



INTERNATIONAL DISTANCE &  
BLENDED LEARNING PROVIDERS

# Preparing for Inspection



YOUR GUIDE TO  
Preparing for Inspection.

# Preparing for Inspection

Our Standards have been developed specifically for international institutions. Holding ASIC Accreditation indicates that your distance learning institution follows proven practices of the finest, world-leading, international institutions. ASIC Standards monitor the elements integral to the smooth functioning, quality provision, and reputational standing of an institution. They are holistic, encompassing the entirety of your distance learning institution's operation including areas such as management and governance, health, safety, and security, safeguarding, curriculum and quality of teaching, research activity and supervisory arrangements, qualifications of staff, operating procedures, and financial stability. Furthermore, we take a close look at the mission and vision at the heart of the institution and help you to develop upon your existing improvement plan.

The Standards are also intended to be used by the distance learning institution to self-assess practices and programmes. Highly qualified trained inspectors will then conduct a full accreditation visit, where they will assess Key Performance Indicators and check the appropriateness of policies and procedures to verify and provide feedback for the distance learning institution's improvement plan. We find that institutions who continually engage in self-assessment, and set goals based on our Standards and Indicators, will ensure that they provide a high-quality, rigorous, educational programme for all students.

## Guide to preparing for the evaluation visit

This guide contains step-by-step instructions that will help your institution prepare for ASIC accreditation, and other progress monitoring visits, and hopefully answer any questions you may have.

### **POINT OF CONTACT**

- When a visit is scheduled, ASIC will assign an Accreditation Team Leader. The Team Leader will be the point of contact for all inquiries regarding the accreditation process during the inspection period.
- The institution should not have any contact with any other accreditation team members.
- One person should be designated as the institution's point of contact. The ASIC Team Leader will direct all requests to that person. (Please note that this person should have the authority and time to arrange and expedite all requests.

### **GIFTS**

- The giving of gifts to the accreditation team members is NOT encouraged. If the Institution wishes to gift team members a memento, please limit this to inexpensive or Institution related items.

### **VISIT SCHEDULE**

- The institution will work with the Accreditation Team Leader in advance of the visit to determine the visit schedule.
- A short initial video conference call may be necessary at the start to explain the process.

### **PREPARING AND ORGANISING ITEMS OF EVIDENCE**

- The institution will need to prepare certain items of evidence and collate each section as shown in our standards. We do not wish to be too prescriptive in determining how standards are met. Nor do we ask you to reproduce documentation if it is available in a separate document.

*For example: if you have evidence regarding a standard related to CPD, but this is already shown in your staff handbook, simply signpost us to the relevant page and booklet and have these available.*

- Please send requested documentary evidence to the Team Leader electronically.

## HANDBOOKS AND MANUALS

- Place one original copy of: Staff and Student Handbooks, QA Manual, and Policy and Procedure Manual in the accreditation team's workroom (see below). If any of the handbooks or manuals are available online, please send the link(s) to the team leader at least two weeks prior to the inspection.

## VIRTUAL PREMISES TOUR

- The institution should provide a video walkthrough tour of the premises. This includes offices, remote teaching and recording rooms, signage (including safety), access and egress and location.
- The inspectors will pay particular attention to the environment, health and safety\* arrangements, security, and resources. (*\*Please be aware that health and safety requirements still apply to all staff even if you have no students on your premises*).

## STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

- Stakeholder meetings are conversational but guided by the inspectors.
- To achieve maximum benefit from the meetings, please encourage all stakeholders to be candid and open. (No individuals' names are used in ASIC reports.)
- The accreditation team will have video conference meetings with the various stakeholder groups during the remote inspection. The institution should prepare for all meetings according to the guidelines below.

## SCHEDULING OF MEETINGS

- The institution's point of contact should work with the Team Leader to arrange mutually convenient times and the appropriate platform (e.g., Zoom, Skype, Teams etc.) for the various meetings bearing in mind any time zone differences. Where possible, all meetings should be arranged on the same day.
- ASIC wishes to be as unobtrusive as possible to the general operation of the institution so the timings of the meetings should suit the institution's day.

### Meeting with management:

- The meeting should include (where possible) owners, directors, principals, managers, governors, and trustees etc.
- During this meeting, the institution will give an introductory presentation covering its history, an overview of the community the institution serves, and how the institution prepared for the visit.

### Meeting with academic staff:

- The staff meeting should include a mix of lecturers so that each core area and year group is represented. Also, please include one or two teachers representing elective or noncore content classes, as well as one or two counsellors.
- During this meeting, a variety of topics will be discussed with the accreditation team including the institution's curriculum, curriculum development, instructional practices, assessment programmes, management support, views on resources and facilities, workloads, staff development opportunities, and issues relating to health, safety, and security. (This will be a conversational meeting and no preparation is necessary.)
- Senior Management should not be present at the staff meetings.
- ASIC wishes to be as unobtrusive as possible to the general operation of the Institution so the timings of the meetings should suit the Institution day.

### Meeting with support staff:

- The support staff meeting should include individuals representing technicians, counsellors, facilities management, general administration, examinations, health, safety and security, and marketing etc. A variety of topics will be discussed with the accreditation team. (This will be a conversational meeting and no preparation is necessary.)

- Senior Management should not be present at the staff meetings.

### **Meeting with students:**

- The meeting with students should include a variety of students representing different programmes of study. During this meeting, a variety of topics will be discussed with the accreditation team. (This will be a conversational meeting and no preparation is necessary.)
- Where possible, a meeting with alumni may also take place.
- Senior Management (or any other members of staff) should not be present at these meetings.

### **ACCESS TO THE LEARNING MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS**

- The inspectors are to be given a remote access to the LMS and be sent links to any recorded lessons.
- The inspectors are to be given access to the administrative system to view student records, including attendance/participation records and progress records

## Inspection results

At the end of the inspection stage the Accreditation Team Leader will share some general findings from the evaluation but cannot state the outcome of accreditation. *The decision to award accreditation is the culmination of the formal ASIC Accreditation Process and is solely within the remit of the Accreditation Committee.*

### **Timeline of result:**

- Upon completing the inspection, the Lead Inspector will submit their report (within two weeks) to the Committee.
- The Committee will then meet (usually within a week) to review the submission and make a decision.
- If successful, the Institution will be awarded accreditation for four years. (If, unsuccessful the Committee will explain in writing. The Institution will have the chance to appeal if they disagree with the Committee's findings at this stage.)
- The Institution will receive notice of the decision by email, which will outline any remaining steps to take before the decision can be publicised (i.e. the payment of the annual fee or any outstanding invoices).
- When these steps are complete, the Institution will receive their official welcome email, at which point the award can be celebrated and shared publicly.