

INSPECTION REPORT: FULL INSPECTION – REACCREDITATION

INSTITUTION: OXFORD TUTORIAL COLLEGE

ADDRESS: 12 King Edward St
OXFORD OX1 4HT

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Mr Ralph Dennison

Dates of BAC visits:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Full inspection: | 10 January 1995 |
| Interim inspection | 25 November 1997 |
| Preliminary visit | 10 June 1999 |
| Full inspection: | 23 November 1999 |
| Preliminary visit | 01 October 2004 |
| Full inspection: | 9-10 February 2005 |
| Interim inspection | 19 January 2009 |
| Reaccreditation inspection: | 10-11 May 2010 |

BAC Inspection team:

Reporting Inspector: Dr Michael Watts, DPhil, CPhys, MInstP, Btech

Inspector: Dr David Gutmann, MA (Ed), BEd (Hons), Dip.RSA. FSBT, FRSA

Accreditation status: **Accreditation expiring June 2010**

**DATE OF CONSIDERATION BY
THE ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE
10 JUNE 2010**

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| NAME OF INSTITUTION | OXFORD TUTORIAL COLLEGE |
| Address | 12 King Edward Street, Oxford, OX1 4HT |
| Telephone | 01865 793333 |
| Website | www.otc.ac.uk |
| Main contact and email | Fiona Pocock, Principal, fiona.pocock@otc.ac.uk |
| REPORTING INSPECTOR | Dr Michael Watts |
| INSPECTION TEAM | Dr David Gutmann as Mentor |
| DATE OF INSPECTION | 10-11 May 2010 |

| ACADEMIC PROGRAMME | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Subject/award | Awarding body | NQF Level | Enrolments FT | Enrolments PT |
| A level | Edexcel, OCR, AQA, WJEC | 3 | 100 | 24 |
| GCSE, IGCSE | CIE, Edexcel, OCR, AQA, WJEC | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Full-time EFL | IELTS | n/a | 12 | 0 |
| Academic Semester in Oxford - Post Grad | n/a | n/a | 15 | 0 |

| STAFF DETAILS - NUMBERS | Permanent | Temporary | Self-employed |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Full-time teaching staff: | 30 | 0 | 0 |
| Part-time teaching staff: | 55 | 4 | 0 |
| Administrative staff | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Ancillary staff | 11 | 0 | 0 |

| STUDENT DETAILS | General visas | Child visas | Under 18 | Under 16 |
|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Total | | | | |
| Full-time | 77 | 74 see below* | 3 | 18 |
| Part-time | 0 | | | 0 |

* 47 at Tier 4, 27 at pre-Tier 4.

| INSTITUTIONAL DATA | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Date of establishment | 20 July 1995 |
| Date when teaching commenced | 1 September 1995 |
| Date of first BAC accreditation | November 1999 |
| Type (limited company etc) | Limited - not for profit |
| Company name | Oxford Educational Trust t/a Oxford Tutorial College |
| UKBA licence number (if applicable) | WNY 7RCVC1 |
| Maximum student capacity per 15 hour teaching block | 310 |

| OTHER ACCREDITATION | Status | Last/next inspection | Outcome |
|------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| ABLS Accreditation | N/A | | |
| Accreditation UK | N/A | | |
| ASIC | N/A | | |
| CoE Ministry Division | N/A | | |
| ODLQC | N/A | | |
| Ofsted | N/A | | |
| Other | N/A | | |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Background to institution*

Oxford Tutorial College (OTC/the College) was founded originally as part of Wolsey Hall, Oxford, in 1984. It was subsequently established in its own right as Oxford Tutorial College under the ownership of the Oxford Educational Trust in July 1995. The College, in this form, was initially accredited by BAC in November 1999. In January 2010, the College was sold to Robert Darrell and David Brown of ISIS Education & Travel, 259 Greenwich High Road, Greenwich, London, SE10 8NB. This company is a language and travel business, and the joint intention is to increase the business and provide further outreach for the College, especially in the USA and other overseas markets.

In 2002 the then Principal (in post since 1988) was appointed as Director and, additionally, became a Trustee. At this time a new Principal was appointed and is still in post. The two directors of the new owning company were both trustees of the College prior to its purchase and remain so. The College retains its five trustees prior to this sale, and its tutors and administrators all remain in post.

1.2 *Recent developments*

Since the last full inspection, in February 2005, the overall number of students has grown and the variety of the provision has increased. Currently there are 155 students enrolled - 126 full-time and 29 part-time. All the students are over 16 years of age. Whilst many students are recruited via personal recommendation, an increasing number of applicants approach the College via a few agencies. These agencies have developed a long-term and trusted interrelationship with the College, and the majority are UK based, so that all aspects of communications are good.

To accommodate this expansion effectively, and to address needs from the BAC inspection report of 1995, both the numbers of academic and administrative staffs have been increased. A high proportion of the academic staff are full time, and all the administrative staff are full time. The College has provided additional teaching rooms, named the Annex, on the second and third floors of 3, 4 & 5 King Edward Street. This has been in use for about three years, and is a similar building, immediately opposite the Main building, in King Edward Street. All science laboratory tuition is now in new laboratories in the Main building basement, and all but exceptional art classes are in the Annex. Separate toilets are now available for students and for staff in both buildings.

1.3 *Current provision*

The College is open to students from 08.30 to 19.00 hours each weekday, and tuition is between 09.00 and 18.00 hours. The majority of classes are provided in one-to-one tutorials, with a curriculum based on their individual needs.

Most students follow one or two year courses of tuition leading to A level (AS and A2) examinations. A small proportion of these are for retakes to improve module or subject grades. A very small number of students are tutored for GCSE and IGCSE examinations – mainly for English or mathematics. Virtually all available examination subjects are offered at each of these three levels. Students, typically, enrol for one or two year full-time courses, whilst others negotiate for more intensive and personalised tuition to address their specific needs. An additional programme of A2, AS, and GCSE courses is offered each Easter time, to address revision needs prior to the summer examinations.

A number of overseas students enrol for a pre-session course prior to studying at A level. This course comprises a mix of EFL, study skills, and cultural awareness as appropriate for each individual student. Full-time EFL tuition is provided to a small number of students, and also to those individuals on other courses where the need has been identified. Other related and specialist needs are also catered for, for example: university entrance (UCAS); interview techniques; learning skills.

At a higher level, a more sophisticated provision is offered to gap-year students and post-graduates – especially those from the USA. These academic courses are, typically, for one or two terms (semesters) or during the summer period. They provide tuition in College and visits to appropriate establishments

within the UK. Whilst not aiming at a formal qualification, they offer a personalised and enriching programme to broaden each student's mind, to provide a maturing experience, and to build their personal statement. Individual agreements between American universities and the College allow these students to accumulate points towards their entry for their subsequent studies in the USA. One of these courses approximates to the UK level 3, and the students are accommodated in an Oxford college for the summer duration.

1.4 *Inspection process*

The two inspectors inspected the College over two days. A tour of the College included all rooms; both those in the main building and those of the Annex. Additionally, one inspector examined one each of the three College hostels and of the many home-stay houses. Meetings were arranged with a group of tutors and a group of students. The College has invested extensively in ICT facilities so that many documents could be inspected in electronic format on their intranet. More formal, legal documentation was inspected in original hard copy format.

2. DETAILED COMMENTS

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector(s) during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.

2.1 Premises and Health and Safety

| Minimum standards: | Fully met | Partially met | Not met | N/A |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|---------|-----|
| <i>The institution has secure tenure on its premises</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for students and staff</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Statutory requirements in relation to fire, health and safety are met</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Classrooms provide adequate accommodation for the class sizes allocated to them</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Classrooms, laboratories and any other specialised areas are equipped to a level which allows for the efficient delivery of each academic programme</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>There are specific safety rules in areas of particular hazard (in science laboratories, for instance), and these are made readily available to students and staff</i> | ✓ | | | |

Areas assessed

2.1.1 General

The College comprises two buildings; the main and the Annex. The main building comprises; reception area, all the senior staff offices and administration, library, IT computing suite, kitchen, student common room, staff common room, two laboratories, and 26 tuition rooms. The Annex comprises a staff room, reference library, art room, kitchen, and 13 tuition rooms. The tuition rooms in both buildings vary in size, but the majority are suitable for one or two students, and a few would accommodate up to a maximum of about eight students. These larger rooms are utilised for candidates during examination sessions.

The main building has a modern lift to give access to all floors including the basement. Whilst the main and the Annex buildings each comprise several terraced houses, interconnecting corridors, with fire doors, link all the rooms on each floor. Both buildings provide separate toilets for students and for staff, although there is no toilet for the disabled in either building.

Both buildings have ground-floor access onto the Oxford-centre street, and are adequately equipped for security. Signage at the Annex entry is minimal. Both main and Annex buildings are well decorated, impressively clean and well maintained. Floors and stairs are either close carpeted or with a robust plastic surface. All rooms are clearly numbered, light and airy, and with opening windows for ventilation. Some rooms, on the western side of each building, are equipped with internal blinds. All corridors and most rooms benefit from noticeboards and large reproduction artworks.

Both main and Annex buildings are leased. The main building's lease is for 25 years and due to expire in 2013, whilst the Annex's is for 15 years and due to expire in 2022. Especially for overseas students, the College has one hostel house (College owned) and two other houses (leased) to provide bed and breakfast accommodation. In addition to this, they have established a large number of local home-stay premises on their books for overseas and UK students.

2.1.2 Facilities for teaching and learning

All tuition rooms are attractive, and equipped with appropriate quality seating, tables, and a large whiteboard. They are well insulated against sound penetration. Wifi is provided throughout all rooms of both buildings. The two new laboratories - a recent conversion in the main building basement - are of

high quality, and each has good provision for science teaching, with room for up to five students in each. Separate provision is made for storage of coats and bags. However, these two new laboratories have only one access door for both, with a lightweight folding partition/door between them. This results in serious sound penetration between them, and disturbance for one when a class from the other arrives or leaves. The ICT suite offers modern equipment for up to 10 students, with adequate table space for note taking and with appropriate seating. The large library in the main building provides lending of books for the full breadth of the courses offered, and a good range of current periodicals. There is a comprehensive stock of past examination question papers, and recordings of material for modern foreign-language tuition. Seating is provided for up to 20 students. A smaller reference library was in the Annex. All students were also encouraged to use the Oxford city library, which was a 10 minute walk away. Gap-year and post-graduate students also had special access to the nearby Oxford Union library during their one or two semesters of studies.

2.1.3 *Facilities for staff*

Tutors are provided with comfortable staff rooms – a large one in the main building and a smaller one in the Annex. Both are well equipped with IT facilities - the College intranet and internet access - and telephone, desks and chairs and lounge seating. In both cases, nearby kitchen facilities are available. In addition there are noticeboards, considerable storage shelving, cupboards, secure filing cabinets, and reference books available. Both libraries and the IT suite are available to tutors. Tutors can rely on the College to purchase necessary books. The Annex staff room also has a photocopier, there being three other photocopiers available in the main building. Staff have their own toilets, separate from those for the students.

2.1.4 *Facilities for students*

The large comfortable and attractive reception area with TV, on the ground floor of the main building, is clearly valued by students for relaxation and as a meeting place. In addition there is a small student common room in the basement. This is equipped with TV, a football game-table; lounge chairs and tables, and a drinks machine. Water dispensers are provided at various sites in both buildings. The College reception office is adjacent to the Main building entrance and is manned at all times for enquiries. In addition to the libraries and IT suite, students have free access to a dedicated study room - supervised by a tutor at all times. Both the main building and the Annex are served by wifi. The Annex also now provides a dedicated art room, mainly for two-dimensional but some three-dimensional work, where previously some of this work was conducted external to the College.

Oxford city provides a variety of places of worship, theatres and cinemas, bookshops, and a vast number of cafes and restaurants. Frequent Bus and train services are nearby, and these offer routes around Oxford, to local towns, and to London and other UK cities.

2.1.5 *External premises (if used)*

Currently the College has no regular need of further external accommodation for tuition. However, in some special circumstances, the art tutor makes his own Oxford studio available for tuition. Some additional floors and rooms are currently vacant on other storeys within the Annex building. The College has made regular enquiries about renting some of these for additional tuition rooms, but with no success to date.

2.1.6 *Health and safety*

The College has a comprehensive health and safety policy, which is displayed in both the main and the Annex buildings. Also displayed in reception are details of the Employers Liability Insurance, to be reviewed on 18 October 2010. Health and safety is managed overall by the Bursar who has been in post for five years. Fire drills are the responsibility of the Bursar's colleague, who was appointed six months ago.

2.1.6.1 *Health and safety policy and management*

A summary of the policy and aspects of health and safety are contained in the student guide and in the tutor guide. However, the full policy and laboratory safe practice are not shown in either of these two guides. Whilst the stairs and corridors are narrow in both buildings, especially those on the upper floors, there are no obstructions, and the floor and stair coverings are well maintained. Stair handrails are robust. Fire doors are fitted and allowed to be in their normally closed position. The new laboratories display safe practice notices, provision for eye protection, emergency cut off points (gas and electricity), a fume cabinet, separate storage of coats and bags. In all areas of multiple electrical equipment – IT suite, libraries, common rooms – the electrical wiring is neat and tidy.

Whilst not qualified specifically in this area, both the Bursar and colleague have attended courses at the local fire station, and use web searches to gain additional information. Recently sought advice has identified other issues and their solutions - the new laboratories must each only accommodate five students, according to CLEAPSS recommendations.

2.1.6.2 *Fire precautions*

The College buildings are now well equipped with appropriate fire extinguishes. These are checked and maintained by an external contractor - most recently inspected on 2 November 2009. Exit routes are clearly displayed in both buildings. The Bursar's colleague, as Fire Marshal, is responsible for fire drills, as well as for the health and safety of hostels and home-stay accommodation. This officer has attended a fire marshal course recently, and is enthusiastic about extending her knowledge. Fire drills for each of the two buildings are at different times, and are each at least once every term. This officer keeps detailed records of each occasion and identifies additional specific issues to be checked for the next evacuation. The officer is fully aware of the need for continuous improvement in education of all staff, tutors and students, and is addressing methods to improve awareness and appropriate actions. In particular, the officer is intending to introduce specific safety elements into the student induction programme.

2.1.6.3 *First aid*

The Bursar is also the first aid leader and coordinator for training and the operation. The number of first aiders was increased to a total of four when the College expanded to the Annex, so that first aiders are always available in both buildings. All first aiders are full-time permanent members of staff. Standard incident report sheets are held in reception, and fully completed sheets are held in a secure file in the Bursary. First aid boxes are sited and maintained in appropriate locations within both buildings.

2.1.7 *Section summary*

The College's strengths in this area include good security, improved fire precautions and good recent fire drill, light and airy accommodation which is well decorated and maintained throughout with stimulus material and noticeboards, and the College's central location in the city.

Weaknesses include multiple floors, narrow corridors and staircases, no lavatory for the disabled, and some important elements missing from available documentation.

2.2 Management, Staffing and Administration

| Minimum standards: | Fully met | Partially met | Not met | N/A |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------|
| <i>The institution is effectively managed</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>The administration of the institution is effective</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Statutory requirements in relation to employment are met</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Statutory duties in relation to equalities and non-discrimination are enforced across the full range of the institution's provision.</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Staff have an appropriate level of experience and qualifications</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Attendance and punctuality are recorded and monitored</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>The institution complies with UKBA requirements</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Entry requirements for each course are clearly stated and institutions take reasonable steps to ensure that students accepted for enrolment meet these requirements</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>There are satisfactory procedures for the administration of examinations and other means of assessment</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Publicity material gives a comprehensive and accurate description of the institution and its academic programme</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>There is no breach of copyright regulations</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Institution complies with requirements of the Data Protection Act 2003</i> | | | | ✓ * |

Notes

* The College has no licence and, on thorough checking with BAC, currently has no need of one.

AREAS ASSESSED

2.2.1 *Management structure*

The College provided their organogram, annotated with names of officers currently in post. The academic team comprises the Director, the Principal, the Director of Studies, the Academic Registrar, and the Bursar. In general the Principal manages the academic, administrative and public relations parts, and the Director the business aspects of the College. The new owners have so far not interfered with either of these major aspects of the College. The Director is a Trustee, and attends the three formal advisory Board of Trustee meetings annually. In addition, the Director has informal discussions with individual Trustees on the longer term aspects of the College's future, managing change, matters of policy, and especially about students from the USA. Both Principal and Director delegate the day-to-day College management to their second in line teams of staff who, in their turn, rely on the support of their colleagues.

2.2.2 *Academic staff*

The Principal delegates the major academic responsibilities to the Director of Studies (for tutors, timetable, and current students) and to the Registrar (for marketing, student recruitment, and the initial assessment of students). The Registrar is supported by a further member of staff, who focuses specifically on student recruitment from the USA.

In addition to the teaching responsibility of tutors, 17 of them hold the responsibility of personal tutor, for which they report direct to the Principal. This enhanced provision has been in place now for three years, with each personal tutor monitoring their students' progress, holding regular weekly one-to-one meetings with up to 10 students. Personal tutors commonly advise students about university admission and routinely attend specialist training provided by UCAS.

2.2.3 *Academic management*

Senior academic staff meet informally every two weeks to discuss confidential matters, which are not minuted. Tutors meet each term, and these meetings are minuted and feedback shared as appropriate. All academic staff meet annually in June – again, this is a formal meeting which is minuted. Other, informal, meetings are convened as necessary, and these may well extend to include other staff relevant to the particular agenda. Personal tutors have no senior tutor, but report direct to the Principal for matters relating to these specific responsibilities.

2.2.4 *Administrative staff*

The number of administrative staff has been increased gradually over the last few years to enhance the provision and more clearly delineate their individual responsibilities.

2.2.5 *Employment*

Tutors are all employed as permanent members of staff, and are hourly paid. Many have worked for the College for many years in either full or part time capacity. Some Oxford University research students supplement this team. Administrative staff are all full time permanent employees of the College. Each has a job description.

All documentation relating to human resources is the responsibility of the Bursar. Confidential files are held on each member of staff, including the contract of employment and CV. Some tutors and staff have been employed by the College for many years so that some CVs are not current, but a programme of regular updating is in place.

2.2.6 *Equalities and non-discrimination*

The College has a policy for equal opportunities and for non-discrimination. In particular, the College has enrolled a student with cerebral palsy for the academic year 2010-2011. These policies are, however, not provided in the student or tutor guides.

2.2.7 *Compliance with UKBA requirements*

The College complies fully with current UKBA requirements, and has been inspected recently by a UKBA representative. The College's status of sponsor has been confirmed. They have very recently applied to UKBA for Highly Trusted Status and currently await the outcome.

2.2.7.1 *Hours of study*

All overseas students receive at least 15 hours supervised study between the hours of 09.00 and 18.00 on weekdays. Where the formal subject tuition of some students is less than 15 hours, the difference is made up by the requirement for these students to attend the fully supervised study room, where tutors are always available, and where attendance is formally monitored.

2.2.7.2 *Attendance monitoring*

All tutors monitor their students' attendance in a paper format at every tutorial session. This documentation also records the tutor's attendance and consequential payment, hence providing an incentive to maintain these records fully and promptly. In addition, tutors always report student absences direct to reception for them to make the initial enquiry and provide feedback.

2.2.7.3 *Action taken if attendance unsatisfactory*

The student is telephoned or visited, and the parent advised, should no good and valid reason be offered for non-attendance. The student's personal tutor also is advised, and will pursue the reasons in a one-to-one discussion. Initially communication is in person or by telephone but, subsequently, it is by letter setting out the formal requirements and the legal position, especially should the student be subject to a

Tier 4 visa. The final stage would require the student to be interviewed by the Principal, which is followed by a letter from the College. UKBA is informed as appropriate; originally by letter, but now electronically as agreed with UKBA. The College now also informs UKBA when a student leaves the College normally at the end of a course.

2.2.7.4 *Level of programmes*

The main emphasis of the tuition is on AS level and A level GCE. There is a small provision for GCSE and IGCSE (level 2) and, additionally, for the overseas gap year and post-graduate students who, typically, are at level 3. All students whose native language is not English are tested for their English language skills on arrival. Students not able to demonstrate competence at level 5.5 (English language qualification) are then given EFL tuition as necessary.

2.2.7.5 *Approved awards*

None are available or offered by the College.

2.2.8 *Student registration*

Prospective students may register online via the College website application form, and the majority do so. Alternatively, they may use the printed form provided in the College brochures. This is a comprehensive document and requires a passport photograph. Those received in hard-copy format are converted to an electronic format, whilst retaining the hard copy. These documents are held by the College as part of the individual student's electronic record. All records are held securely with restricted access.

All prospective students are interviewed, if not in person then via a closed internet video system. In particular, overseas students are requested to show their valid passports during these sessions, and it also provides a good opportunity to get an indication of students' skills in English language.

2.2.9 *Publicity*

The College's website is current and comprehensive, whilst remaining fast to respond to searches and individual page requests. The material presented is essentially the same text as provided in the brochures. This material is updated every two years. This includes current photographs of Oxford, the College facilities and many of the students at work and relaxing. Currently there is work in hand to update that information for the gap year and post-graduate courses, to include relevant UKBA information and requirements, and to improve search facilities. The College Academic Registrar is especially aware of the importance of a proactive approach in marketing, high quality personal service, and of the need for excellence in public relations more generally. The website map of Oxford could be clearer and, perhaps, might usefully reflect the design given in the brochures.

The College has formal agreements with their few long standing agents based in the UK and overseas. These now bring continuity of understanding needs – especially with regard to the new UKBA requirements - and recruit some overseas students. These agreements are updated every two years and are also accessible on the College website for all to see. However, many overseas students are recruited by word of mouth from fellow students, or their parents, and this applies more generally to those students originating from the UK.

2.2.10 *Copyright*

Four photocopiers are provided within the College. Three of these are in the main building, and one in the Annex. Each has a CLA licence notice nearby, but in one case it was not immediately apparent to the potential user.

2.2.11 *Data protection*

No current data protection licence is held by the College. This matter is now being addressed and BAC should be advised upon completion of registration with the Information Commissioner's Office.

2.2.12 *Section summary*

The College's strengths in this area include a recent increase in administrative staffing and clear identification of roles, realistic responsibilities for personal tutors to better serve students' needs, and potential synergy of expertise between new owners and current staff.

Weaknesses are mainly with respect to the future development and expansion of the College. The management style of the new owners (a language and travel business) is not yet identified. Much internal communication and administration is informal, which will provide challenges for further growth if not formalised.

2.3 STUDENT WELFARE

| Minimum standards: | Fully met | Partially met | Not met | N/A |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------|
| <i>Students receive an appropriate level of pastoral support, taking into account factors such as their age, abode and country of origin</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Specifically in the case of students from overseas, the institution provides an appropriate level of advice and assistance</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Where students are under the age of 18 or vulnerable adults, the institution meets the requirements of the Child Protection Act 1999, the Education Act 2002, and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, in relation to checks on the employment of staff</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Where the institution enrolls students with special needs, an appropriate level of support or provision is available. The institution has responded to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005</i> | ✓ * | | | |
| <i>If the institution offers residential accommodation, it is clean, safe and open to inspection by the appropriate authorities and that a level of supervision is provided appropriate to the needs of the students</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>If the institution organises home-stay accommodation for students, it is inspected before students are placed and subject to regular re-inspection</i> | ✓ | | | |

Notes:

* Although no physically disabled students are currently enrolled, students with identified learning needs such as dyslexia are supported appropriately by their tutors. Although there is a lift in the main building, there is currently no toilet for the disabled in either building.

AREAS ASSESSED

2.3.1 *General*

There have been further improvements in the pastoral care and support with the expansion into the supplementary Annex building and the fact that, in addition, all students are allocated a personal tutor, who meets each individual student for half an hour each week. The tutor/student ratio of 1:10 is the norm, and this is a considerable improvement on that noted in the last full inspection. The newly acquired building across the road provides more than adequate space for study, including provision for supervised study, a large library and study area, internet access in the IT suite, and common room facilities in the basement and foyer areas. Although there are no catering facilities on site, the College's proximity to city centre facilities cannot be better.

Considerable care is given to the one day induction process for all students. It includes taking a photograph of each student for the College's student record file. Special emphasis is made to the areas of health and safety, and a check-list is provided to each student as a reminder of the College tutors and staff they need to see initially. Further information is provided in the student guide, though this is incomplete in some aspects, and would benefit from co-ordination with other relevant material, such as College policies, and with College branding and presentation comparable with the brochures. More ephemeral material could be issued separately. There might be benefit in each student signing a document to confirm that they have read and fully understood the various College policies, and the accommodation requirements, after the first few days.

2.3.2 *Overseas students*

The overall proportion of overseas (Tier 4 visa) students is currently 55%, verified by registration staff. Student gain a high level of assistance with comprehensive pre-arrival advice by email and telephone; some advice is given by overseas agents. All students are registered with a local medical practice and, if required, are assisted with police registration. Advice on bank accounts is provided verbally and in the comprehensive induction pack, and student welfare staff can assist students to find part-time jobs if

necessary. American students on the gap year and post-graduate courses are sometimes found internships with local charitable organisations. Several overseas students live in the residential accommodation the College provides or in host families (see below). Agencies used to recruit overseas students now provide some welfare support to these students, especially on arrival in the UK and subsequently during their time at the College, and this is greatly valued by all concerned.

2.3.3 *Child protection*

There are very few students under 18 (currently six), and they are entered for GCSE or IGCSE. All tutorial staff, regardless of the ages they teach, have an enhanced CRB check. A single central register of CRB details was seen by inspectors. The College admitted that not all CRB checks were up to date, but that this routine process was part of an enhanced administrative programme to be put in place.

2.3.4 *Provision for students with special needs or disabilities*

Although no physically disabled students are currently enrolled, students with identified learning needs such as dyslexia are supported appropriately by their tutors. The needs of students of different cultures and religions are well respected; for example, one of the host families provides halal meat for Muslim students. Although there is a lift in the main building, there is currently no toilet for the disabled in either building. Inspectors recommended that the College explores, with the landlords, the possibility of converting a room for disabled use. During the inspection, the student officer responsible for welfare informed inspectors that a disabled student was enrolling for September, and that special arrangements had been made to accommodate her on the ground floor of the residential accommodation identified for her.

2.3.5 *Residential accommodation*

Currently three houses (in Oxford city centre and within walking distance) are provided, each with a Dean. One house is owned by the College and is used as a hostel, but the lease runs out on the other two houses during this academic year. However, it is planned to purchase a second hostel in September. An inspector who visited the current hostel (which was owned by Oxford Educational Trust, and is now owned by the College's new owners) found a high standard of accommodation. There are several washing machines and a dishwasher. The students' rooms are light, clean and airy. Fire precautions are good, because the regularly serviced extinguishers and fire blanket were supplemented by regular fire drills which were logged. All electrical equipment seen was PAT-tested.

2.3.6 *Home-stay*

Up to 40 home-stay families are currently being used by the College, out of a bank of 170 held on file. The College's Student Officer, responsible for welfare, provides a good level of support for students and the home-stay providers working in partnership. She clearly has a good grasp of home-stay requirements, and has built up a strong partnership with the providers. An inspector visited one of the nearest providers and found conditions to be good. The provider and her family ensured students became very much part of the family. The quality of accommodation was very good. The student officer gives all students a personal health questionnaire, so that any particular needs can be notified to providers. She visits all providers, questions them about the family, diets, and pets, and ensures that they have a full description of intending students. She provides home-stay students with a special handbook (with a Chinese version seen) which helps students adjust to what to them may be an alien culture at first.

2.3.7 *Social programme*

A wide-ranging social programme is in place for the benefit of all non-local students, and these are free to join. Events planned for all students include celebrations for Thanksgiving Day, Chinese New Year and a Christmas party. There is a boat cruise, theatre trips, bowling competitions and, from time to time, music clubs. A plan for comprehensive range of social activities for students on the summer programme 2010 was seen.

2.3.8 *Student opinion (report of meeting with representative student group – 14 in number)*

Up to a year ago there was an official student representative group. Although this is not currently in operation, a newly appointed member of the administrative staff plans to start a new group. On the second day of the inspection, the inspectors met 14 female and male students. It was clear from the highly positive discussion with the students that they valued the high levels of both teaching and pastoral support. They talked about the tutors' good subject expertise, their very good relationships with them, and the high expectations that students would improve their work and pass their examinations. Exam preparation was thorough with frequent tests and mock examinations, and students' work was always quickly and constructively marked with high quality feedback.

2.3.9 *Section summary*

Student guidance and welfare is of a very high quality. It is clear that the good provision and outcomes reported on at previous inspections have been maintained and enhanced. This has been in two ways. Firstly, by the embedding of the high quality personal tutor system, so that every student feels valued and is encouraged to perform to her/his highest level and, secondly, through the very good teaching and learning system, mainly through one-to-one tuition, whereby students are thoroughly prepared for external examinations by experienced teachers of the highest quality. Students said they would recommend the College to others.

Students currently have no direct access to senior College staff outside the usual College open hours in an emergency, although the College telephone answering service does offer the Principal's mobile number.

2.4 TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

| Minimum standards: | Fully met | Partially Met | Not met | N/A |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------|
| <i>The courses are planned and delivered in ways that offer students a reasonable chance of success</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Teachers have an acceptable level of subject knowledge and pedagogic skill</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Teachers respond to the individual learning needs of students</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Students are enabled to prepare for target examinations</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Students receive quality feedback on their performance and progress</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Students have reasonable access to appropriate resources for study either within the institution or externally</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>There is appropriate provision of advice for students going on to employment or higher/further education</i> | ✓ | | | |

AREAS ASSESSED

2.4.1 Curriculum

This is defined by awarding body's specification in each case where the student becomes a candidate for a public examination. Courses are offered to meet almost all subjects offered at A level (AS & A2), IGCSE, GCSE, and IELTS. Gap year and post-graduate residential short courses are matched to individual needs. They are, typically, at level 3. These students are not examined or provided with internal College awards.

2.4.2 Effectiveness of teaching

Several tutorials were visited and observed by the inspectors. The subjects included: physics, study support, history, business studies, philosophy, religious studies, media studies, mathematics, music technology, history, sociology, chemistry, and EFL. The number of students in each tutorial varied between one and four, but was frequently one. Most subjects were of A level (AS or A2). The EFL tutorial was especially dynamic in the variety of techniques used by the tutor to interest and motivate the students.

Strengths include: tutors all displayed subject expertise, work extended beyond the examination requirements to support students' individual circumstances and study needs, tutors maintain close relationship with students, students gain considerable confidence from high expectations, tutors demonstrated up to date awareness of specification and examination requirements, students were prepared thoroughly through frequent progress tests and mock examinations and used innovative material, students homework was assessed with considerable supportive comment, and tutors used whiteboards well. There was no use of ICT or visual aids other than whiteboard and marker pen, perhaps understandably in view of the usual one-to-one situation.

2.4.3 Learning materials

Students and tutors benefit from the considerable resources in College – two libraries, IT suite, wifi, internet access, and well equipped staff rooms, as well as the more usual course notes and guidance worksheets provided by tutors, and free access to the nearby Oxford City library.

2.4.4 Assessment

Aside from promptly and effectively assessed regular homework, all examination students are given fortnightly tests. These results are held electronically in each student's personal file, increasingly in electronic format. Personal tutors review and discuss these outcomes at the weekly personal tutor/student meetings, so that students are clearly aware of their progress towards the individual plan agreed at first interview, and remedial support can be identified and provided where necessary. Mock

examinations are held just before each of the major public examinations sessions. Students are assessed initially for English language support and then a programme of tutorials is agreed to best meet their individual needs.

All the administration and documentation relating to public examinations, including tutor-assessed coursework, is held secure by the Examinations Officer who is well experienced in this work and has been in post for six years. Summaries of public examination grades and their analysis for the College are completed every three years, and these are accessible on their intranet. Awarding bodies' reports, including senior examiners' reports on individual subjects for the past three years, are now accessible via the awarding bodies' websites. These are then readily accessible to College tutors and students.

2.4.5 *Ancillary programmes*

Study skills of a high standard are offered to: those who request this support - particularly overseas students; those whose regular assessments identify a need; those attending pre sessional courses.

2.4.6 *Higher education and careers advice*

UCAS preparation is provided and some tutors and all personal tutors have attended recent UCAS university admissions training.

2.4.7 *Section summary*

Strengths include small class sizes, committed, experienced and well-qualified tutors and personal tutors with have very good relationships with their students. Most tutorials are one-to-one, good libraries and ICT resources are readily available, and there is private study support which is fully supervised and always available.

There are currently no weaknesses identified. However, with an increased numbers of students, ICT visual presentations might prove to be a useful teaching aid.

2.5 MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

| Minimum standards: | Fully met | Partially met | Not met | N/A |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------|
| <i>The institution has effective systems to monitor its own standards</i> | | ✓ | | |
| <i>Students are adequately briefed on the nature and requirements of the courses for which they enrol</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>Student progress is effectively monitored and the monitoring is linked to procedures to allow for prompt intervention where appropriate</i> | ✓ | | | |
| <i>The institution has a means of accessing and monitoring the views of students and clients</i> | | ✓ | | |
| <i>Students have access to a fair complaints procedure</i> | ✓ * | | | |
| <i>In the case of internal awards, there is a clear statement of the NQF level claimed and evidence that students who receive the award meet the stated requirements for that level</i> | | | | ✓ |
| <i>Students have the means of appealing against assessment marks or grades in the case of internal awards</i> | | | | ✓ |
| <i>The requirements of the Education Reform Act 1988 in relation to the offer or award of degrees are fully observed</i> | | | | ✓ |
| <i>Where programmes lead to the award of a degree, the awarding body itself is nationally accredited or, in the case of US degrees, accredited by a body recognised by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (www.chea.org)</i> | | | | ✓ |

Notes:

* This is currently an informal process via tutors, personal tutors, and the Principal.

AREAS ASSESSED

2.5.1 *Quality assurance policy and systems*

The College has a quality assurance policy in place, and provides questionnaires for students to complete at the end of each term. However, a formal summary of academic issues might result from these opportunities, and this could be shared with tutors and personal tutors to review the current high academic standards.

2.5.2 *Student enrolment*

This is a robust and flexible process with all data held both electronically, and also in hard copy where it arrives in this format. Each student's photograph is also held on the file. Prospective students' documentation and certification are checked, and the resulting student files held by the Academic Registrar, with access limited to the senior staff and personal tutors.

2.5.3 *Monitoring of student progress*

Each student's progress is closely and regularly monitored via the subject tests at two week intervals, end of term tests, and the weekly one-to-one meetings with the personal tutor. These outcomes are held on each student's personal electronic file. Lack of appropriate progress and any specific needs are identified, and subsequently discussed promptly at informal meetings to resolve the matter or identify solutions. This clearly works very well, and the students are most appreciative of the personal guidance and support provided.

2.5.4 *Student feedback (forms)*

Students complete a general questionnaire at the end of each term, and these are viewed by the Principal. In view of the potential growth, a more formal analysis might result from this important

feedback, and this could be shared with tutors, staff and students to maintain the current high standards of personal relationships and welfare.

2.5.5 *Tutor and staff appraisal and development*

Some tutorials are observed by the Director of Studies, but there is no routine monitoring of tutors and personal tutors. Each tutor has an annual meeting with the Director of Studies, and the outcome is held on the tutor's personal file. Tutorial review, for new and possibly inexperienced tutors, might be beneficial, together with an opportunity for the sharing of skills, techniques, and appropriate opportunities for growth. Problems that arise in relation to tutors and their work are initially referred to the Director of Studies, who investigates immediately. Should some training be appropriate, this is readily available, and access to new books and library resources are, apparently, never refused. No review or appraisal of administrative staff was apparent.

2.5.6 *Internal awards*

The College offers no internal awards.

2.5.7 *External awards*

Currently provided by the UK awarding bodies: AQA, CIE, Edexcel, OCR, WJEC, and IELTS.

2.5.8 *Section summary*

Strengths include good tutoring, and enhanced personal tutor provision to monitor students' progress and to provide appropriate additional support. Weaknesses include: lack of regular formality in review of students' feedback and of tutor appraisal, no formal complaints procedure in place, no review of administrative staff progress or needs, and no opportunity provided for tutors and administrative staff development in-house.

3. REQUIREMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 REQUIREMENTS THAT MUST BE MET BEFORE ACCREDITATION

None

3.2 Requirements that must be met before the first inspection after accreditation

- 3.2.1 The College must convert one room on the ground floor to a toilet for the physically disabled (in either building) so that physically disabled students can be recruited in future. (2.3.4)
- 3.2.2 The College must integrate the various relevant documents and information into one student guide so that it provides a centralised complete resource of non ephemeral material. (2.1.6.1, 2.2.6, 2.3.1, 2.5.1)
- 3.2.3 Each tutor's CV, CRB, and enhanced CRB checks should be current. (2.2.5, 2.3.3)
- 3.2.4 The College must ensure that CLA licence details are clearly visible at all photocopiers. (2.2.10)

3.3 Recommendations to institution

- 3.3.1 College should more formally monitor tutor and staff skills and encourage professional growth. (2.5.5)
- 3.3.2 The College should consider soundproof partitioning between the two science labs to provide physical access yet maintain access and ventilation. The College should consider other laboratory facilities relevant to increasing student numbers. (2.1.2, 2.1.6.1)
- 3.3.3 With potential expansion, the College should recognise potential need for more formal internal communications. (2.2.3)
- 3.3.4 The College should provide a mobile telephone number to students for emergency contact out of College hours. (2.3.9)
- 3.3.5 The College should provide a mechanism for routine analysis and feedback of student opinion via existing termly questionnaire, and re-establish representative student group as soon as possible. (2.5.4)
- 3.3.6 The College Annex building would benefit from external signage and branding. (2.1.1.2)
- 3.3.7 The College website map of Oxford should be clearer, as in printed brochures. (2.2.9)

4. DECISION ON ACCREDITATION

- 4.1 The Accreditation Committee agreed that Oxford Tutorial College should be awarded re-accreditation for four years, with an interim inspection mid-way through the accreditation period. It will be expected that the College will work towards meeting the requirements listed in section 3.2 and consider the recommendations in section 3.3, and confirmatory evidence will be required at the time of the interim inspection, as well as considering the College's compliance with statutory requirements and assessing any major changes that have occurred.

4.2 *Conclusion, general summary and further comments on accreditation*

The College provides a high level of tuition and support for students from home and overseas. UKBA requirements are fully met, and the College is complying with all aspects of its sponsor's licence. The new owners have a good awareness, of requirements to be borne in mind as they seek to expand further. However, to do this successfully, the College is advised to formalise some of the communication, monitoring, and quality processes, so that they are systematically implemented.

**APPROVED FOR DISTRIBUTION TO
THE HEAD OF OXFORD TUTORIAL COLLEGE
10 JUNE 2010**