



UK INSTITUTIONS

Accreditation Handbook



WORKING TOGETHER

For Quality International Education.

UK BASED. INTERNATIONAL FOCUS.

We work globally with institutions
and governments to improve the
quality of their education provision.



Students at an ASIC Accredited institution in the UK.

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Grow your international reputation and recruitment with ASIC Accreditation.

OUR CREDENTIALS

UK Government approved

ASIC is a UK Visas and Immigration (part of the UK Government Home Office) approved accreditation body for the Short-Term Study and Standard Visitor visas.

INQAAHE: The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

INQAAHE is a worldwide association of organisations that is active in the theory and practice of quality assurance (QA) in higher education (HE). ASIC is a Full Member of INQAAHE. Approved Members are independently assessed and approved by the Membership & Membership Services Committee of the INQAAHE Board.

ISO 9001:2015 Accredited

ASIC holds ISO 9001:2015 certification in recognition of our commitment to high standards in the accreditation process and internal procedures.

Please see our website for the full list: www.asic.org.uk

About ASIC



1. BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

Established in 2007, ASIC provides independent information to all interested stakeholders within the world of education through its international accreditation service of well-defined and objective benchmarking. As a result of our work globally and our philosophy of commitment to excellence, ASIC Accreditation is an internationally renowned quality assurance standard for every type of educational establishment [1].

1.2. Ethos of accreditation

ASIC Accreditation is holistic, recognising and underpinning the quality of operation at all levels of an institution's administration, governance, and learning provision. The primary objective of the accreditation process is to reward and reinforce best-practice where found and provide recommendations for further development; to aid in the continuous enhancement of internal QA processes and improvement of the student* experience. Achieving accreditation through ASIC confirms external recognition of an institution's commitment to high international standards. It illustrates to students, parents/sponsors, and stakeholders that appropriate education/training is delivered competently by staff with relevant expertise in a safe and supportive learning environment.

ASIC Accreditation is independent and unbiased, with the certification of institutions undertaken by inspectors demonstrating a wealth of knowledge and relevant experience in the sector. The inspection phases leading to accreditation are holistic, covering all aspects of the educational experience on offer (see *Appendix A: Areas of Operation*), emphasising criteria which indicate the provision of a complete student journey.

Accreditation through ASIC enables providers to demonstrate, particularly to the international student body, that it is a high-quality institution. It supports students and their parents/caregivers in making an informed choice, helping them form a complete and honest picture of the institution's offering. Students can be confident not only of receiving worthwhile qualification(s)** upon graduation but also that the institution's provision of quality resources, student support structures, and ethical practices will enrich their learning experience.

**Note, ASIC accreditation concerns all students related to your institution, international students and those who are home based - whether they require visa entry or not or are residing in the UK or not.*

***Note, ASIC Accreditation does not confer any awarding/degree-awarding powers to an institution. Area of Operation F evaluates the delivery of the courses on offer, and our checks include that qualifications have (appropriate to the model of educational offering) the relevant approvals.*

1] Refers to all educational establishments and includes (but is not restricted to) schools, colleges, universities, distance and blended learning providers, business and management schools, and training organisations.

The ASIC Accreditation Process

2. ACCREDITATION PROCESS FOR UK INSTITUTIONS

ASIC inspects the full range of provision and supporting activities offered by an institution, together with a detailed consideration of its documentation, helping to ensure a satisfactory level of operation is maintained.

2.1. The ASIC Accreditation Committee (AAC)

The AAC are responsible for making all decisions regarding the award, maintenance, and withdrawal or suspension of Accreditation. Please note that no member of ASIC staff is able to indicate, deliver, or override any decision that is made by the Committee. The AAC make decisions based on the following evidence:

- the Report submitted by the Reporting Inspector(s) after an inspection visit;
- documentation provided by the institution;
- evidence provided by official agencies;
- evidence arising from the consideration of complaints and appeals;
- updated background checks.

2.2. The Accreditation Process

There are three stages in the process, with the following timeline and fees:

- **Stage 1: Application and Review.** 1-2 weeks. *Stage 1 and 2 Fees due with Application submission.*
- **Stage 2: Inspection.** 6-8 weeks. *If the AAC awards Interim Accreditation (following the visit, Report, and Decision), the Initial Annual Accreditation Fee becomes payable.*
- **Stage 3: Inspection.** 6-8 weeks. *The Stage 3 Inspection Fee is due before the visit is confirmed. If the AAC grants Accreditation (again, following the visit, Report, and Decision), subsequent Annual Fees continue to be payable on the same date each year as the Initial Annual Accreditation Fee* (at the award of Interim).*

Fees: For full details, including any circumstance where additional fees may become due (e.g. cancellation of a pre-arranged inspection), please see the Finance Policy in *Appendix B* of this Handbook.

Timeline: The process is designed to be as unobtrusive to an institution's daily operation as possible. If the information submitted to us during Stage 1 is complete *and* an institution is immediately available for inspection at Stages 2 *and* 3, **the entire process can take as little as eight weeks to complete.** The number of weeks at each stage given above is the average period of time we find institutions take to get through the process, factoring in arranging dates for inspection. We find that there are two main reasons it can take longer:

1. There is an extended period between the award of Interim Accreditation and the Stage 3 inspection taking place (usually the case for newly operating institutions and can be no longer than 12 months).
2. The institution does not follow the process. E.g. submission of incomplete information, non-payment of fees, unavailability of dates for inspection, or simply failing to respond to ASIC communication. *We recommend that institutions assign a designated contact person to deal with ASIC correspondence regarding the process.*



STAGE 1:
Application &
Documentation



STAGE 2:
Inspection
Interim Accredited



STAGE 3:
Inspection
Fully Accredited



Four Year
Accreditation
Cycle

*Note, in some circumstances the process may differ, and, in such cases, the Annual Fee will be due from the initial award of Accreditation.



ASIC institutions range in size and type of provision across the entire breadth of the sector.

2.2.1. Stage 1

Overview: The first step is simply information gathering. If an institution is operating as it should be, it will find the process straightforward and the documentation required easy to collate.

Format: All institutions must submit the following to ASIC to begin the process:

- The Application Form (available on the ASIC website) **completed in full**; please see the form guidance notes regarding the best way to address any queries *before* submission.
- Copies of the required documentation (see Application Form).
- The relevant fees **in full** (see the Finance Policy, Appendix B).

Decision: Once submitted, the application is reviewed. If the information provided is complete and acceptable, this will take no more than one week, and the process then proceeds straight to Stage 2.

If the application (including documentation) is incomplete/insufficient, ASIC will advise either:

- The institution needs to rectify any perceived shortcomings before proceeding.
- ASIC is unlikely to accredit at this time. (The institution is welcome to re-apply once it has undertaken further development.)

On the rare occasion that providers feel they do not have everything required, we would advise that they contact the ASIC Office; we find that it is often the case that the relevant documentation does exist (e.g. under a different process name) or, in the case of newly-operating institutions, it may be that we can advise on any areas of confusion.

2.2.2. Stage 2 Inspection

Pre-inspection: After the institution successfully completes Stage 1, the ASIC Office will arrange inspection dates and send the "*Stage 2 Checklist of Documents*" for the institution to collate and make available during the visit. Once an inspection date is confirmed, the Lead Inspector will arrange for a short video conference (approx. 20-30 minutes) to take place 1-2 weeks before the visit. The pre-inspection meeting will provide guidance for staff coordinating the visit and the opportunity to ask any remaining questions. The Inspector will also send the institution the "*Preparing for Inspection*" document.

Inspection Overview: Stage 2 focuses on statutory and immigration requirements, premises and health and safety, management, adequacy of teaching resources for the advertised/planned courses, and staff and student records.

During the visit, the Inspector(s) will meet with the Owner(s)* to discuss the institution's Business Plan for ongoing operation and development; the Inspector will also discuss the format and arrangements for the Stage 3 visit.

Inspection Format: The inspection will, usually (as a minimum), be a full-day visit** by one ASIC Inspector. After the Stage 2 visit, the Inspector will compile their report and submit it to the AAC.

The remote pre-inspection meeting is for:

- Introducing the inspection stage and discussing what will be covered.
- Clarifying the requirements for a suitable room for the inspectors to use.
- Explaining how the documentation needs to be presented in the room in the order of the ASIC Areas of Operation: A, B, C etc.
- Asking for an organogram.

Summary of Inspector activities at Stage 2:

- Meet the Owner/Principal and management
- Undertake a tour of the premises
- Examine health and safety arrangements and fire-risk related records
- Survey the library (where appropriate)
- Evaluate IT provision for staff and students
- Assess classroom facilities, laboratories, and audio-visual equipment (where applicable)
- Visit student common/refreshment areas and any institution-owned accommodation
- Inspect administration systems and process
- Confirm all "*Stage 2 Checklist*" documents are satisfactory

Decision: The ACC will consider the evidence and determine one of the following outcomes:

1. **Award Interim Accreditation** for a total period not exceeding 12 months (during which the Stage 3 Inspection must occur). The initial Annual Accreditation Fee (*Appendix B*) will become due. At this stage, the institution may then proceed straight to Stage 3.
2. **Defer the Decision** as it is perceived that there are some weaknesses in provision. ASIC will notify the institution of the conditions to satisfy and will (usually) give a three-month period for these to be fulfilled; when met, the institution will submit its evidence. [1] The AAC will meet to decide on the award of Interim.
3. **Refuse Accreditation** on the grounds that there are serious shortcomings in provision. In this case, the institution has the Right of Appeal (*Section 7*).

*If the Owner is unavailable, the Inspector will meet with the Principal and senior management (and meet the Owner at Stage 3).

**Please note that the Stage 2 Inspection and the Stage 3 Inspection are separate visits and may not be combined.

[1] Documentation/photographs to demonstrate the institution has made the required improvements. In some cases, the AAC may decide a further visit to the institution is required to verify any evidence submitted. (There will be a charge for this visit, as per the Finance Policy.)



2.2.3. Stage 3

Pre-inspection: The ASIC Office will arrange inspection dates and send the "Stage 3 Checklist of Documents." Again as above, once an inspection date is confirmed, the Lead Inspector will arrange a short remote meeting.

Overview: Stage 3 will evaluate criteria from all eight Areas of Operation (see "ASIC UK Standards for Accreditation") with particular emphasis on academic matters, including teaching and learning, resources and quality management, student welfare, and reporting to official bodies. The Inspector(s) will also evaluate whether the institution has resolved the issues (if any) identified during Stage 2. To assist with further development, the Inspector will encourage institutions to look for ways in which they might continue to improve their provision and provide recommendations to help achieve this.

Format: This varies in relation to the institution's size, nature, location, and complexity of provision. The visit is usually one day for smaller providers, and larger institutions (more than 1000 Full-Time Equivalent students (FTEs) with an extensive academic programme) may require two days. The number of visiting inspectors will also depend on the above criteria.

During the visit, the Inspector(s) will hold meetings with the senior management team, administration and teaching staff (without management present) and with a group/groups of students (without staff present). Teaching and lesson observation will occur, along with the inspection of learning resources, student/staff refreshment facilities, and any accommodation owned by the institution. [1]

Please note, ASIC expects institutions to tell staff and students about the visit, making them aware of the likelihood of lesson observations and that they may receive a request to meet with the Inspector(s).

The Stage 3 report covers each of the eight Areas of Operation, identifying points of strength and highlighting areas of good practice. It also details any areas to be improved/addressed, summarised under the heading, "Conditions, Recommendations, and Suggestions to the Institution."

The remote pre-inspection meeting is for:

- Introduction to the inspection stage and discussing what will be covered.
- Asking the institution to identify which lessons will be delivered during the inspection period and provide a timetable.
- Highlighting that the institution will need to identify the teaching and administration staff available to meet with the Inspector(s).
- Reminding the institution that groups of students must also be available to meet the inspector(s) without members of staff.
- Clarifying the requirements for a suitable room for the inspectors to use during the inspection.
- Explaining that documentation needs to be presented in the room in the order of the ASIC Areas of Operation: A, B, C etc.
- Asking for an organogram (if changes have occurred since Stage 2).

Summary of Inspector activities at Stage 3:

- meet the Principal and management team (and the Owner*if this did not occur during the Stage 2 visit);
- meet a representative group of administration and teaching staff - without any senior management present;
- meet course/subject leaders (if applicable);
- observe several teaching sessions;
- meet 1-2 representative groups of students (depending on the number of FTEs) - without any staff present;
- inspect the administration systems;
- confirm all mandatory documentation** is present, adhered to, and meets requirements (all documentation from the Stage 2 and 3 "Checklist of Documents" must be available for the Inspector to view);
- hold a concluding meeting with the Principal at the end of the visit to discuss findings and next steps.***

[1] **Students must be present and classes running for the Stage 3 Inspection to occur:** we signpost this requirement throughout all documentation regarding the process, and it is highlighted in emails to the institution when arranging the inspection. If, when our inspectors arrive, an institution informs us that students are not available to meet or classes are not running on that day, we will need to return when students are on site. The institution will be charged accordingly for the incomplete and subsequent re-arranged visits.

*If the Owner is unavailable at this stage, the institution must provide a reasonable explanation to ASIC beforehand; a person authorised to speak on behalf of the Owner is to be identified and present for the Stage 3 meeting.

**Inspectors may request to see additional items of documentation or systems during the visit as part of the organic nature of the inspection.

***The Inspector can not indicate the outcome of the visit and decision to award accreditation; the Decision lies solely with the AAC.

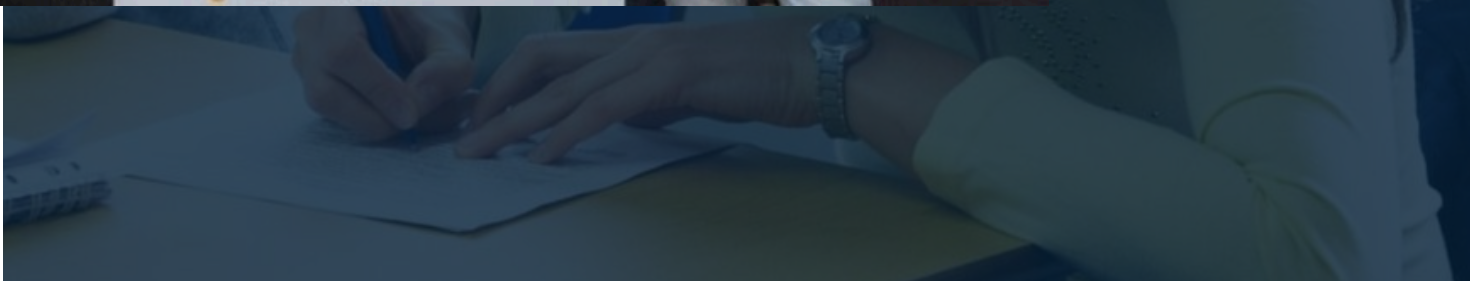
Decision: Once the Accreditation Advisor has checked and edited the Final Report, the AAC will meet to determine one of the following outcomes:

1. **Award full Accreditation** for four years (not to be exceeded, Re-accreditation must occur before the period of accreditation lapses.) The initial or subsequent Annual Accreditation Fee will become due at this stage, depending on the status of previous annual fee payments (see *Appendix B*).
2. **Defer the Decision** as it is perceived that there are some weaknesses in provision. ASIC will notify the institution of the conditions to satisfy and will (usually) give a three-month period for these to be fulfilled; when met, the institution will submit its evidence. [1] The AAC will then meet to make the Decision.
3. **Refuse Accreditation** on the grounds that there are serious shortcomings in provision. In this case, the institution has the Right of Appeal (*Section 7*).

[1] Documentation/photographs to demonstrate the institution has made the required improvements. In some cases, the AAC may decide that a further visit to the institution is required to verify the evidence submitted. (There will be a charge for this visit, see the Finance Policy.)



ASIC Accredited Institution, City College Oxford.



2.3. Premier Status

ASIC Premier Accredited Institutions: When an institution demonstrates excellent practice in particular areas, at the point of awarding Full Accreditation, the AAC will also confer "ASIC Premier Status" to the institution; the Certificate of Accreditation and entry in the ASIC Directory will reflect this designation. Please see the "ASIC UK Standards for Accreditation" (available on the ASIC website) for the criteria for gaining Premier Status.

It is also possible for Accredited Institutions to upgrade their status to Premier during the course of the accreditation period by improving their provision in the areas outlined as commendable and providing the evidence required to ASIC. More information regarding the process for this is available from the ASIC Office.

2.4. Accreditation of new institutions

Newly established providers will be able to meet the criteria to successfully complete Stages 1 and 2 (as detailed in the previous section); at this point, the award of Interim Accreditation, of **up to** twelve months, allows the institution the time to recruit at least one significant cohort of students. As soon as the institution has classes of students running, they should then be able to demonstrate that their provision fulfils all of the necessary conditions to satisfy the Stage 3 criteria.

New institutions should contact the ASIC Office for further information and guidance.

Decision: The process leading to the award of Accreditation for a new institution is as outlined in *Section 2.3.2.*, and all applicable Fees are in the Finance Policy (*Appendix B*). The Stage 3 Inspection will occur during the Interim Period, once the institution has informed ASIC that the recruitment of students has been successful and classes have begun. When the institution has demonstrated that its full range of provision meets the required standards, the AAC will award full Accreditation, again, as described above in *Section 2.3.3.*



Classroom of ASIC Accredited Institution, Imagine English.

After the award of Accreditation

3. POST-AWARD SERVICE AND MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION

As with all partnerships, both sides must fulfil the necessary conditions to maintain a successful working relationship. The following sections detail ASIC's service commitments and the ongoing requirements the institution must meet to maintain Accreditation.

3.1. ASIC Service Commitments

3.1.1. ASIC UK Directory listing and Institution Profile on the ASIC website

The online Directory entry includes the provider's address, website, and contact details to help students and other stakeholders to find the institution when searching for an accredited provider/confirm the accreditation status of the institution. The additional Institution Profile area is designed to encourage those who discover the institution through the ASIC listing to contact the institution or navigate to its website to learn more.

3.1.2. Use of the ASIC Badge of Accreditation

The ASIC Accreditation Logo and Authorised Wording (along with the ASIC Brand Guidelines) are for institutions to use in student recruitment and marketing activities. Different logos are supplied for Interim Accreditation and full Accreditation.

*If the institution chooses to discontinue its relationship with ASIC **or** has its award of Accreditation withdrawn by the AAC, it may no longer use the Badge/Wording; the institution must remove them from its website and promotional materials with immediate effect.*



Example of the ASIC Accreditation Logo for use by fully Accredited Institutions

In using the Badge and Wording, the institution agrees to follow the ASIC Brand Guidelines (and any README files sent with the resources).

Following them will help providers use the resources provided with confidence.

Institutions will also receive a Marketing Pack with the Logo, Authorised Wording, and ASIC Brand Guidelines, containing useful ideas on how to use the Logo across their promotional activities to help them get the most out of their accredited status in their student recruitment and marketing activities.



Example College has been awarded ASIC Accreditation.

Example College is excited to announce that we have been awarded full Accreditation, with commendables, by the Accreditation Service for International Schools, Colleges and Universities (ASIC).

[READ MORE](#)

3.1.3. Ongoing advice and ASIC Support Services

There are numerous benefits to holding ASIC Accreditation, many of which are free at point-of-access (with costs covered by the Annual Fee). Key benefits are:

- On achieving accredited status, institutions receive an email introducing their dedicated ASIC Customer Relations point of contact, who will provide friendly and responsive assistance with any queries the institution has throughout the accreditation period. They are also the person the institution should communicate with regarding any changes in operation and contact details (see *Section 3.2.1.*).
- ASIC Call Support: ASIC will call/email several times a year to see how the institution is doing, ask if there is anything ASIC can help with, and let the institution know about upcoming events and other helpful ASIC/Partner services.
- The provision of ongoing support for business development, quality enhancement, and international partnership development
- Free access to various ASIC-run seminars/webinars/CPD training/other events.
- Discounted attendance rates for Partner services, events, and training
- Access to ASIC Newsletter

N.B. As the details for ASIC Events and Services, and those of our Partners, are time sensitive/subject to change, the above is not an exhaustive list of available benefits. More comprehensive, up-to-date information is available through our newsletters, website, and by contacting the ASIC Office.

3.1.4. Priority access to additional enhancement services

Opportunities to further develop your provision are available through supplementary services, e.g. ASIC International Education Conferences and ACS Consultancy (see ASIC website for more). Additional fees will apply to use these services, but we endeavour to offer priority access or provide discounts and other options exclusive to our accredited institutions.



ASIC International Education Conferences, Bali Regional Conference 2019.

3.2. Accredited Institution Commitments

3.2.1. Actions required by an institution to maintain Accredited Status

The following conditions ensure that the institution continues to operate in a manner that protects its students and staff, maintains its ASIC Accredited Status, and upholds the institution's reputation and standing:

- Maintain the Standards of Accreditation and inform ASIC within 30 days of any significant changes to the institution's operation, e.g. in ownership and senior management, or to the location of main premises (and use of any new premises) and the courses on offer. *If there are any queries as to whether a change is significant, the institution's ASIC Point of Contact will be able to advise accordingly.*
- Assist with providing any information or evidence required by ASIC to fulfil its role of oversight, including the obligation to assist with any investigation into substantiated complaints made against the institution.
- Adhere to the ASIC Code of Conduct and Ethics (available on the ASIC website).
- Payments of all required fees are made, on time, as stated in the terms detailed on any invoice issued and within the Finance Policy, *Appendix B*.
- Submit a completed Annual Return Form (sent by ASIC yearly in October) for each year of accreditation.
- Must not misrepresent their Accredited Status in any way which would be considered misleading or damage ASIC's reputation.
- Follow the Brand Guidelines and instructions provided with the ASIC Badge and Authorised Wording.

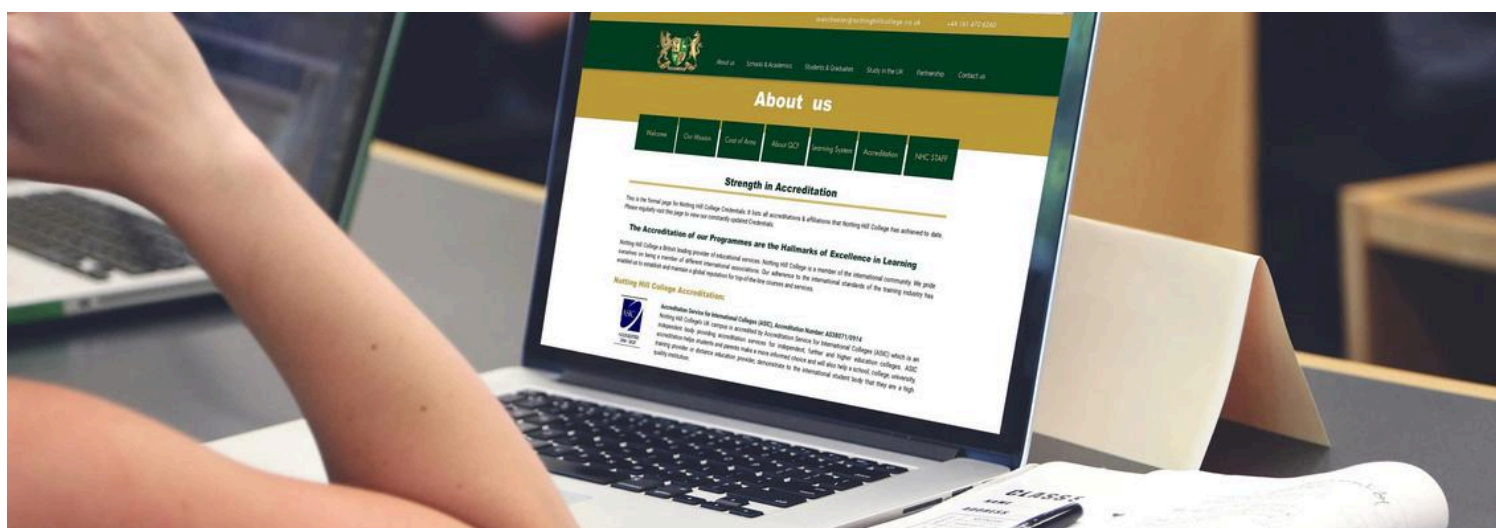
ASIC reserves the right to remove accreditation and the right to withdraw permission to use the Accreditation Logo, Wording, and Resources at any time. If an institution fails to meet any of the requirements listed above or declines to follow the ASIC Code of Ethics and Conduct and Brand Guidelines, unfortunately, this may lead to the removal of an institution's accredited status (*Section 6*). *If the AAC determines that an institution should lose its ASIC Accreditation, the institution has the right to appeal the decision (Section 7).*

3.2.2. Misuse of Accreditation status with regards to associated/partnered institutions

ASIC Accreditation pertains only to the accredited institution. It cannot be conferred or associated, in any way, with another institution or organisation (this includes other uninspected satellite campuses or institutions owned by/related to the accredited institution). Any advertisement of ASIC Accreditation status must relate only to the institution awarded as such by the AAC. The institution may not allow associated/partner institutions to state or imply that they are, in any way, linked with or benefit from the institution's award of Accreditation.

Note on Badge of Accreditation use: ASIC permits the use of the Accreditation Logo and Resources* by accredited institutions only. **Permission for use does not grant ownership; institutions cannot authorise the use of the Logo or Resources to others.** If any partner of an ASIC institution wishes to demonstrate affiliation, partnership, or accreditation (or any other type of recognition by ASIC) they must seek their own relationship with us.

*The ASIC Brand Guidelines contain more detailed information about how to use the Badge and Resources.





3.3. Post-accreditation inspections and impromptu visits

3.3.1. Reasons for mandatory post-accreditation inspections or impromptu visits

Sometimes it will be necessary for ASIC to inspect or visit an institution after they have gained Accreditation; the reasons for this include:

- To verify a change of circumstances, e.g. a move of premises (see *Section 3.2.1.*).
- To make an impromptu site visit in response to a concern regarding the institution's operation, a complaint about the institution, or a lack of reply to ASIC communication.
- A random spot-check.

Note: Fees will apply for some types of post-accreditation inspection, invoiced in accordance with the Finance Policy (Appendix B).

3.3.2. Change of Circumstance inspections

An inspection will be likely if significant changes occur in operation after the award of Accreditation. Sometimes the assessment may occur remotely; however, if ASIC needs to inspect due to the institution moving to new premises/opening additional premises, an onsite visit is required to ensure the institution meets the statutory requirements of Accreditation at the new facilities.

The fees and terms of payment for any mandatory Change of Circumstance inspection are per the Finance Policy (Appendix B) and the invoice issued.

These changes include (but are not exhaustive, see *Section 3.2.1.*):

- Change of ownership
- Changes to/appointment of new senior staff
- Introduction of several new courses (affecting more than 40% of the enrolment)
- Major expansion plans for the existing premises, a move to new premises, or the opening of a satellite campus/other additional premises

3.3.3. Impromptu site visits

An impromptu site visit is (usually) unannounced. A visit may occur due to significant changes (as listed above) and is likely to be an unannounced visit if:

- the institution fails to notify ASIC of any significant changes (which ASIC then learns of independently);
- there is concern that the institution is no longer operating in accordance with the requirements of holding ASIC Accreditation.

Note fees will apply for some types of post-accreditation inspection, invoiced in accordance with the Finance Policy (Appendix B).

ASIC Complaints Procedure

4. COMPLAINTS AGAINST ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS

ASIC will consider genuine and relevant complaints made where the complainant has exhausted the institution's own complaints procedure and feels the response is inadequate. We take our role as a mediator seriously and will make every effort to recommend acceptable solutions for both parties.

4.1. Making a complaint

Complaints may be submitted via letter or email to the ASIC Customer Relations Manager (CRM) and must:

- Identify the complainant, including name, address, email, and telephone number.
- Explain the basis of the complaint, which must relate to an alleged failure to comply with the accreditation criteria.
- Include full evidence (including all correspondence, e.g. emails, call logs) of action taken to follow the institution's complaints procedure.

We are unable to participate in arbitration where a complaint falls outside of our remit, e.g. a contract dispute, or where the relevant body to deal with the complaint supersedes ASIC, e.g. a criminal complaint (we will assist with external investigations where appropriate).

4.2. Procedure for complaints

On receipt of the above, the CRM will send a letter/email to request that the complainant:

- Confirms that they have followed the institution's complaints procedures without being able to resolve the issue to their satisfaction (or can demonstrate this is not relevant).
- Authorises ASIC to investigate the complaint.

Note - Inappropriate complaints:

ASIC will not investigate a complaint where:

- The complaint is not relevant to accreditation/not within ASIC's remit.
- The complainant did not attempt to follow the institution's complaints procedure.
- The complaint is made anonymously or by telephone with no willingness to submit in writing via letter/email, see *Section 4.1*.
- The evidence provided is insufficient or the complainant withholds/doctor's evidence.
- The complainant has sought legal advice/commenced legal proceedings against the institution (therefore superseding ASIC's involvement).
- A contractual agreement exists that negates the institution's refund procedures.
- The complainant did not ensure that the course met their needs/check the awarding body has appropriate recognition for their requirements before* enrollment.
- There is a contract dispute between the institution and its employee(s).

**Students should be encouraged to look carefully (and institutions should be particularly mindful to provide clarity where language barriers/cultural differences exist) at the refund policy and complaints procedures before signing an acceptance offer to avoid any future misunderstanding.*

4.2.1. ASIC and Institution action:

1. The ASIC Office officially logs the complaint, and its receipt is acknowledged.
2. ASIC reviews the evidence submitted. The complainant may need to provide further evidence as required.
3. ASIC contacts the principal/owner (the institution must cooperate with the attempted resolution of any complaint upheld by ASIC, see *Section 3.2.1*.) to investigate the complaint, who must then respond with the outcome of their investigation within ten working days. The response (by correspondence and, if necessary, a meeting between the principal/owner and the complainant) must detail the complaint and propose a resolution. ASIC will review the response to ensure the institution is adhering to its accreditation commitments.

4.2.2. Outcome: ASIC informs the complainant of the outcome and any recommendations made to the institution or will decide to investigate further; an inspector will then make an unannounced visit to assess the situation more thoroughly. In appropriate cases, ASIC will inform UKVI of genuine complaints and the result of any investigation.

Removal of Accreditation

5. WITHDRAWAL OR REMOVAL OF ACCREDITATION BY THE AAC

Holding ASIC Accreditation is conditional; an institution must continue to uphold the Standards by which it gained Accredited Status and all obligations listed in *Section 3.2.* of this handbook. ASIC is happy to discuss situations as they arise, where appropriate, and will give a reasonable period for any issues to be resolved.

5.1. Reasons for Removal of Accreditation

ASIC reserves the right to withdraw Accreditation if the institution:

- No longer meets the Accreditation criteria (ASIC Standards of Accreditation).
- Fails to adhere to the *Section 3* requirements of the ASIC Handbook.
- Makes false claims/engages in misrepresentation in its publications (including on its website), particularly concerning professional memberships and accreditations.
- Fails to disclose malpractice.
- Refuses to pay any of its required ASIC Fees - on time and according to the Finance Policy (*Appendix B*) and any additional payment terms.

ASIC will also withdraw Accreditation when it receives substantiated complaints from students/stakeholders, and after investigation, ASIC finds that the institution is not meeting the Accreditation criteria.

The reasons outlined here are not exhaustive. ASIC reserves the right to remove Accreditation if it feels the institution is not upholding the high standards of provision required or there is a perceived risk to the integrity of ASIC's reputation.

Appeals

6. RIGHT OF APPEAL AGAINST AAC DECISIONS

ASIC recognises that institutions that are refused Accreditation or have had their Accreditation withdrawn or suspended should have access to a fair and expeditious appeals process.

Should the AAC refuse to award Accreditation or suspend/withdraw Accreditation, the Chair of the AAC will contact the institution to advise the principal/owner of the decision, detailing the reasons for their decision and reminding them of their Right of Appeal. (If the Appeal is by an accredited institution, its Accredited Status remains during the appeals process.) The principal (or another appropriate representative) should then submit an appeal (with the applicable Fee, see Finance Policy, *Appendix B*) **within ten working days** of receipt of the notification from the AAC.

Note that ASIC reserves the right to remove Accreditation without Appeal in specific cases, e.g. ASIC will withdraw the Right of Appeal if an institution is found guilty of deliberately providing false information.

6.1. ASIC Appeals Procedure

6.1.2. Appeal to review the rejection of an application for Accreditation

If ASIC rejects an application after the Stage 2 Inspection, the institution can:

- Request a review of the inspection report
- Submit additional documentation responding to the reasons for rejection.

The AAC will then hold the review and consider any new documentation and decide:

1. In the institution's favour: the process will then proceed to Stage 3.
2. To uphold the AAC's original decision: the institution has the Right of Appeal as described below.

6.1.3. Appeal against the AAC decision to refuse, suspend, or remove Interim or Full Accreditation

An institution wishing to appeal against the rejection of its application or against the suspension or withdrawal of Accreditation, for whatever reason (with exceptions, such as deliberately providing false information), may request a hearing by the ASIC Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee will comprise members of the AAC, the Executive General Manager of ASIC, and Inspectors (not involved in the original decision).

The appellant must:

1. Notify ASIC of their intention to appeal **within five working days** of the original AAC Decision.
2. Submit a statement setting out the grounds for the Appeal and provide any relevant documentation - **within fifteen working days** of the notification of the intention to appeal.

The Appeals Committee will endeavour to meet no later than fifteen working days after receipt of the Appeal; the institution has the right to be represented at the meeting (which will also be attended by the Chair of the AAC).

The ASIC Appeals Committee may decide to:

- Dismiss the Appeal
- Order a new inspection of the institution (at the expense of ASIC)
- Instruct the AAC to grant/restore Accredited Status

The Chair of the Appeals Committee will submit a report of the meeting to the CEO of ASIC, giving the grounds for the decision and any recommendations that the AAC should consider.

The final decision rests with the Appeals Committee, after which there is no further Right of Appeal.

6.2. Fee related to an Appeal

The institution must pay a deposit on submission of its Appeal, as noted in the Finance Policy (*Appendix B*). If the Appeal is successful, the deposit is fully refundable.





Appendix A

THE ASIC HANDBOOK FOR UK INSTITUTIONS: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Areas of Operation:

The Areas of Operation of the ASIC Standards of Accreditation for UK Institutions, which can be downloaded in full from our website, are as follows:

- A.** Premises and Health and Safety
- B.** Management and Staff Resources
- C.** Learning and Teaching; Course Delivery
- D.** Quality Assurance and Enhancement
- E.** Student Welfare
- F.** Awards and Qualifications
- G.** Marketing and Student Recruitment
- H.** Systems Management and Compliance with Immigration Regulations

Glossary:

AAC - ASIC Accreditation Committee

CRM - Customer Relations Manager

EGM - Executive General Manager

FTEs - Full-Time Equivalents (Students)

Institution - inclusive of all types of education providers, including Schools, Further Education and TVET Colleges, Universities, Training Organisations and Business Schools.

Appendix B

ASIC FINANCE POLICY FOR UK INSTITUTIONS

Note, all applications to ASIC include a signed declaration that this policy has been read and understood.

Introduction

The cost of the process for UK institutions is detailed below. To apply for and maintain ASIC Accreditation (if awarded), it is a requirement that the institution pays all applicable fees in full in accordance with the terms stated on any invoice issued and as stated in the Finance Policy before the undertaking of services. Failure to comply with the terms of payment of the policy or invoice will lead to the termination of the application/removal of Accreditation.

Institutions must pay all fees and expenses associated with their application for ASIC Accreditation when due, before the outcome is declared. Institutions which do not adhere to this (or delay payment of the Annual Fee by more than three months, see below) will be assumed to have withdrawn from the process and will not receive Accreditation.

As there can be a delay between the payment of Fees by an institution and the receipt of Fees by ASIC, Fees will not be considered paid until the ASIC Finance Department has acknowledged receipt of payment.

a. Accreditation process and annual fees for a UK institution

(i) Stage 1 and Stage 2 Fees

The cost of the process for UK institutions is detailed below. To apply for and maintain ASIC Accreditation (if awarded), it is a requirement that the institution pays all applicable fees in full in accordance with the terms stated on any invoice issued and as stated in the Finance Policy before the undertaking of services. Failure to comply with the terms of payment of the policy or invoice will lead to the termination of the application/removal of Accreditation.

Institutions going through the process of accreditation must pay all fees and expenses associated with their application for ASIC Accreditation when due (before the outcome is declared). Institutions which do not adhere to this, or delay payment of the Annual Fee by more than three months (see below), will be assumed to have withdrawn from the process and will not receive Accreditation.

The Fees covering Stage 1 (Assessment of completed Application Form and Supporting Documentation) and Stage 2 (Inspection) are payable with the submission of the application.*

Breakdown of the amount payable:

- £300 – Application Fee
- £1,350 – Stage 2 Inspection Fee + £200 Inspection Expenses Fee (flat rate, regardless of distance/time/other)
- £350 – Stage 2 Inspector Fee

*Note, ASIC reserves the right to decline an application at any time.

(ii) Stage 3 Fee

The Fee covering Stage 3 is payable before the inspection date is confirmed.

Breakdown of the amount payable:

- £1,200 – Stage 3 Inspection Fee
- £350 – Stage 3 Inspector Fee (per inspector, per day) + £200 Inspection Expenses Fee

(iii) Annual Accreditation Fee

The Initial Annual Accreditation Fee is immediately due when either Interim Accreditation or full Accreditation is awarded (as detailed in *Section 2*). The institution must pay the Initial Annual Fee to complete the process and receive its ASIC Accredited status. The Fee level is as per the number of Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) registered at

at the institution (detailed on the completed application form).

The Annual Fee levels for the numbers of FTEs are:

- £1,200 for FTEs 0-1000
- £2,200 for FTEs 1001-2000
- £3,200 for FTEs 2001+

(iv) Subsequent Annual Fees

Payments are due on the anniversary of the institution's first Period of Accreditation (the award date for either Interim or full Accreditation, as above) for each year of its Accreditation, with the amount payable determined by the number of FTEs returned on the Annual Return Form (*Section 3.2*).

If the institution fails to submit the Annual Return Form (or a subsequent requirement for student registration numbers as FTEs are not received, ASIC will set the Annual Fee at the highest level of £3,200 - which the institution must pay immediately to maintain Accreditation.

(v) Post-accreditation Inspection Fees

Sometimes ASIC needs to inspect an institution after it has gained ASIC Accreditation (see *Section 3*); fees start from £850 per inspection (and will include the flat rate Inspection Expenses Fee of £200), depending on the reason for the visit, and are due before the inspection date is confirmed.

(vi) Impromptu visits and unannounced spot-checks: The reason for an impromptu inspection will determine the Fee charged, if any (*Section 3*), and invoiced in accordance with this policy. ASIC does not usually charge a Fee for unannounced random spot-checks; however, if ASIC finds something of concern (or needs to return due to an area of concern found) during the spot-check, a Fee for the return visit will be invoiced as above.

(vii) Re-accreditation Fee

The Fee to cover a Re-accreditation is payable before the inspection date is confirmed.

The breakdown of the amount payable is as follows,

- £1,350 – Inspection Fee
- £350 – ASIC Inspector Fee (per inspector, per day) + £200 Inspection Expenses Fee

b. Cancellation of an inspection

If the institution cancels a visit within 21 days of the scheduled date, ASIC will invoice for the Inspector Fee (£350 per inspector per day) and all expenses incurred - for immediate payment. The institution must pay the invoice before the ASIC Office can reschedule the cancelled inspection.

ASIC reserves the right to cancel an inspection without reason or recompense (at ASIC Management's discretion).

c. Refund of Fees paid to ASIC

Once an application is received and the relevant fees paid, ASIC will not issue any refunds should the institution choose to withdraw from the accreditation process. All other Fees are payable as detailed in the Finance Policy, and the ASIC Management team will only issue refunds at their discretion, where appropriate.

d. Appeals

To submit an Appeal, institutions must pay a £1,000 deposit (as per *Section 6*); the deposit is fully refundable if the Appeal is upheld.

e. Postal Charge and Administration Fee for the re-issue or resending of accreditation documentation

If the institution asks ASIC to re-issue/resend the accreditation documentation due to supplying ASIC with an incorrect address or the non-availability of someone for receipt of the documentation at the address provided,

a £50 fee is payable to ASIC. The ASIC Office will not re-issue/resend any documentation until receipt of payment.

f. Fee levels and period rises in costs

ASIC reserves the right to amend its services, processes, and all associated fees at any point as deemed necessary. Changes to accreditation fees and all other associated fees will be communicated to existing ASIC institutions via email and updates to the Finance Policy.



ASIC Premier Accredited Institution, Project International.



We are passionate
about excellence in
international education.