



BAS Assessment Online Procedures and Guidelines

Introduction

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, The BALEAP Accreditation Scheme (BAS) cancelled all proposed assessment visits in 2020 and extended the period of accreditation by one year for all centres due to be reassessed. While assessors were hoping to be able to visit in person in 2021, it is now expedient to offer BAS assessment wholly online until further notice. This will be reviewed again early October. Fees are the same for online and in person assessments.

The following draft procedure and guidelines explain how online assessment for institutional accreditation might work.

Aims of the Scheme

The BALEAP Accreditation Scheme is a peer-review quality assurance and quality enhancement scheme.

The aims of the Scheme are:

- To enhance the quality of learning and teaching of English for Academic Purposes (EAP);
- To ensure that EAP provision prepares students for academic study;
- To support the professional development of those involved in teaching, scholarship and research in EAP;
- To assure standards in EAP provision across the sector.

The Scheme is thus established in the interests of:

- students enrolled in EAP programmes;
- sponsors of students who study EAP;
- EAP teachers and programme managers;
- institutions where EAP programmes are delivered;
- BALEAP itself, since the Scheme seeks to provide a means of self-regulated and peer reviewed quality assurance and quality enhancement in EAP in accordance with the Articles of Association of BALEAP <http://www.baleap.org/about-baleap/articles-of-association>

Timelines for assessment

An assessment online would be carried out by 2 or 3 assessors, depending on the size of the centre to be assessed. Contact with the lead assessor normally begins 3

– 4 months before a visit to establish the deadlines for providing full documentation and a schedule for the visit. At least four weeks in advance, a formal narrative document is required, describing the EAP provision, with links to evidence in digital format (Google Docs, Dropbox, Onedrive). This enables the assessors to check they have everything they need to make a judgement about the quality of provision at the centre. A schedule of meetings during the visit is required at least two weeks in advance for assessors to check their availability.

Although in-person visits usually last over three days, starting around midday of the first day and finishing around midday of the third day, online assessments may need a longer period, up to one week to manage the variety of online meetings. The Assessors would consult the centre to agree the length of the assessment period (no longer than a week).

Following the visit, the Assessors will submit a draft report to the institution, to arrive no later than two weeks after the visit. The institution will then have two weeks to check the factual accuracy of the report. No decision on accreditation will be included in this draft report. The timeline for ratifying accreditation decisions is set out on page 5 of the current handbook.

Required documentation for online assessment

Unlike in-person visits, where assessors can ask to see paper copies of documents not supplied in advance, all documentation for online accreditation would be supplied electronically using an online application, such as Google Docs, Dropbox or Onedrive.

Centres would be responsible, in addition, for providing a narrative document to give an overview of the context of the centre and the principles under which it operates. This document would then provide links to the evidence for each criterion of assessment.

During the online visit

Most of the time during in-person visits is taken up with meetings with students, teachers, course directors, support services, colleagues from receiving departments and senior administrators, as well as observation of classroom teaching. These meetings would be conducted using online meeting applications, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. They may need to be spaced out more across a longer period up to one week.

Observations of classrooms could be done either synchronously, using online platforms, or asynchronously, using recordings of lessons provided by the centre. If synchronously Assessors would be able to ‘drop in’ to online classes and could automatically be included into class invitations. If asynchronously Centres would be asked to choose 10 – 15 appropriate lessons (depending on the size of the centre) to share with the Assessors to show the range of lesson types. Whether observations will be done synchronously or asynchronously will in some cases also depend on different time zones.

Teachers would need to provide lesson plans to show they understand the principles of the course and of EAP provision, but also to show they can be creative in tailoring

the lessons to the needs of their students. Lesson plans to accompany observed lessons should be written by the teacher and not the Course Director.

Assessors would not necessarily observe each lesson completely but could drop into classes or recordings at specific points, as they would do in-person on a visit.

At the end of an in-person visit, there is normally a debriefing session, held with whichever staff the centre decides should attend. This could be done online in Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

After the online visit

Assessors would meet and confer online to write the draft report to be sent to the centre. It is likely that Assessors would need longer than 2-3 days to finalise their final report.