Organisation name | University of Dundee
---|---
Inspection date | 3 November 2016

## BACKGROUND

### Organisation profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection history</th>
<th>Dates/details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First inspection</td>
<td>27–29 October 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last full inspection</td>
<td>27–29 October 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsequent spot check (if applicable)</td>
<td>N/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsequent supplementary check (if applicable)</td>
<td>N/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsequent interim visit (if applicable)</td>
<td>N/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other related non-accredited activities (in brief) at this centre</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other related accredited schools/centres/affiliates</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other related non-accredited schools/centres/affiliates</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Current accreditation status and reason for spot check

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current accredited status</th>
<th>Accredited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reason for spot check</td>
<td>Routine: newly accredited institution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Premises profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address of main site</th>
<th>The English for International Students Unit, 1 Airley Place, University of Dundee, Nethergate, Dundee DD1 4HN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Details of any additional sites in use at the time of the inspection</td>
<td>Other buildings on the university campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of any additional sites not in use at the time of the inspection</td>
<td>N/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sites inspected</td>
<td>1 Airley Place, Dalhousie Building (the main teaching building for English for International Students to check health and safety matters and meet a group of students), the Enquiry Centre (to check accommodation matters), and Tower Building (to check human resource matters).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Student and staff profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At inspection</th>
<th>In peak week November 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total ELT/ESOL student numbers (FT + PT)</td>
<td>395 (19 full-time pre-sessional, 376 part-time in-sessional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum age (including closed group or vacation)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical age range</td>
<td>20–24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical length of stay</td>
<td>One year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominant nationalities</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of teachers on eligible ELT courses</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of administrative/ancillary staff</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Background

The English for International Students Unit (EIS) was first inspected in October 2015. Although strengths were noted in student administration, quality assurance, premises and facilities, learning resources, academic staff profile, course design and teaching, accreditation was not awarded because there was a need for improvement in the care of students and the Care of under 18s section was not met. The university was asked to satisfactorily address these findings before accreditation could be awarded. The action plan sent by the programme leader was approved in March 2016 and accreditation was awarded, but only for adult provision. It was recommended that a spot check inspection should take place at a time when under 18s were enrolled in order to assess this aspect of provision and the effects of the improvements outlined in the action plan. The Accreditation Unit was subsequently informed that no under 18s would be enrolled in the 2016–17 academic year and that foundation programmes, where under 18s were most likely to be enrolled, would be outsourced to a private provider and therefore not included in the university of Dundee accreditation, and would not be covered by any spot check inspection. In the light of this information, the university was informed that a routine spot check inspection would take place within the following 12 months. The reporting inspector from the first inspection was asked to carry out the routine spot check.

English language provision is available as full-time pre-sessional courses of varying lengths throughout the year, and especially in the summer, for students preparing to start mainstream discipline undergraduate and postgraduate study. In both semesters, a full programme of in-sessional language and study support modules is provided for all international students in the university.

English language teaching is managed by the EIS programme leader and is delivered through the Directorate of Student Services.

Preparation

The EIS programme leader was contacted at the end of October to check on the availability of key members of staff and to request information about current staffing, courses and students. In order to ensure that specific members of staff would be available and to give the programme leader time to arrange cover for her teaching, three days’ notice of the visit was given. The university website was checked the day before the inspection.

Programme and persons present

The inspection took place on Thursday 3 November, starting at 12.00 and finishing at 16.15. The programme included meetings with the EIS programme leader, the director of student services, the head of enquirer and applicant communications, the residences officer, a manager of the Dalhousie Building, a human resources officer and the EIS administrator. Focus groups were held with teachers and students. A short feedback session was provided for the EIS programme leader at the end of the inspection.

FINDINGS

Changes

Foundation programmes are in the process of being outsourced to a private provider. Recruitment for these courses will begin in April 2017 for the 2017–18 academic year. No foundation students have been enrolled by the EIS Unit for this academic year.

The minimum age for pre-sessional and in-sessional provision has been set at 18.

Courses

At the time of the spot check inspection visit, EIS was running two groups of full-time students on a ten-week pre-sessional course. It had run ten-week and five-week pre-sessional courses in the summer and was about to start a five-week pre-sessional for students planning to begin their academic discipline studies in January.

The unit’s main provision is the extensive in-sessional language and study skills support modules offered to all international students across the university.

Although foundation programmes for academic year 2016–2017 are currently advertised through the EIS web pages, no students have been recruited so there were no courses running at the time of the spot check.

Staff

The very well-qualified teaching team has been joined by two additional members of staff who are equally well qualified. The director of student services had become the direct line manager of the EIS programme leader.
POINTS TO BE ADDRESSED

Points to be addressed from the previous inspection report with comments (in bold) to indicate how far these have been addressed.

Points which must be addressed within six months

Welfare and student services

W1 Records examined at the main teaching building on the university campus showed no evidence of any fire evacuation drill since July 2014.

Addressed. No evidence was seen of fire evacuation drills carried out in 2016 but evidence was seen of two actual fire emergency incidents in May and August 2016 which involved evacuation of the building. A full report of a fire evacuation drill due to take place later in November was received subsequent to the spot check visit.

Other points to be addressed

Management

M3 The role description document for programme co-ordinators needs to be more specific in order to reflect more fully their work with international students and English language provision.

Not yet addressed although discussions about the contractual status of the two members of staff concerned is on going.

M8 The EIS programme leader has not been trained as a reviewer and there is no system of reviewee training currently in operation.

Addressed. The EIS programme leader has been trained and a system of reviewee training is now in place.

M13 There is no clear procedure for rapid access to emergency contact details out of office hours.

Addressed. There is a fully operational system in place for dealing with student emergencies. This includes access to emergency contact details which are recorded on the university’s management information system.

M15 The conditions and procedures under which a student may be asked to leave the course are expressed in language which could be difficult for some second language students to fully understand.

Addressed. A set of explanatory notes has been produced in much simpler language and is an important addition to the student handbook. Students are required to sign to say they have read and understood the document and are encouraged at induction to ask for clarification if needed.

M21 There are a number of spelling, punctuation and syntax errors on the website.

Partially addressed. The website has been re-designed and, although much improved, still contains a few errors.

M24 The minimum age for courses can only be found on the enrolment page.

Partially addressed. The minimum age is now found on the page for each course. It is clearly stated in one section of the page that the minimum age for the course is 18. Further down the page, however, a section states that the minimum enrolment age is 17 and refers parents to a link to the safeguarding policy, all of which is no longer relevant to students applying for EIS courses, is contradictory, and could be confusing.

M25 Information about deposits, payment of fees, and refund policy, including the arrangements and deadlines for cancellation, is not easy to find on the website.

Partially addressed. Although this information remains difficult to find on the website the information is made very clear once an application has been received.

M26 There is not enough information about the differences between residences on the website.

Addressed. The accommodation website provides detailed information about all residences and includes a clear comparison grid.

M27 Not enough is said about the university-wide sport and social opportunities available to students.

Addressed. The website pages covering Student Life, including short video links, provide detailed information about university-wide sport and social activities.

Resources and environment

R4 Students regretted the lack of more healthy choices in the food outlets.

Addressed. Although most students in the focus group bring their own food for lunch and are very appreciative of the microwave ovens available, others had no complaints about choices in the food outlets.

R5 There is no noticeboard for EIS students.

Not yet addressed although there has been some discussion about possible sites.

Teaching and learning

T8 In the case of some short-notice staff absence, classes may be cancelled.

Not yet addressed. Although a cover rota was set up successfully for summer courses as a pilot scheme, this has not been extended into term-time.

T10 There have been no recent in-house EIS CPD sessions.

Not addressed.
Welfare and student services
W4 The policy is expressed in language which would not be easily understood by students with limited English language proficiency.
Addressed. A set of explanatory notes providing a clear description of abusive behaviour and explaining the disciplinary policy, written in simpler language, has been produced and is included in the student handbook. See M15 above.
W6 Information on how to get to Dundee is not easy to find on the website. There is no information on how to get to the university or residential accommodation from the railway station in Dundee.
Addressed. This information is readily available on the website under the heading Travel to Dundee. It includes a map showing routes from the station to all residences.
W13 Confirmation letters for students living in the residence furthest from the campus do not include information on the time involved or the cost of travel between the residence and the campus.
Addressed. Although not covered in the confirmation letter, the accommodation pages on the website give details of distance from the campus for all residences, and travel times and bus numbers for those which are not within walking distance.
W24 Students are not informed proactively of the implications of living in bed-sits or flats.
Addressed. The Dundee University Student Association, which deals with private accommodation, provides this information on the website and also has a useful booklet on the subject.
W28 Risk assessments for trips organised by EIS do not include risks associated with the use of transport.
Addressed. The risk assessment template includes a section devoted to risks associated with the use of transport.

Points to be addressed arising from this visit
M6 Some of the copies of teachers' certificates have not been endorsed.
M24 The minimum age for enrolment on EIS courses is stated as both 17 and 18 on the website.

CONCLUSIONS

Although there is no system of cover for absent staff and no in-house CPD sessions have taken place since the last inspection, the EIS Unit and the university continues to provide well for international students in language and study support as well as in other service areas, which ensures that students have an interesting, comfortable and safe experience while studying in Dundee.

RECOMMENDATION

The next inspection falls due in 2019; there are no grounds for bringing this forward.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Changes to summary statement
The need for improvement in the area of care of students can now be removed.

Summary statement
The British Council inspected and accredited the University of Dundee in October 2015. 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 (18+).

The inspection report noted a need for improvement in the area of care of students.

Strengths were noted in the areas of student administration, quality assurance, premises and facilities, learning resources, academic staff profile, course design, and teaching.

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

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