recently as one of a number of student support services within the Directorate of Student and Academic Services. The Language Centre was inspected for the first time in February 2017. Provision was mainly in the form of English language support for students on mainstream courses, some language development modules on two foundation courses and a small cohort of full-time students on a thirty-week pre-sessional course (PREP1). Although there were no students under the age of 18 at the time of that inspection, it is possible for under 18s to be enrolled on Language Centre courses. The inspection report noted a number of strengths and very few points to be addressed. Information with regard to weaknesses in some aspects of safeguarding was sent subsequent to the inspection and was found to be satisfactory. The recommendation was that accreditation should be awarded with a spot check within 18 months preferably at the time of the summer pre-sessional course.

Preparation

The reporting inspector from the first inspection was asked to carry out the spot check visit and background documents, including a summer pre-sessional brochure, were sent by the Accreditation Unit. The website was consulted. The Language Centre was contacted in order to check on the presence of key staff and to obtain a timetable for pre-sessional classes, but no date was set for the visit.

Programme and persons present

The inspection took place 7 August 2018 starting at 10.30 and finishing at 14.30. The programme was agreed with the head of department and meetings were held with her and the pre-sessional course leader. The three teachers teaching that day were observed. None of these teachers had been seen during the first inspection. Focus group meetings were held with students and staff and there were also meetings with the international student adviser and the student engagement manager for the Student Union. Qualifications of new staff and DBS status of all staff were checked with a human resources manager.

Findings

Significant changes since the last inspection

Management

Management remains the same, both in personnel and structure, apart from the appointment of a new administrator.

Student recruitment and enrolment are now dealt with by Central Admissions whereas in 2017 this was handled by the department.

Quality improvement processes remain the same; examples were seen of action taken in response to student feedback.

Publicity for the summer pre-sessional is very clear, informative and attractive.

Premises and resources

The Language Centre now has a much higher territorial profile with clear notices indicating its presence and its services. The Skills Corner, an open access area specifically for the use of international students, which was in the early stages of development at the time of the first inspection, is now open and in use. It is a comfortable place for students to study and provides Language Centre students with a "home".

Teaching and learning

Two new members of staff have been added to the team. Both are TEFLQ and experienced. Two additional temporary teachers are employed on the pre-sessional course. Both are also TEFLQ and experienced. The area of strength for *Academic staff profile* has been retained.

One member of academic staff who was TEFLI at the time of the first inspection has been funded to enrol on a course to improve his EFL qualifications. He has been awarded his PGCE in ELT and Professional Practice by the

university and is awaiting the results of his externally validated in-service ELT training award.

In addition to the modules it already provides for two mainstream courses, from September, Language Centre staff will provide two modules of EAP for the new foundation courses being run by other university departments.

The design of the ten-week and six-week pre-session courses is clear and fit for purpose. Students in the focus group felt not only were they improving their English, but they were also being well prepared for their future studies.

There are new opportunities for one-to-one feedback from tutors during timetabled independent learning sessions and there is organised peer-supported learning in fortnightly PALS sessions.

The teaching observed was found to be of a good standard, so the Language Centre retains its area of strength in *Teaching*.

Welfare and student services

Students felt they were being well cared for. They are accommodated in university residences that were inspected and found to be good in the first inspection. Students confirmed this finding. They are enjoying a one-day excursion per week as part of the course and they also have the opportunity to take part in Student Union trips and social events.

Safeguarding under 18s

There are no under 18s enrolled on the current pre-session course; nevertheless, all requirements for care of under 18s are in place.

Action taken on points to be addressed

Points from the previous full inspection and/or subsequent spot checks or interim visits with comments (in bold) to indicate how far these have been addressed.

Points which must be addressed within six months

Care of under 18s

C2 (S2) The designated safeguarding lead currently only has basic level training.

Addressed. The designated safeguarding lead is trained to specialist level.

C4 (S4) Language centre staff are not currently DBS checked.

Addressed. The DBS status of all Language Centre staff has been checked.

Other points to be addressed

Management

M5 (M8) Checking revealed that the application of human resources policies and procedures for recording and filing of documentation was inconsistent and exposed some significant gaps, for example, up-to-date contracts for all staff were not available to be seen.

Addressed. Staff files were seen to be well ordered with all necessary documents in place.

M6 (M8) Personnel files showed inconsistent filing of documents required by the human resources policies, for example, references for only two members of staff were seen and very few original certificates of qualification were in evidence; those seen had not been signed or dated.

Addressed. Staff files showed that this inconsistency had been addressed and files were in order with a useful checklist of requirements stapled to the front of the folder.

M22 (M22) Some photographs in the brochure would benefit from captions.

Addressed. Photographs in the brochure that are not self-evident have been captioned.

M24 (M24) The maximum class size for the summer pre-session course is not given and the minimum age is not stated for any course.

Partially addressed. The brochure states that classes will normally contain no more than 16 students.

Official university policy is that there is no stated minimum age for students as the university has no stated minimum age.

Resources and environment

R3 (P2) The arrangement of desks in rows in some classrooms was not as conducive to language learning as other more flexible configurations of furniture.

Addressed. This point had been noted. In the classes observed, tables were arranged in island formation.

R5 (P5) Signage in the Richmond Building and the Horton Building is confusing. There is no dedicated language centre noticeboard. This is partly due to the lack of a clear territorial identity for the centre, which currently does not have a high visible profile.

Addressed. The Language Centre has a clearer territorial identity with large clear signage and a well-organised noticeboard. The opening of the Skills Corner has added to the profile of the Language Centre and provides students with a home base. Signage in the Richmond and Horton Buildings is a university matter.

Conclusions

The Language Centre has maintained the high standards noted at the first inspection and has satisfactorily addressed all points to be addressed that are within its control.
