

ACTDEC Code of Practice

Administrative/Organisational

A1 WEBSITE

All website information is user-friendly and reflects the ACTDEC provider's commitment to transparency and professionalism.

A2 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

The ACTDEC provider makes every effort to ensure that pre-course information and descriptions of courses are accurate and fully informative, enabling candidates to make the best possible decisions regarding which course to choose.

A3 ADVERTISING, COURSE FEES & DISCOUNTS

The ACTDEC provider follows UK advertising guidelines and ensures candidates are fully informed of any conditions and their rights before buying.

A4 SELECTION & ADMISSION OF STUDENTS

The ACTDEC provider ensures that entry requirements are clearly specified, that only candidates with sufficient qualifications and experience to benefit fully from the course are allowed to enrol and that equal opportunities are afforded to all candidates.

A5 COURSE ADMINISTRATION

The ACTDEC provider's administrative procedures and communication systems are clear, highly effective and enable staff and student voices to be heard.

A6 STAFFING

The ACTDEC provider only recruits tutors with appropriate qualifications and experience and consistently improves the teaching offered by providing opportunities for continuing professional development.

A7 ORGANISATIONAL EVALUATION & QUALITY ASSURANCE

The ACTDEC provider continuously makes every effort to improve the service they offer by collating and acting on feedback from all relevant stakeholders.

Course Provision

C1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The ACTDEC-accredited course has a clearly defined set of achievable and assessable goals which are communicated to all stakeholders.

C2 COURSE STRUCTURE, SYLLABUS CONTENT & LENGTH

The ACTDEC-accredited course has been designed in line with current best practices in syllabus design and consists of a reasoned and methodical plan for teaching and learning, coherent with the goals of the course.

C3 COURSE PROCESS

Students are nurtured and challenged throughout the course, which incorporates appropriate, up-to-date distance and online learning methodological principles.

C4 PROGRESS & ASSESSMENT

There are measures in place to provide regular feedback and support and to undertake effective assessment based on appropriate and up to date formative and summative assessment principles.

C5 COURSE EVALUATION & QUALITY ASSURANCE

The ACTDEC provider continuously makes every effort to improve the courses they offer by collating and acting on suggestions and feedback from all relevant stakeholders.

ACTDEC Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Administrative/Organisational

A1 WEBSITE

All website information is user-friendly and reflects the ACTDEC provider's commitment to transparency and professionalism.

- A1.1** The layout and organisation of the website is user-friendly, so that it is easy to navigate and find information. We recommend (as a minimum) including the following as separate tabs:
* Contact * Courses * Accreditation * FAQs * Resources
- A1.2** The Accreditation tab describes briefly ACTDEC's Code of Practice and provides a link to ACTDEC's own website. Details of any other bodies accrediting the provider are also given on this tab.
- A1.3** All cross-referencing and external links function and are up to date.
- A1.4** Care has been taken with proof-reading and spelling throughout the website.

A2 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

The ACTDEC provider makes every effort to ensure that pre-course information and descriptions of courses are accurate and fully informative, enabling candidates to make the best possible decisions regarding which course to choose.

- A2.1** Every effort is made to differentiate ACTDEC accredited courses from other unaccredited courses offered by the provider.
- A2.2** Only ACTDEC accredited courses bear the ACTDEC logo.
- A2.3** The course description refers to ACTDEC accreditation levels and the title/name of the course is similar to those provided by ACTDEC in the Level Outlines & Learning Outcomes.
- A2.4** There is adequate course documentation, describing the goals, scope, nature and procedures of the course, to enable candidates to make informed decisions about enrolment or contractual agreements.
- A2.5** The course description includes a possible timeframe for completion, and explicitly states the **maximum** amount of time allowed for a trainee to complete the course. Any additional costs for time extensions are specified.
- A2.6** Advice/guidance is provided (online and/or live) to enable candidates to choose the most appropriate course from those offered.

A3 ADVERTISING, COURSE FEES & DISCOUNTS

The ACTDEC provider follows UK advertising guidelines and ensures candidates are fully informed of any conditions and their rights before buying.

- A3.1** Advertising, promotional and other publicity materials give a clear and truthful account of courses offered.

- A3.2** Any discounts offered follow (UK) ASA/CAP advertising regulation guidelines.¹ In addition, the provider clarifies explicitly beforehand any discounts based on a shorter completion time.
- A3.3** Before enrolment, candidates are provided with clear details of course fees, including any deposits required, and their rights in the event of cancellation, curtailment or deferment.
- A3.4** Any fees paid must be fully reimbursed in the event that a candidate does not subsequently meet the Course Requirements as described.

A4 SELECTION & ADMISSION OF STUDENTS

The ACTDEC provider ensures that entry requirements are clearly specified, that only candidates with sufficient qualifications and experience to benefit fully from the course are allowed to enrol and that equal opportunities are afforded to all candidates.

- A4.1** The course has clearly stated entry requirements to ensure that candidates will be sufficiently qualified and experienced to benefit from the course and to meet the standards for qualification.
- A4.2** Required language levels for non-native speakers of English are stated in terms of the level of proficiency necessary not only to complete the course successfully, but also to be able to start a teaching career in English².
- A4.3** There are effective procedures to assess language level requirements and to communicate these results to candidates.³
- A4.4** There are effective procedures to assess prior learning and experience in relation to entry requirements.
- A4.5** The admissions policy incorporates an equal opportunities statement.

¹ Advertising Standards Authority Ltd, n.d. Available at: <https://www.asa.org.uk/advice-online/promotional-savings-claims.html>

² TESOL International Association, 2014 researched various organisations' descriptions of proficiency, and we list some of these below. Providers may use their own descriptions or choose from the following:

- "A proficiency level at which teachers can speak spontaneously in the classroom, provide rich language input to allow for language acquisition, and interact with students in the target language". (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), 2013)
- Teachers must be able to "speak English with accuracy and fluency on a variety of topics, manage complicated social tasks, support their opinions, explain content in detail and hypothesize on topics which they are familiar". (TESOL International Association, 2008).
- Teaching candidates are required to "understand complex, extended discussion or presentations, discuss detailed complex information and opinions, understand a range of complex texts in some unpredictable contexts and on some unfamiliar topics, and write formal and informal texts of some complexity for a range of purposes." (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2013)
- The Common European Framework describes speakers as proficient when they can *express ideas fluently and spontaneously and use language effectively for social, academic and professional purpose* (Council of Europe, 2001)

³ These may include, for example, interview, requesting proof of a recognised English level exam, an online test of English, a required piece of writing and/or other procedures a provider has developed.

A5 COURSE ADMINISTRATION

The ACTDEC provider's administrative procedures and communication systems are clear, highly effective and enable staff and trainee voices to be heard.

- A5.1 There are satisfactory structures and procedures to deal with course recruitment, admissions and grievances.
- A5.2 There are clear and effective two-way lines of communication between course administrators and trainees.
- A5.3 There are effective two-way lines of communication between administrative members of staff and distance tutors.
- A5.4 Accurate records are maintained of trainees' progress, assessment and achievement and are available to relevant stakeholders.
- A5.5 Certification is provided on successful completion of a course and accurate records of certificates issued are kept.

A6 STAFFING

The ACTDEC provider only recruits tutors with appropriate qualifications and experience and consistently improves the teaching offered by providing opportunities for continuing professional development.

- A6.1 All tutors have appropriate qualifications and/or experience.⁴
- A6.2 There are appropriate procedures for the induction and training of new tutors, including a breakdown of how much time they should spend on administration, tutoring and marking, to ensure effective trainee management.
- A6.3 Conditions of service for staff are fair, respect local labour agreements, include grievance and disciplinary procedures and encourage motivation, continuity and effective teaching.
- A6.4 There is adequate provision for staff development.
- A6.5 Staff experience and expertise are engaged in decision-making processes about course structure and procedures.

A7 ORGANISATIONAL EVALUATION & QUALITY ASSURANCE

The ACTDEC provider continuously makes every effort to improve the service they offer by collating and acting on feedback from all relevant stakeholders.

- A7.1 There are procedures in place for offering a timely response to any queries, complaints or issues raised by trainees or staff.
- A7.2 There are robust procedures for acknowledging and following up on feedback received from trainees and staff.
- A7.3 There is a forum for periodically discussing suggestions and feedback and deciding on appropriate actions.

⁴ We recommend a **minimum** qualification of DELTA (Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults) or possible equivalents (for example, a university one-year Diploma in TESOL/TEFL). Alternatively, a CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) or its equivalent, along with a Bachelor's degree in Education or Linguistics could be considered appropriate. In addition, a CELTA (or equivalent) with at least 5 years teaching experience, and (preferably) some training experience could also be considered.

Course Provision

C1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The ACTDEC-accredited course has a clearly defined set of achievable and assessable goals which are communicated to all stakeholders.

- C1.1** The course has a set of goals serving to guide its content, procedures and evaluation.
- C1.2** The goals relate to an appropriate, specified level of achievement.
- C1.3** The goals are consistent with statements about the course process and assessment.
- C1.4** The goals of the course are documented and available to all relevant stakeholders, including trainees, tutors and administrative staff.

C2 COURSE STRUCTURE, SYLLABUS CONTENT & LENGTH

The ACTDEC-accredited course has been designed in line with current best practices in syllabus design and consists of a reasoned and methodical plan for teaching and learning, coherent with the goals of the course.

- C2.1** The model of course design is consistent with the goals of the course.
- C2.2** The course content is relevant to the future professional aspirations of the trainees and to the knowledge and skills with which they wish to leave the course.
- C2.3** ACTDEC Standards and Learning Outcomes are satisfactorily covered.
- C2.4** The course is informed by sound, appropriate and up to date methodological principles and current educational best practice. This includes backward-planning and setting KUD (Know, Understand and be able to Do) module objectives⁵, which in turn are assessable.
- C2.5** Decisions about the course study hours, workloads, etc., are consistent with the course syllabus, learning outcomes and trainee needs.
- C2.6** The various components of the course fit together to provide a coherent programme and a balance between taught input and independent learning. The course facilitates a challenging but manageable level and pace of learning for the trainees.

C3 COURSE PROCESS

Trainees are nurtured and challenged throughout the course, which incorporates appropriate, up-to-date distance and online learning methodological principles.

- C3.1** The course contains a section with advice for trainees on studying online. In addition, sufficient help and proactive support are provided through tutor contact to enable trainees to complete the course successfully within the specified timeframe.

⁵ For useful input on backward course design and on setting these types of objectives, see the following sources:

- a) (Bay Area School Reform Collaborative, n.d.) <https://www.sfsu.edu/~teachers/download/Inquiryframework.pdf>
- b) (Douglas County School System, n.d.) http://web.douglas.k12.ga.us/intranet/StaffInfoPG/ProfessionalLearning/2012_CDA_Summer_Work/KUD_CHEAT_SHEET_for_SS.pdf
- c) (Designing Learning, 2016) <https://blogs.ubc.ca/learningdesign/big-picture-planning/>
- d) (Bowen, 2017) <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/understanding-by-design/#resources>
- e) (Erickson & Lanning, 2013) Chapter 1 is available at: https://www.corwin.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/59552_Erickson_Chapter_One.pdf

- C3.2** Trainees experience a variety of distance teaching/learning (input and output) methods, e.g. print and audio/video recorded input, reading assignments, action research tasks, activities aimed at developing analytical/critical thinking skills, various tutor-assessed activities (study file cards, assignments, online presentations, etc.).
- C3.3** There is a sensible sequence of learning including frequent review sections throughout the course.

C4 PROGRESS & ASSESSMENT

There are measures in place to provide regular constructive feedback and support to trainees and to undertake effective assessment based on appropriate and up-to-date formative and summative assessment principles.

- C4.1** There are procedures ensuring trainees receive regular structured feedback and encouragement on their progress throughout the course, with the aim of ensuring that they continuously improve and complete the course successfully. Feedback is motivational and consists of either positive comments (praise) or constructive comments (help to improve).
- C4.2** Trainees are assisted in improving their strategies for learning and the quality of their work, e.g. through interactive online tutorials, recorded audio feedback, e-mail, etc.
- C4.3** There is a specified system for valid and reliable assessment, maintained and reviewed periodically, in line with changing goals and course design.
- C4.4** Assessment procedures are consistent with the goals of the course and module objectives and are aligned with ACTDEC standards and KUD Learning Outcomes.
- C4.5** Coursework and examinations/evaluations are linked and sequenced clearly for the trainees.
- C4.6** There is an effective appeals procedure for candidates who dispute evaluation or examination results.
- C4.7** Trainees' achievements are recognised through certification and feedback.

C5 COURSE EVALUATION & QUALITY ASSURANCE

The ACTDEC provider continuously makes every effort to improve the courses they offer by collating and acting on suggestions and feedback from all relevant stakeholders.

- C5.1** There are procedures in place for monitoring and maintaining internal standards on each delivery of the course.
- C5.2** All relevant stakeholders, e.g. directors, trainees, staff, etc., are involved in both course evaluation and periodic review.
- C5.3** A range of appropriate procedures are used in course evaluation and periodic review of the course.
- C5.4** Periodic course review takes account of formative and summative evaluation data available from several previous courses.
- C5.5** Where the course is offered repeatedly, mechanisms are in place for periodic review of the course in response to changes in trainee needs, trends in teacher education and changing professional contexts.