



## Educational Purpose

### The College Charter

The broader educational purposes of Hilderstone are set out in the College Charter, which expresses the College's commitment to excellence across its entire range of activities and services. With reference to educational purpose, the Charter states:

"Hilderstone College aims to offer excellent quality and value for money, and to provide students with the best possible learning experience both inside and outside the classroom."

The following points are also published in the Charter:

#### Teaching and Learning

- a) Students will be assessed on arrival and placed in the most appropriate class for their needs. They will also be given a realistic idea of how much progress they can make
- b) All aspects of the course, including the number of students in a class, will be as described in the College publicity materials and terms and conditions of enrolment
- c) Our teachers are chosen for their personal qualities, as well as their professionalism and qualifications
- d) Our teachers will use the most appropriate teaching methods, teaching materials and equipment, and their teaching will be regularly monitored and observed
- e) The content of classes will be relevant to students' needs
- f) Lessons are properly prepared, and written work will be marked and returned promptly
- g) Students' progress will be reviewed regularly
- h) We will ask students regularly for their opinion of the course and will consult with them as to its content
- i) Students will receive a report and certificate at the end of the course

The Charter is underpinned by the College's participation in British Council and IALC oversight schemes as well as its own internal quality assurance procedures.

### Implementation

The College seeks to implement its educational aims in the following ways:

- through the creation, application and review of written descriptions for each type of course offered at the College
- by having course descriptions available to all students, agents and staff
- by preparing class profiles and/or course plans for every class with copies available in the classroom
- by recording work covered by tutors and kept in files for each class, which also contain the class profile, students' pre-course questionnaires, attendance register, notes from tutorials, pre-arrival and progress test scores, and record of homework completion
- through the recording of students' performance in tests, mock exams and public examinations. These are kept for the purposes of monitoring students' progress and in order to provide information for advising students on further courses both at the College and elsewhere
- through regular student feedback via end-of-first-week, mid- and end-of-course questionnaires, tutorials and the Student Council
- with feedback from tutors to the academic management team (Head of Teaching (HoT), Deputy DOS and/or course co-ordinators) through daily contacts and staff meetings and end-of-course questionnaires
- with a review of all courses, documented in course reports
- through classroom observation both by teachers' peers and academic managers
- through regular meetings with management, resources, administrative and technical staff
- with a regular review of academic needs, resources provision and premises
- through regular contact with accommodation and welfare staff to help in the resolution of students' personal problems
- through the involvement of the HoT/DDoS in dealing with students' unsatisfactory behaviour or absences from class
- with support for the work of the Professional Development Co-ordinator's planning of CPD meetings and their follow-up
- through guided self-study in the College's multimedia learning centre
- by exploiting and associating language outside the classroom (including on social excursions, around the College, within the town and within the homestay) to course work and study within the classroom.

## Guarantors of the College's educational purpose

### ***Assessment of students' work***

The assessment of students' language level and their rate of progress are assessed prior to arrival, at regular intervals during their period of study and on completion of their course.

### ***Initial assessment***

Every student, both long and short-stay, is required to complete a pre-course questionnaire and test prior to their arrival. Tests vary according to the type of course chosen in order to ensure that an appropriate test is completed. Tests may be completed online via the College website, sent in by post, faxed or submitted by email. The pre-arrival test forms the basis of the initial assessment of the student's level which is checked on his/her first day, when further assessment takes place. This will consist of an informal speaking assessment and may also include reading and writing components.

### ***In-course assessment***

Students on the Intensive English Course receive monthly progress tests. These include assessment of work done in class as well as testing in each of the four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. All of these skills are tested again at the end of each three-month term and a skills profile is produced for each student. Students taking exam courses (CAE, FCE or IELTS) usually have two mock exams per term as well as several opportunities to sit less formal practice tests. Feedback is given to students on their performance in these tests both in class and in one-to-one tutorials. The assessments take place at fixed points during the term and enable courses to be structured around them effectively. In the feedback, students are informed how they can improve and make progress.

When requested by sponsors, employers, parents or occasionally by students themselves, progress reports are prepared. Assessments form the basis of these reports, together with the teachers' impressions of the student's general performance in class, motivation and completion of assignments.

Students are given regular and appropriate amounts of homework according to the type of course and the needs of individuals. Records of assignment completion are kept and are used in discussions with students about their progress.

### ***End-of-course assessment***

A certificate summarising students' progress and achievements at the end of their period of study is given to each student. Where students have had several assessments of their level, e.g. by means of a series of mock examinations over several months, a student achievement record, detailing all of the assessments, is also issued.

### ***Teaching and learning***

Students are encouraged to work independently both in and outside class. Students' personal insights and contributions to discussions are highly valued.

Students are grouped in their classes, as far as possible, according to their language level. Tutors' awareness of the students' aptitudes, cultural background and needs is increased by experience and professional development and training. These factors play a large part in the planning and delivery of lessons.

Tutors employ several means to encourage students to maximise the benefits of their stay in the UK. These include the provision of visits to places of interest, talks and lectures by local speakers, familiarising students with news and broadcast media, use of authentic materials in class including internet-based media, support for self-access and project work, advice and guidance in improving and increasing communication opportunities with homestay and other native-speakers, and encouraging students to participate in the social programme.

Students are encouraged at all times to participate as much as possible in class and to develop their knowledge and experience in all spheres. Presentations, in which students introduce an area of personal interest to their peers are frequent events in many classes.

## ***Grading of students***

The College makes extensive use of grades based on the Common European Framework and Cambridge ESOL and IELTS examinations. These grades are used according to the assessment and courses concerned.

## ***Educational direction***

The HoT is charged with providing educational direction and endeavours to provide tutors with the means and resources to achieve the aims of the College, as set out in the College Charter.

Records of students' academic achievements are maintained and analysed to inform the planning and improvement of future course. They are kept and then disposed of in line with current GDPR guidelines.

## ***Educational resources***

The College has a large stock of course books and supplementary materials which are made available to tutors for use in classes. An annual resources meeting, and the regular purchase of new materials, ensures the continued relevance and range of available resources.

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