



Consult the EAQUALS
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<http://www.eaquals.org/>



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Excellence through
accreditation of quality
in language learning services





The primary aim of EAQUALS is to encourage and accredit high quality in language teaching and learning in any type of institution, whatever languages are being taught, and whatever the national context.

EAQUALS is internationally recognised for its quality standards in language education and training, and for its accreditation services.

Accredited Members of EAQUALS offer a consistently high standard of language education that meet the world's language learning needs.

What can EAQUALS offer?

- ★ International accreditation based on high standards tailored to the needs of language teaching institutions.
- ★ Supportive but rigorous external quality control with a strong consultancy element, making this a rewarding professional experience.
- ★ Use of the EAQUALS accreditation logo, and market advantage as an EAQUALS Centre of Excellence.
- ★ A committed and lively network of language education professionals.
- ★ International meetings and conferences for sharing expertise and seeking collaborative partnerships.
- ★ Opportunities for participating in international language education projects.

Founded in 1991, EAQUALS is an association that fosters 'Excellence through Accreditation of Quality in Language Services'. It is a not-for-profit international association of language training providers who aim to uphold and guarantee high quality in language education.

★ To support these aims, EAQUALS has established and published a demanding set of accreditation criteria. These are laid out in the form of four charters - a General Charter, a Charter for Course Participants, and others concerning staff and information. These are used as a basis for EAQUALS' rigorous inspection scheme.

The main purposes of EAQUALS are:

- ★ Through its Charters and accreditation scheme, to provide guarantees of high quality for language learners, as well as for the learners' sponsors, employers, parents, or the funding agencies which finance their study.
- ★ To bring together providers of language education services, whether they are privately or publicly funded, and wherever they are located.
- ★ To seek to encourage greater awareness of consumer rights and quality issues in language learning, both among those providing language education services and among those using them.
- ★ To assist national and international bodies to develop accreditation schemes for those providers that may not yet be ready to meet EAQUALS standards.
- ★ To provide support through self assessment, management training and consultancy for any language teaching institution which has a genuine desire to raise its standards.

EAQUALS is recognised as an international non-governmental organisation and has been granted Participatory Status by the Council of Europe. It subscribes to the Council of Europe's principles on Language Learning for European Citizenship:

- ★ to facilitate the free movement of people and ideas across Europe;
- ★ to increase mutual knowledge and understanding among all European people;
- ★ to increase the quantity and quality of international cooperation; to combat prejudice and intolerance towards peoples of different languages and cultures;

EAQUALS contributes to Council of Europe language projects, and is consulted by the European Commission on matters related to language education. It has memoranda of cooperation with the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) and with the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE), and has Liaison Status with two International Standards Organisation (ISO) committees.

EAQUALS Accreditation

Accreditation by EAQUALS is the primary means by which providers of language courses can demonstrate their compliance with high international standards designed specifically for language education services. Accreditation by EAQUALS and full membership are granted only after a rigorous quality assessment process. The main element of this process is an EAQUALS inspection based on transparent assessment criteria derived from the EAQUALS Charters. Inspections also provide independent consultancy to help maintain the momentum of continuous improvement.

FIVE REASONS WHY STUDENTS, THEIR PARENTS AND THEIR AGENTS CHOOSE EAQUALS INSTITUTIONS

1. Legal requirements, reliability and truthfulness:

- ★ Complete legality of the operation and compliance with local regulations are basic requirement for EAQUALS accreditation.
- ★ EAQUALS members are also required to provide clear, accurate and complete information about all aspects of the courses and services offered.

2. Accreditation guarantees and appropriate standards:

- ★ EAQUALS members are committed to providing well planned and enjoyable learning opportunities for their course participants and to exceeding minimum standards in all areas of their operation.
- ★ The EAQUALS quality standards that are used for self-assessment and as accreditation criteria are specific to language education: they have been developed by language teaching specialists over many years. EAQUALS inspections cover the school in action' and the experience of clients, as well as processes and documentation.

3 . Teaching:

- ★ At EAQUALS-accredited institutions effective, well-planned and enjoyable learning opportunities are provided by well-qualified, trained staff who have access to good teaching resources.
- ★ EAQUALS schools have their own observation and teacher development programmes.

4 . Curriculum:

- ★ EAQUALS-accredited providers have clearly defined learning programmes and the course content is balanced and varied.
- ★ Course objectives and assessment are based on the Common European Framework of Reference.
- ★ EAQUALS Member Institutions with assessment schemes that are accredited by EAQUALS can issue professionally valid and reliable 'EAQUALS Certificates of Achievement' that state the language level attained by course participants at the end of their course.

5 . External quality control:

- ★ All EAQUALS-accredited institutions undergo a thorough inspection carried out by an international team every three years, during which internal quality assurance measures are also verified.

FIVE REASONS WHY COMPANY TRAINING MANAGERS AND OFFICIAL ORGANISATIONS CHOOSE EAQUALS ACCREDITED PROVIDERS FOR THEIR LANGUAGE TRAINING NEEDS

1 . The institution is properly constituted and reliable, and complies with financial, employment and health and safety regulations.

2 . Information about the following will be trustworthy, easily available and complete:

- ★ staff and facilities;
- ★ the language level and examination results of course participants;
- ★ the objectives of courses, and the time needed to achieve these objectives.

3 . EAQUALS-accredited providers are flexible in providing the right courses for the client's needs, their enrolment and placement procedures are efficient and appropriate, and they offer:

- ★ a range of group and individual courses;
- ★ detailed advice as to which courses are suitable for different types of staff;
- ★ timetables and course formats to meet the client's specific needs;
- ★ a clear system of levels with realistic learning aims;
- ★ suitable placement procedures.

4 . Course design is sound and professional, and teaching is well-planned and effective

- ★ there is systematic needs analysis - learners' priorities for using the language are established;
- ★ courses are related to the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR);
- ★ objectives are adapted to the client's specific needs;
- ★ the teachers used are qualified in foreign language teaching;
- ★ the performance of teachers is monitored through regular observation;
- ★ courses are based on written course outlines stating the objectives, content, materials and assessment procedures;
- ★ course participants' progress is systematically checked and regular feedback is given.

5 . There is effective reporting and feedback

- ★ attendance is strictly monitored and progress is tracked;
- ★ minor issues are dealt with before they turn into problems;
- ★ regular reports are provided in the style and the format required by the client;
- ★ there is a formal procedure to investigate and deal with complaints;
- ★ responses to client questionnaires are analysed to monitor quality and take corrective action.

ALL THESE ASPECTS OF THE OPERATION ARE CAREFULLY INSPECTED BY EAQUALS EVERY THREE YEARS.

WHY DO LANGUAGE COURSE PROVIDERS SEEK ACCREDITATION BY EAQUALS?

- ❓ EAQUALS membership provides a credible guarantee of quality for course participants and clients: After the inspection, a detailed report with numerous recommendations is sent. This process is repeated every three years.
- ❓ Unique international accreditation: EAQUALS is the only international organisation that offers accreditation specifically for language learning services.
- ❓ Promotional advantages and transparency: EAQUALS accreditation is recognised as tangible evidence of a commitment to maintaining high international standards.
- ❓ International recognition as a guarantee of quality: an increasing number of organisations require the providers of their language training to be EAQUALS members.
- ★ Opportunities to form partnerships between institutions in the language travel market and those working in the local market: EAQUALS members include institutions offering intensive courses in a country where the target language is spoken, and providers serving their local communities. Attending EAQUALS meetings provides excellent opportunities for exchange of expertise and international partnerships.
- ★ Support in applying the principles and levels of the Common European Framework of Reference: EAQUALS has prepared extensive guidance materials to assist members to apply the principles of the CEFR in their learning programmes and assessment procedures in order to meet their customers' expectations and to comply with national norms.
- ❓ International certification of students' achievement: Accredited Members may (from 2010) issue certificates of achievement indicating the CEFR level attained by each student.
- ❓ Specialised staff and management training: EAQUALS training materials relate to curriculum development, language assessment, teacher development and other educational topics, as well as the management of language teaching operations.
- ★ Information on leading-edge developments in the field: EAQUALS Members receive information about developments in the Council of Europe, ALTE, ECML, and ISO plus updates from EAQUALS Associate Members, including the Goethe-Institut, Instituto Cervantes, and the British Council as well as examination providers.

EAQUALS MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to any institution which is a provider of high quality language training or is, in some other way, committed to the achievement of excellence in this area. There are three types of members:

Accredited Members:

To become an Accredited Member, language training institutions prove their full adherence to the Charters by submitting themselves to a full and rigorous inspection, which is repeated every three years. Only institutions that fully comply with EAQUALS standards can be accredited and display the EAQUALS 'Accredited Member' logo.

Associate Members:

This category of membership is for organisations with considerable involvement and professional achievement in language education. Associate membership is by invitation only. The essential criterion is a commitment to quality.

Inspector members:

These are individuals who are trained and appointed EAQUALS inspectors but are not affiliated to any EAQUALS institution. Through their membership they become part of the network and collaborate on EAQUALS internal projects, in addition to doing their work as EAQUALS inspectors and advisors.

(see the website www.eaquals.org for the current list of members and project partners)



THE EAQUALS INSPECTION SCHEME

What is inspected?

- ★ All aspects of language education services, and the management, staff and systems that support these.

By whom?

- ★ International teams of inspectors.

How long does an inspection last?

- ★ Usually for two days, but this depends on the size of the institution.

How often does an EAQUALS accredited institution get inspected?

- ★ Every three years.

What are the main elements of an EAQUALS inspection?

- ★ observations of teaching and other activities
- ★ meetings with key staff and teachers
- ★ meetings with course participants and clients
- ★ checking of premises and resources
- ★ review of documents and records
- ★ visits to accommodation where applicable.

How are institutions assessed?

- ★ Inspectors obtain and evaluate evidence from different sources to verify that EAQUALS standards are being met.

What sort of standards are applied?

- ★ The EAQUALS accreditation scheme is international, and, the standards and the assessment criteria are not prescriptive, although the basic requirements are clearly established.
- ★ During the inspection process, the criteria are applied according to the different contexts in which institutions operate, and it is their task to provide evidence to demonstrate that they meet the requirements.

- ★ Country-specific regulations are described in Country Notes which inspectors use for guidance. However, if EAQUALS standards are higher than local regulations, EAQUALS criteria are applied.

How many criteria are there?

- ★ ? 50 key assessment criteria
- ★ ? 12 main areas of assessment
- ★ ? specific indicators of quality for each area.

What is the method of assessment?

- ★ EAQUALS assesses the institution as a whole and in its own particular context. For example, as many teachers as possible are observed in order to access the general level of teaching and the support for learning being provided by the institution, but EAQUALS does not evaluate the performance of individual teachers.



OVERVIEW OF EAQUALS STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

MAIN CATEGORIES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	WHAT INSPECTORS WILL LOOK FOR	MAIN CATEGORIES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	WHAT INSPECTORS WILL LOOK FOR
<p>1. Teaching</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approach and content 2. Teaching methods 3. Course participants' needs and learning 	<p>Inspectors aim to get evidence that effective learning is taking place in classes, and to form an overall picture of the quality of teaching. They do not inspect the performance of individual teachers.</p>	<p>5. Academic resources</p> <p>Availability and organisation of</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Course books, software, reference materials and/or student library 18. Supplementary materials produced in-house 19. Hardware: OHPs, audio & video/DVD equipment, computers, access to the internet etc. 	<p>The quality, appropriacy, availability and use of teaching resources are checked, and also whether they correspond to the needs of learners and are in line with the statements on teaching philosophy in the institution's curriculum and syllabus documents.</p>
<p>2. Academic management - Curriculum and Syllabus</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. A structured course of study 5. Levels that refer to the CEFR 6. Learning objectives that are adapted to learners' needs 7. Statements of content to be covered in a course and during a certain period 	<p>Inspectors seek evidence that there is coherence between what is laid out in the publicity materials and academic management documents and what is going on in the classrooms. E.g. if a school claims that it provides teaching based on a communicative approach, evidence of this needs to be shown both in supporting documents and in the teaching.</p>	<p>6. Other services to course participants</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Fair dealing between the institution and course participants 21. Advice and consultation 22. Leisure and social programme 23. Course participants' welfare 24. Accommodation services: residential and home-stay 	<p>The nature and number of other services offered to course participants may vary considerably from institution to institution. Inspectors check what is offered, whether the services are high quality and whether systems and procedures for quality assurance and continuous improvement are in place.</p>
<p>3. Academic management - Assessment and Certification</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Placement testing 9. Assessment of progress and achievement 10. External exams and tests 11. Reports, certificates & diplomas 	<p>The inspectors check whether the assessment procedures and methods are valid and reliable, and are in line with the general approach to teaching. E.g. if learning aims are defined by "can do" statements, is assessment designed to assess what course participants can do with the language?</p>	<p>7. Staff contracts, terms and conditions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 25. Contracts 26. Terms and conditions 	<p>Aspects of the EAQUAL Staff Charter are checked, based on local conditions as laid out in the Country Notes, and terms and conditions are verified for their fairness within the local context.</p>
<p>4. Academic management - Quality assurance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. System & procedures for lesson observation 13. Support and guidance for teachers 14. Coherence between outcomes of class observations and internal training 15. Professional development review of teaching staff 16. Other procedures for quality assurance 	<p>The inspectors seek evidence that the standards of teaching are monitored by well qualified and experienced academic managers, and that appropriate action is taken to continuously improve standards where and when needed. The professional development opportunities for staff and systematic assessment of teachers' work are also checked.</p>	<p>8. Qualifications, experience and training</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 27. Competence, experience and qualifications of teachers 28. Administrative and academic staff profile 29. Training and professional development 	<p>Inspectors look at the qualifications profile of the teaching staff. The qualification and competence of all staff are checked, as well as the training opportunities available to them.</p>

9. Communications

- 30. Clear academic management systems
- 31. Procedures for internal communication between staff and managers
- 32. Information available to staff about the institution
- 33. Grievance and disciplinary procedures
- 34. Performance review for managers & admin staff

Channels of communication and the balance between formal and informal communication are checked, as well as awareness of basic company information among staff. Inspectors also look at the institution's systems for managing staff performance.

10. Information

Completeness and accuracy; clarity and accessibility of

- 35. all promotional materials
- 36. all contractual information
- 37. Information about EAQUALS and the correct use of the EAQUALS logo and Charters

Adherence to the EAQUALS Information Charter is checked. Publicity materials, websites, contracts and information about EAQUALS should be accurate, clear, comprehensive and easy to access.

11. Premises

- 38. Teaching and study facilities
- 39. Other facilities
- 40. Hygiene
- 41. Health and safety
- 42. Welfare

All teaching and learning premises and facilities used by the institution are checked to see whether their condition corresponds to what is stated in the institution's publicity materials and whether they offer a safe and pleasant learning environment. Safety features are checked for compliance with European directives and local requirements.

12. Management and administration

- 43. Legality and integrity
- 44. Fair dealing between the institution and its clients
- 45. Management processes
- 46. Course organisation and administration
- 47. Enrolment and placement administration
- 48. Quality assurance procedures
- 49. Complaints
- 50. Client feedback

This complex area comprises all elements of general management, organisational and administrative procedures.

Requirements with reference to legality are preconditions of EAQUALS accreditation, and these are checked very thoroughly during an inspection.

WHO TO CONTACT?

For more information about EAQUALS see www.eaquals.org

To find out more about the EAQUALS membership

and to read the EAQUALS Charters in full,

see www.eaquals.org/about/what.asp