

The ICC Quality Assurance Scheme

What is it?

The ICC Certificate of Quality Assurance and Best Practice offers recognition within the ICC, its partner organisations around the world and the wider international community.

The Certificate may be awarded for any product or service in the broad spectrum language teaching, learning and research.

The award of the Certificate to an organisation is an endorsement of the high quality and reliability of its products and service. The ICC recognises that materials, delivery systems and assessment procedures for language learning vary according to the teaching environment of the learners and the aims of the instruction. As such the product or service is appraised on its own terms of merit, relevance to markets, professionalism, production values and innovation. The ICC nonetheless sets out criteria for quality and best practice which are relevant to all products and services.

Who benefits from the scheme?

The Quality Assurance Scheme brings benefits to:

- The organisation that owns the product or service by giving international recognition to it;
- the Membership of the ICC by drawing their attention to products or services of assured quality;
- other interested professionals through dissemination of products and services accredited by the ICC.

What happens?

An appraisal of the product or service takes place through the examination of documents and other evidence, and in some cases a site visit. The appraisal checks that the product or service reflects aspects of best practice in language learning, teaching and research against the criteria outlined in this document. The appraiser's expert report gives clear and concrete written indications of how the product or service meets the standards and thus satisfies the quality assurance requirements of the scheme. The appraiser makes an explicit recommendation to the ICC Executive Board to issue or not to issue a Certificate of Quality Assurance and Best Practice. Where the recommendation is that a Certificate is not issued, recommendations will be made to the organisation which if implemented should enable it to meet the required standard.

How long does it take?

Reports are normally available to the ICC Executive Board within three months of completed QA registration and payment of fee. Certificates of Quality Assurance and Best Practice are issued at the quarterly meetings of the ICC Executive Board.

How do I register?

Please complete the form on page 4 of this document and submit with accompanying documentation to the ICC QAS Secretariat.

The Criteria

The following criteria are those against which organisations will be assessed in relation to the ICC Certificate of Quality Assurance and Best Practice. **Organisations will need to supply supporting documentation to satisfy the appraiser that they meet all of these criteria.** If this is not possible they need to demonstrate that they satisfy the majority of them and have measures in place to meet the remainder.

a) Training Schemes

- A clear and appropriately detailed course programme is in place which is made available to learners and which includes a description of the aims of the programme, the learning outcomes and the form and duration of the training units
- A clear indication of the types of learners for whom the course is appropriate and who would not benefit from the course
- A statement of justification for the quality and exemplification of best practice in the training schemes
- A definition of the target groups, desired outcomes and aims of the training schemes.
- A range of methodology is employed that is relevant to the student body and their learning situation; for example intensive/extensive courses, distance learning programmes, modular courses, IT-based courses
- There are IT-based or e-based elements of the training schemes, for example access to a database of resources, intranet based work pages, remote feedback mechanisms, email communication with students, distance learning
- The course uses professionally produced, clearly written materials.

b) Training materials and resources

- A complete set of relevant training materials is in place
- High quality training materials are used that are professionally produced, clearly written, and relevant to the needs and interests of the target group
- A statement of justification for the quality and exemplification of best practice in the training materials
- A clear statement of the target group and the desired outcomes are clearly stated in the materials used
- A clear indication of the methodological and pedagogical principles underlying the development of the training materials
- IT-based or e-based elements of the training materials where this is appropriate to the target group

c) Examinations

- Examination arrangements are appropriate in relation to the assessment and accreditation of the learning outcomes described in the training scheme.
- High quality examination materials
- A statement of justification for the quality and exemplification of best practice in the examinations

- A clear indication of the target groups, desired outcomes and descriptors used for the levels of attainment.
- Where appropriate examinations are calibrated or benchmarked against existing recognised descriptors of competence (national standards, CEFR etc)
- A clear, written examination procedure
- A clear and demonstrable quality control procedure at setting
- Clear role descriptors for relevant staff involved in examinations including, for example, Chief Examiners, Examiners, Setters, Markers. And Moderators/Verifiers
- IT-based or e-based elements of the examinations where appropriate

On site visits

These are required where a proper appraisal of a product or service is possible only *in situ*. Possible activities to be undertaken during an on-site visit include:

- interviews with the applicant, tutors, trainees and administrative staff
- observation of training sessions or relevant management, technical, staff or student meetings
- inspection of dossiers, portfolios, record keeping, and other aspects of quality management
- observation or involvement in IT-based aspects of the product or service

Supporting documentation

Organisations will need to provide supporting documentation as evidence that the criteria are being met. Supporting documentation helps the ICC to establish that the product or service meets the aims, outcomes and specifications submitted by the applicant; and that it is of high quality and reflects aspects of best practice in language learning, teaching and research. The actual documentation required will vary in each case, but will need to provide evidence against the criteria.

Terms and Conditions

Registration and fees

1. The applicant will submit all necessary documentation.
2. Fees are payable in advance on receipt of an invoice from the ICC.
3. If an on-site visit is required, the applicant will cover the travel and subsistence costs up to the published maximum.

Appraisal

4. The applicant will receive a full copy of the appraiser's report, including all recommendations.
5. The Quality Assurance Secretariat will notify the applicant if the product or service cannot proceed to the appraisal stage. In this event, the fees will be reimbursed, minus an administration charge.

6. The Secretary for Quality Assurance will notify the applicant if the application requires significant changes. This may result in a delay in the appraisal procedure.

Validity

7. The Certificate is valid for a period of 5 years.

Appeals and suspensions

8. The ICC Executive Board has the right to suspend or withdraw the Certificate if complaints about or changes to the product or service indicate that quality has not been ensured or maintained.
9. The applicant has the right to appeal against the decision of the ICC Executive Board. The ICC Executive Board will review the documentation, the report and the applicant's submissions and then report their conclusions.
10. If the applicant is still not satisfied, another appraisal by mutually agreed experts may be requested. The applicant will be required to pay a repeat appraisal fee for the second appraisal; this fee will be reimbursed in full if the applicant's appeal is upheld.

Registration Form

Registration for the ICC Quality Assurance Scheme

Name of the Applicant for Quality Assurance

Name of Applicant's institution

Position of the Applicant

Product or service to be submitted for Quality Assurance

- Genre statement
- QAS statement

Contact details

Name

Postal address

Telephone

Fax

Email

Web

Documentation and evidence statement:

I hereby register [Product or service] for the ICC Quality Assurance Scheme and agree to the published terms and conditions.

I undertake to pay the Fee on receipt of invoice from the ICC.

I also undertake to reimburse the ICC for travel and subsistence costs up to the published maximum if the nature of the Product or service submitted for Quality Assurance requires an on-site visit or other travel by an Appraiser

Signature

Date

Stamp

To be returned to:

ICC International Language Network
Bernier Heerweg 183
D- 22143 Hamburg
Tel: +49 40 645 329 63
Fax: +49 40 645 329 79
info@icc-languages.eu