

Quality Assurance Policy

ETC International College Statement

This quality assurance policy outlines our belief and commitment to ensure that ongoing quality improvement is an integral part of our organization.

ETC Training will aim for continuous improvement in the quality of all aspects of its work as part of its determination to help learners achieve the highest possible standards

- ☐ The purpose of the Quality Assurance Policy is to ensure such continuous improvement through a process of self evaluation and action planning.
- ☐ The Quality Assurance Policy and associated procedures will involve all employees and collaborative partners. The management of the process will be through the existing organisational structure. Line managers will initiate procedures within their teams and collate and agree self-assessment reports and action plans.
- ☐ The quality assurance procedures will be founded in a process of regular self-evaluation by teams in different departments, internal & external audits and observations, in addition to employer and client feedback.
- ☐ The quality procedures will seek the views and perceptions of learners and other clients for whom the services of ETC exist.
- ☐ Wherever appropriate, the procedures will promote the identification of quality standards and performance indicators against which performance can be measured, evaluated and improved for example Investors in People, Accreditation UK and ISI.

Responsibility for Implementation

- ☐ **All staff** (managers, tutors, assessors, support staff) are responsible for the implementation of the Quality Assurance Policy.
- ☐ It is the **Principal's** responsibility to ensure there is an annual review of the policy.
- ☐ It is the responsibility of all to engage positively in that review and ensure implementation.

Focus of Quality Assurance

Courses for international students

- ☐ To encourage continuous improvement in the quality of all teaching and learning programmes, thereby making learning an enjoyable activity and through this, increasing learner retention and the achievement of individual learning aims.
- ☐ To develop and sustain a diverse range of programmes across the college which provide opportunities for progression and which provide learners with experiences and wherever possible and appropriate, qualifications suited to their learning aims.

- ☐ To ensure rigorous, standardised and consistent assessment procedures against the CEFR, which meet the standards of external validating agencies.
- ☐ To provide information which supports strategic planning for ETC's business development.
- ☐ To monitor and evaluate the procedure for advising, interviewing and counselling learners at entry and throughout their time at ETC International College.
- ☐ To establish standards and monitoring procedures for providing a supportive and accessible range of services to all learners.

Staff

- ☐ To review regularly the performance, training and developmental needs of all employees through the operation of ETC's annual staff appraisal scheme.
- ☐ To offer training and development to individual staff members from Induction and throughout their employment.
- ☐ For teaching staff: to monitor and evaluate performance and developmental needs through at least one lesson observation a year.
- ☐ To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the training and development against ETC's strategic goals.

Learners

- ☐ All learners at Induction will be made aware of the quality standards at ETC.
- ☐ All learner feedback including comments in the suggestion box, New Student (Early Bird) and exit questionnaires will be analysed and acted upon.
- ☐ All learners' performance in the workplace will be monitored and evaluated.
- ☐ All learners' files will be continuously and rigorously assessed for quality.

New Procedure

The process of quality control requires **all staff** to meet on a regular basis to review their work, set standards and monitor learner perceptions and achievements.

- ☐ Quality control and analysis will be carried out against agreed criteria which will incorporate performance indicators.
- ☐ Review will be supported by analysis of learner, employees and other client (eg. agents, distributors, etc) views and perception, gathered via questionnaires, surveys and review meetings.

The outcome of these processes will provide information:

- ☐ To inform the process of ETC self assessment and development planning.

- ☐ To action plan for improvement at ETC team level.
- ☐ To highlight issues that need consideration by ETC.
- ☐ That supports ETC's business and strategic planning cycle.

Feedback on actions resulting from this quality review process will be communicated to employees via regular team and / or individual meetings.

The outcomes and action plans which result from the process will form the basis of the annual ETC Self Assessment Report.

SIGN

DATE

Additional Notes on the ETC Quality Assurance Policy

Selection of students

Students are selected on the basis of their ability to successfully complete the courses they enrol for and make a positive contribution to the courses they wish to join. This means that we will not accept extensions or re-enrolments from students who have shown a poor attitude to their studies. It also means we may have to turn down enrolments from students on the basis of their first language if we feel that the number of students in the school who speak that first language is already high and the arrival of more students with that first language would have an adverse impact on the existing students.

Successful completion of courses also depends to a large extent on the students' level of proficiency in English, so we do have to be sure that students' level of English matches the course that they wish to join.

General English courses

We do not teach beginners except on the four published start dates each year and clients must indicate in advance if they think they are beginners as we may not always be able to provide a beginner-level course.

We will accept enrolments at the elementary level from trusted consultants without requiring a pre-enrolment (barrier) test but many students enrolling at the elementary level do need to take a pre-enrolment test.

We ask every student to complete a test before accepting the enrolment. Students who enrol as Very Advanced are interviewed by the Director of Studies to ensure that there is a course available which is suitable for their needs.

We will occasionally allow students to join the course a week or two late, or finish a week or two early if their personal circumstances do not allow them to complete the

entire course and they have clearly demonstrated that they are at the level for the exam.

Specialist courses, IELTS / Cambridge FCE or CAE Exams

Students wishing to enrol on one of these courses take an English Pre-course test. If they are not at the level required for the courses currently running, or the courses we expect to be running when they are at the school, we advise them to take a general English course before starting their exam preparation course. Some students will be accepted onto an exam course even when we feel their level is too low to pass the exam if, in our judgement, we feel they will not adversely affect the other members of the class and we feel it will be of great benefit to those students. The majority of students on exam preparation courses complete the entire course at ETC.

Placement of students

General English courses

On their first day, students do a placement test which consists of speaking, writing, listening, grammar, and reading and vocabulary. Speaking tests are not always conducted for very large intakes during the summer months; teachers assess students' speaking level on the first day and inform the Director of Studies / Junior Courses Manager immediately if they feel this should affect the placement decision. Speaking scores are entered onto Academic Notes and entered into the Enrolment system. The effectiveness of day one placement tests is reviewed through an analysis of transfers in week one and progress data.

Assessment

On exam courses, students are assessed by doing practice tests, either partial tests done in class, or a full mock exam. General English students are assessed using a mixture of coursework and written tests. At the end of an 8-week general English course, students do a level test, produced by the academic management team, which is uniform for all classes at that level.

Teachers also do a test based on work completed in class; some teachers formally assess students' speaking by means of a presentation or some other form of extended production, although some teachers feel that the students' performance in class is a better reflection of their overall speaking ability.

Teachers pass on results and recommendations to the director of studies, who makes a decision about each individual student's next step. Midcourse assessment is similar, but does not involve a level test produced by the academic management team.

When students leave the school with satisfactory attendance, they receive a certificate showing their teachers' assessment of their exit level of proficiency in the five core skills of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) - listening, reading, spoken production, spoken interaction and writing - and comments on their progress during their course.

Focus on the individual

One of the primary aims of the school is to provide students with a personal

experience. This applies to all aspects of the school, not least in the classroom, where we believe it is important to focus on the needs and progress of each learner. This is built into the teaching style at the school, but it is also built into the design of the courses.

When students arrive at the school, they are usually interviewed as part of the placement test: this helps us assess their language level but also provides us with valuable information about their learning goals.

During the course, teachers conduct one-to-one tutorials with students every four weeks. This enables teachers to find out from students how they feel about their studies, discuss the students' progress; give advice on effective study skills and self-study options and set learning goals for the next four weeks.

Short-course students receive a more streamlined approach to tutorials, but still enjoy individual attention to focus on their goals and progress.

Where possible, students will be assigned teachers who will guide them through the whole of a course for at least one term. The purpose of this is to ensure continuity of support and guidance over a long period of study.

Students must all be encouraged to use English – both in-class and outside the classroom. Questionnaires completed by students have identified this as being of key importance to students. Teachers should manage their classes so as to encourage students to focus on using English and not permit side conversations in L1. All staff members should likewise encourage the use of English generally around the school premises, including at breaktimes and when students are on sports, social or cultural activities.

Students Requiring Extra Support

We try to find out before students start at the school whether they need any extra support with their studies. They may have hearing, seeing or learning difficulties, or may require assistance with mobility. While we try to provide as much extra support as we can, we cannot guarantee that we can do so with every student who requires such support.

Examples of support we can provide in the classroom include providing enlarged photocopies of course book materials (with the publisher's permission), enlarging text on the interactive whiteboard with the zoom tool (some classrooms are equipped with these whiteboards) and ensuring students with mobility issues are in classrooms on the ground floor.

Unfortunately, we cannot provide the level of support required by students who are totally blind or deaf.

If it comes to our attention that a student is dyslexic, we will make every effort possible to enable that student to benefit as much as possible from their course.

Exceptionally-talented students

Occasionally, we may encounter students whose proficiency with the language or

exceptional ability to learn the language means that it is difficult provide an appropriate level of challenge for them in the regularly scheduled classes. In such cases, teachers inform the Director of Studies, who may be able to arrange a programme of tutorials to meet those students' needs and capabilities.

University Counselling

The aim of the University counselling service at ETC is intended to provide ETC students who are considering studying at a British University with impartial help in making their university choices.

This service is offered free of charge and ETC takes no responsibility for the eventual choices made by the student. Students who have the existing help of an agent are encouraged to continue with this help so that the universities and students are only dealing with one set of information.

The majority of these students wish to study at undergraduate level and as such are over 18 and normally have a high school diploma from their own country.

The process of making the right choice for each student starts with discussions with the university counsellor regarding their criteria for selecting a university. These include; previous academic achievements, future plans, academic content of courses as well as personal preferences, such as location of the university, costs of academic fees etc.

Students are encouraged to research online for courses which best fulfil their needs and to discuss these with the counsellor.

Guidance is then given on how and when to apply, how to write a personal statement, what the referees should include, what documentation is necessary, etc.

Some students wish to study at Undergraduate level and the process of applying through UCAS applies to them. Many of the criteria for making choices are the same as above and the university counsellor works through these with the student to help them make decisions.

Quality Assurance of Academic Provision

We operate the following procedures to ensure the quality of our academic provision.

- We review all feedback on academic issues provided through Early Bird (New Student) Questionnaires, tutorials, occasional focus groups / student representation, Exit questionnaires and teachers' meetings.

Early Bird and Exit questionnaires are checked on receipt by the Academic Management Team for matters requiring immediate attention and presented immediately to the appropriate department / responsible staff member for quick response.

All student feedback provided through end of course questionnaires is also analysed by the Director and Principal.

The Academic Management Team raise any stand-out / ongoing issues in a summary report with recommendations for action to the Management Team.

- ETC aims to conduct an annual Quality Review in December of each year. This will assess the quality of learner experience from start to finish. Recommendations from this review will then be submitted to the Management Team for consideration.
- The analysis of student assessment data

ETC has always placed a strong emphasis on asking teachers to make detailed and informed judgements on the entry and exit CEFR level of students by skill area. Teachers are also required to capture this information as students progress through their course.

This level data is captured centrally and analysed by the Academic Management Team. It is the responsibility of the Director of Studies to conduct a quarterly review of this data for trends in areas such as progression rates or discrepancies by nationality. Through the review process the Director of Studies makes recommendations for management action.

Quality Assurance

A number of quality checks are conducted by the Director of Studies and Academic Management Team. These include the on-going scrutiny of teacher's level judgements and the quality of feedback provided through the tutorial system and captured in the academic notes on student registers.

Our online placement test is used as a check of the accuracy and consistency of the assessments of students. We have confidence in an assessment programme based on teachers' judgements, but recognise the value of triangulation. The Academic Management Team also reviews all end of course reports / certificates both in terms of style / presentation and in ensuring that accurate statements are produced by skill area, mapped against the CEFR.

Individual feedback is managed with teachers on a one-to-one basis. Where general development needs are identified these are typically fed back through Teacher's meetings and INSET sessions and at each staff member's annual Appraisal. The Academic Management Team conducts regular spot checks on the quality of academic notes on individual learners by teachers. Feedback on this is either channelled individually to teachers or dealt with through Teacher meetings / INSET sessions.

Performance of teachers and other members of the academic staff

Teachers and other members of the academic staff are expected to perform the duties and responsibilities in their job description to a high standard.

General

Teacher performance is assessed by a combination of classroom observation, student feedback and the Director of Studies' assessment of their overall performance based on the manner in which they are seen to perform their duties.

If there are concerns about performance, the Director of Studies will bring it to the employee's attention and explore together with the employee ways of improving performance.

If the concern is with unsatisfactory performance in the classroom, the Director of Studies will typically observe the teacher in order to identify problem areas and suggest ways of remedying them.

There will then be a further observation and monitoring of student feedback to ensure that performance has improved. If performance continues to be unsatisfactory, the employee will receive an informal warning in addition to further support such as help with planning, further developmental observations and additional training where appropriate in order to help them improve their performance. Continued unsatisfactory performance will be viewed as misconduct and the employee will be given a written warning stating the period of time during which performance must improve or the employment contract will be terminated. Please see 'Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures'.

Annual Appraisals:

Teachers (and other staff at ETC) have found these appraisals to be very useful in terms of generating ideas to promote quality. Feedback from these channels of information is reviewed by the Director of Studies and all other line managers, including the Principal and the Director.

Significant issues are identified and escalated to the Management Team (Principal / Director / Operations and Facilities Manager / Business Development Director / Training and Development Director) for action.

Teacher Observations

Teachers are observed by the Director of Studies, the Training and Development Director or another Diploma-qualified member of the Academic Management Team at least once per year.

The observer normally observes a class for at least 45 minutes and provides detailed feedback on the lesson. The feedback session typically lasts from 30 minutes to an hour.

Recommendations are made for improvement and where necessary, follow-up observations may be timetabled to ensure that adjustments have been made.

These sessions are widely regarded as useful by teachers and contribute to the high quality of teaching at the school, as well as ensuring that standards are being met.

Lesson observations may be conducted as part of the scheduled annual observation programme or scheduled in response to a concern arising from student feedback.

Last reviewed: 31st October, 2018.