

Frequently asked questions about Education Scotland's application and inspection process for educational oversight of private further education colleges and English language schools in Scotland

1 Who/what is Education Scotland?

- Education Scotland is a new executive agency which inherits the full range of functions formerly undertaken by Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS), HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), the national CPD team and the Scottish Government's positive behaviour team. This new agency plays a key role in Scottish education, supporting innovation and dynamism throughout the education system, providing challenge and making a major contribution to raising standards overall. This key national body supports and pursues quality and improvement in Scottish education, and it ensures that the best possible national-level systems are in place to support practitioners, pre-school centres, schools, colleges, local authorities and others. Education Scotland has been approved by the Home Office to inspect privately funded further education colleges and English language schools in Scotland.

2 When does the Education Scotland application process close?

- Education Scotland now accepts applications at any time from organisations seeking educational oversight for the purpose of recruiting international learners.

3 How do I know whether to apply to Education Scotland or the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)?

- If most of the qualifications you offer are up to and including SCQF level 8 (Further Education) or English language programmes, you should apply to Education Scotland. If most of the qualifications are above SCQF level 8 (Higher Education) you should apply to QAA.

4 Do I have a choice in the educational oversight body carrying out the inspection of my private further education college or English language school in Scotland?

- No. The Home Office has confirmed that only Education Scotland will conduct inspections of private further education colleges and English language schools in Scotland.

5 I run an English language school. Is my organisation eligible for Education Scotland oversight?

- Yes. You should apply to Education Scotland if your organisation is based in Scotland.

6 I have just opened a new private further education college or English language school in Scotland and have not yet recruited any learners. Can my organisation be inspected by Education Scotland?

- No. Education Scotland cannot inspect an organisation which has yet to recruit learners. Observing learning episodes or lessons, and discussing the learning experience with learners are key components of our inspection evidence. An organisation is likely to have been in operation delivering learning for at least one year before we would inspect. Those organisations who wish to be Tier 4 sponsors for non-EEA learners are required by the Home Office to have a 'track record' delivering learning.

7 When will I know the details of the inspection process which my organisation will undergo?

- The Education Scotland quality framework provides a structure for inspection, and arrangements that relate to these inspections. These are based on arrangements already used in the external review of publicly-funded colleges. All relevant documents are currently available on our website <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/> and are regularly updated. Please consult the website for the latest version.

8 How soon after applying will Education Scotland inspect my organisation?

- Education Scotland will confirm receipt of your application. We notify organisations three weeks prior to the start of their inspection.

9 Will Education Scotland provide guidance on the inspection process?

- All relevant information and guidance is provided mainly through our website. Education Scotland has also held three events - in December 2011, March 2012 and February 2013 - that received very positive evaluations from participants who were provided with background information to our inspections and development related to self-evaluation. Further development events may be available, subject to demand, but will not be free of charge. If you are interested in attending a future guidance event, please email Education Scotland Private_College/Language_School@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

10 On what will inspections by Education Scotland focus?

- The focus will be on determining the overall quality of educational provision provided by the private further education college or English language school. As a result, learners need to be present at the time of the inspection. Further details on this are available on the Education Scotland website <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/>. Education Scotland will provide a report on its findings from the inspection to the private further education college or English language school inspected and will publish this on their website.

11 Will there be a charge for the inspections?

- Yes. Further details on the charges are available on the Education Scotland website. Fees for 2013-14 have been set at £1,000 per inspector day, with a typical inspection requiring six inspector days. For very small organisations, with 20 or fewer learners, the Managing Inspector will discuss with the organisation whether fewer days are required. Charges will be adjusted accordingly.

12 I have been identified by my organisation as the *inspection nominee*. What will Education Scotland's expectations be in relation to this role?

- Our documents also describe the *inspection nominee* as the 'organisation-nominated inspection coordinator'. This longer title gives more of a sense of what is required of the role. You are likely to be a senior member of staff within an organisation, with a comprehensive strategic overview. Primarily, you will act as the main contact between the Managing Inspector within Education Scotland and the organisation, clarifying issues and directing inspectors to relevant evidence. In advance of the inspection, you are required to provide the Managing Inspector with

timetables of classes being taught during the inspection week, so that observations can be selected by inspectors. A schedule of meetings with learners, staff and managers will also require to be set up for inspectors. The *inspection nominee* is present at the opening meeting at the start of the inspection, the evening team meetings during the inspection, and observes the grading meeting at the conclusion of the inspection.

13 How frequently will Education Scotland inspect private further education colleges or English language schools?

- Inspection outcomes are valid for four years, provided the organisation does not undergo substantial change. Reports from inspections will remain on Education Scotland's website for four years. However, if as a result of re-inspection the outcomes for the organisation change, the most recent report will replace the original.

Education Scotland will visit organisations who are successful in their inspection on an annual basis to discuss progress and be updated on any material changes to the organisation. The purpose of this annual engagement is, to satisfy Education Scotland that the individual further education college or English language school continues to meet the standards identified in the quality framework. This meeting is likely to take half a day. There is a charge for this annual engagement.

14 Will I know in advance the date of my annual engagement visit?

- You will be notified of the visit four weeks before it takes place. You will be sent a self-assessment form, including a BACS transfer form, which you are required to complete and return to Education Scotland at least two weeks before the visit. Payment for the visit must be cleared before the visit will take place.

15 I note that *partial re-inspection* or *full re-inspection* are possible outcomes of the inspection process. What will be involved?

- Partial re-inspection will focus on the one area which was graded as less than good during the original inspection. Organisations will be required to pay a fee for partial re-inspection, determined by the time required by inspectors returning to the organisation to re-evaluate new evidence or new circumstances. It is envisaged that organisations are likely to be in a position to apply for partial re-inspection within a year from the original inspection.

Full re-inspection will require all areas to be re-examined by inspectors within a reasonable timescale. Fees will be determined by the time required by inspectors to plan and undertake the full re-inspection.

16 Who in Education Scotland do I contact for further information?

- In the first instance, you should contact our Office Manager. Please email: Private_College/Language_School@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or telephone 0131 244 4256.
- For further information in relation to the work of the UK Border Agency, please contact the Home Office: postmaster@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.
- For any questions relating to QAA, please contact the QAA website: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Scotland/Pages/Contact-QAA-Scotland.aspx>.