



Institute of IT Training

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR LEARNING CENTRES

A guidance document for Open/Distance Learning Centres





Code of Practice for Open/Distance Learning Centres

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Code of Practice for Learning Centres

IT users in the UK benefit from one of the most advanced IT training environments anywhere in the world. In general, Open/Distance Learning Centres provide a value-for-money range of quality training products and services to their client organisations. However, in a business environment which is ever-increasingly competitive, it is important for them to align to best-practice and be able to demonstrate that they provide the client organisation with top quality and cost effective training products and services.

It is an Institute objective to assist in the raising of standards in IT training across the board, and the Open Learning Centre Accreditation Programme (OLCAP) is a key component of this. Note that the OLCAP accredits the company: it does NOT accredit individual courses.

This Code of Practice provides the basis for the Institute of IT Training's Learning Centre Accreditation Programme through which the Institute will maintain and monitor a register of approved providers. Organisations which undertake voluntarily to abide by the terms of this Code of Practice and can demonstrate that they do so are eligible to be accredited by the Institute.

Definitions

In this code of practice:

- 'Open Learning Centre (OLC)' is a facility providing learners access to individually focused education through the use of innovative processes and current technologies.
- 'Client' means any person or organisation that enters into a contract with the OLC for the provision of training services.
- 'Learner' is any person requiring and entitled to the training services of the OLC.
- A 'Learning Support Specialist' works within the OLC in the capacity of providing learning support to learners on behalf of the Centre. May also be known as Tutors or Facilitators.
- 'The Accredited Organisation' means any enterprise, institution or organisation accredited by the IITT as an Accredited Open Learning Centre under the terms of this Programme.

Publicity and promotion

- In promotional literature, advertisements and other form of promotion, the Accredited Organisation shall express itself clearly and without ambiguity so that clients may know exactly what is being offered and what they are to

entitled to expect from the services being offered.

- The Accredited Organisation shall not give false or misleading indications, whether by words, illustrations or other means, in relation to the service which is to be provided to the client, neither shall it make any statement which cannot be substantiated.

- The Accredited Organisation shall not publish or display any advertisement, which may be confused with any other organisation.

- Fictitious testimonials shall not be used, neither shall testimonials from other parties with interests in the business of the Accredited Organisation without declaring this interest within the testimonial.

- The Accredited Organisation will make all of its clients and prospective clients aware of its Accredited status and hence its conformance to the IITT's Code of Practice, usually by including such reference within promotional materials. However, such references are only permitted for the duration of the Accreditation and must be in a form approved by the IITT.

Technical prospectus

- Prior to a client contracting for the provision of Open Learning services, the Accredited Organisation shall make information available on:

- the scope of the training to be available in terms of products, level and outcomes.

- the award, if any, for which the training is designed to achieve and the name of the awarding body.

- any constraints or exclusions which may affect the service provision.

- the method of evaluation and the conditions for the awarding or withholding of certification.

- the syllabus of the training indicating the emphasis placed on each section, including practical work.

- the likely duration of the training, OLC availability and booking arrangements.

- a profile of students for whom the training is designed, including pre-requisites and/or desirable experience.

- any required dress code for students and any rules governing conduct whilst attending the Centre together with the consequences of lapses from the standards and rules.

- what post-training support is available to the student.

- a realistic estimation of the commitment required of the delegate in terms of time, effort and ongoing financial outgoings.

- other information, available on request, including details of the qualifications and experience of Learning Support Staff. Prospective students shall be provided with the opportunity to inspect the Centre and sample course materials and the learning facilities.

Commercial prospectus

In quotations the provider shall state:

- specifically what products and services are included.
- the total cost and payment schedule.
- any reserved rights to change any aspects of the published service.
- the rights of the learner and/or client in the event that the learning programme proves to be unsuitable for whatever reason for the learner or if for any reason the training is not completed or if the learning programme is suspended by the learner, client or provider.
- the refund policy if any.
- the responsibility for payment of fees and the associated liabilities of the client.
- whether any supplied training media is subject to copyright law.
- that the Centre subscribes to and abides by the Institute of IT Training's Code of Practice for Open Learning Centres.

Internal controls

The Accredited Organisation shall:

- ensure that all Learning Support Specialists possess the necessary technical skills and product/service awareness to provide the level of support implied through their specific job responsibilities.
- ensure that Learning Support Specialists are fully competent in the appropriate skills of Learning Support, verifiable by holding an accredited Learning Support Specialist certification or, if during the first year of accreditation or the first year of their employment as a Learning Support Specialist in the Centre, by demonstrably working towards the attainment of same.
- ensure that Learning Support Specialists keep abreast of current developments appropriate to their responsibilities and can describe how this is achieved.
- ensure that Learning Support Specialists are participating in a recognised Continuous Professional Development (CPD) scheme as administered by an

appropriate external professional body or formally defined internal procedure.

- ensure that all training materials and documentation are up-to-date.
- ensure that resource levels are sufficient to provide a timely reaction to required learning interventions.
- ensure that the open learning facilities provided are appropriate to the learning programmes and provide an environment conducive to effective learning.
- at the conclusion of a programme of learning offer learners the opportunity of giving written evaluation of their training and ensure that clients are aware of this opportunity.
- ensure that Learning Support Specialists are provided with a work situation which is conducive to effective Learning Support - noise levels, space and privacy, efficient call logging system
- ensure that all Learning Support Specialists are fully aware of the training and personal development options which are available to them.

Note: this list is not exhaustive – included by implication is any factor or item which may also affect the suitability of the Learning Support Specialist's

Job placement

- Where Open Learning Centres offer placement assistance, details of this assistance should be made clear prior to a contract for training being entered into.
- The Open Learning Centre shall include in this information the number of students who used the service and the number placed in suitable employment.
- The Open Learning Centre shall make a disclaimer of guarantee for securing job placement for students on completion of their training.
- Open Learning Centres should make known any commission received from such placement.

External controls

- The Accredited Organisation shall make available to the IITT such statistical, documentary and other information, which the IITT may reasonably require to be assured that the Code of Practice is being observed.
- The Accredited Organisation will co-operate with scheduled IITT monitoring visits and will facilitate access by IITT assessors.
- The Accredited Organisation agrees that IITT assessors and/or verifiers

may use unannounced and fictitious role play as a method of sampling the services of the Open Learning Centre. The Institute will be provided with necessary telephone numbers, security codes, etc to facilitate this activity.

The Institute of IT Training Complaints procedure

A statement of the procedures for making and responding to complaints shall routinely be made available by providers to clients with whom they have contracted.

Providers shall respond to client complaints in a prompt and courteous manner.

Should the provider not satisfy the complaint to the satisfaction of the client, the provider will advise the client of the right to notify the IITT of the outstanding complaint. A form, together with a Complaints Procedure form, available from the IITT, shall be supplied by the provider.

Complaints by clients shall then be made direct to the IITT and must generally be made within 30 days of the provider having given an initial response to the complaint.

If the IITT is satisfied that a complaint against a provider is justified, the provider shall be bound by the IITT's decision on the matter.

The Institute's complaints procedure

This procedure is administered in conjunction with the IITT Code of Practice for Training Providers. It provides a mechanism for making, receiving and examining complaints by clients against providers in respect of any matter covered by the Code of Practice.

Complaints committee

- The executive of the IITT shall establish a three-person committee which will manage the detailed operation of this procedure.
- The CPD director of the IITT shall be the Chairman of the Committee and the Membership Secretary of the IITT shall be its Secretary. The third member will be a current member of the council.

Notification of complaints

- The secretary shall take such steps as are necessary to clarify and define the complaint, at the same time ensuring that the complainant has fully taken up the matter with the training provider before invoking the IITT Complaints Procedure.

- The secretary shall refer the complaint to the provider who shall be required to make written response within fourteen working days setting out a detailed explanation.
- The secretary shall refer the response made by the provider to the client. If the client is not satisfied with the provider's response, the secretary will refer the matter to the Complaints Committee.
- The Complaints Committee shall consider the complaint within fourteen working days, requesting further information if required, and shall notify the client and the provider of its findings.
- Either party may, within 30 days of being notified of the findings of the Complaints Committee, appeal to the Board of Directors of the IITT.
- The secretary shall keep the Chief Executive of the IITT informed of all complaints received and actions taken on such complaints and shall also keep the parties involved in a complaint informed at all stages.

Appeals procedure

- The secretary shall submit to the Chief Executive of the IITT all appeals together with all relevant material considered by the Complaints Committee.
- The Board of Directors of the IITT will consider the appeal and will advise the parties of its decision within fourteen working days. The decision of the Board will be final.

Further Information

For further information, please contact the Standards Secretary on 0845 006 8858 or email standards@iitt.org.uk