

CURRICULUM POLICY

AIMS:

- To provide a broad curriculum suitable to meet the diverse needs of young adult and adult EFL learners of all nationalities, ages, abilities and levels, studying on courses of various lengths.
- The curriculum should include general English, a range of EFL exam classes and Business English.

POLICY:

- To ensure external parties (students, agents etc) are fully aware of our course provision and to give guidance on course selection for each student.
- To ensure staff throughout the company, but in particular in the academic, marketing, enrolments and student services departments have a thorough knowledge of our curriculum.
- To review the curriculum at regular intervals, taking into account the views of staff, students and agents.
- To provide clear and detailed written information (eg manuals, brochures, website) and oral presentations to convey this information to all parties.
- To provide teachers with comprehensive syllabuses and course outlines for all courses, including modules.
- To provide extra-curricular activities in support of our overall educational aims.
- To provide clear progression pathways for students, especially those on longer term courses (3 months or longer).
- To focus on open group classes, but to provide one-to-one and closed group classes on request.

PROCEDURES:

1. Set up regular meetings and focus groups between senior managers, teachers and students regarding course content and feedback, also ideas for future courses.
2. Check and analyse results of student surveys on course satisfaction and content. Provide actions for improvements/ amendments where necessary.
3. Marketing to get feedback from agents on current courses and to discuss ideas for future courses.
4. Academic and marketing departments to provide regular workshops and presentations for students and other staff members.
5. Academic and marketing departments to co-ordinate information dissemination internally and externally via brochures, AV systems, posters and flyers in centres, etc.

6. Senior managers to meet regularly to determine changes and additions to the curriculum, based on feedback from all sources.

ACADEMIC ETHOS:

MH is a learning organisation with a strong belief in the value of training for all its staff members, to the benefit of our students. We specialise in using technology to enhance our students' learning and to develop their autonomy in the classroom and beyond.

CORE ACADEMIC PRINCIPLES OF MALVERN HOUSE COURSES:

- i. **The syllabus.** The syllabus for all course types (general, business and exam English) is based on a core programme, covering all four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing and also language systems: grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. There are also supplementary classes available for students requiring additional help in areas of weakness or specific need or interest (eg writing modules etc).
- ii. **Learning outcomes and CEFR.** The balance of syllabus elements outlined above is determined by the academic staff, based on the learning needs of the class and also external requirements, such as exams. There are clearly stated learning outcomes at each level for students, teachers and other interested parties, which are demonstrable and measurable through appropriate forms of testing and/or exams. These learning outcomes are linked to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for languages) and all students and teachers should have clear information on this.
- iii. **Progress rate and learning pathways.** Students progress at different rates for a variety of reasons and our systems reflect this, with students able to change levels at various points in the term, once they have achieved the required learning outcomes. Students should be encouraged to progress to exam classes (eg IELTS or Cambridge exams) or business English courses where appropriate. Learning pathways for students should be outlined by their teachers and in the written information provided for students (eg student progress diary).
- iv. **Innovations and learning technology.** Malvern House actively supports and encourages innovations and development in teaching methodology, with a particular interest in e-learning, m-learning and all aspects of 'blended learning'. Provision of this is encouraged and developed by the Learning Technology Co-ordinator, the Academic Director and all senior management to ensure that use of IWBs is as effective as possible and that we are at the cutting edge of learning technology in EFL. The impact on the learner should be central to all developments, whose aim is to improve learning outcomes for students.

- v. **Student-centred approach.** Teaching methods and systems encourage student involvement and participation at all stages of the learning process. The needs and interests of each particular class and individuals within it should be accommodated, where possible. Weekly plans should be compiled by teachers with this in mind.
- vi. **Student learning support and autonomy.** All students are given feedback in the monthly one-to-one progress interview with their teacher, backed up with a short written report in the student progress diary, to ensure that they progress rapidly, meet their goals and achieve their full potential. They are encouraged to become independent learners and to extend their learning beyond the classroom by means of appropriate study skills training, homework and study guidance. They should also be informed of extra-curricular activities.
- vii. **Communicative approach.** There is an emphasis on increasing students' ability to use language as a vehicle for spoken and written communication to prepare them for using English in real life settings. There is a focus on both fluency and accuracy and pair and group work should be incorporated, where appropriate.
- viii. **English beyond the classroom.** Academic staff should be aware of the huge benefits to the students of studying in an English-speaking environment and teachers should be encouraged to use the world outside the classroom as an excellent resource. It is a two-way process and students should also be given opportunities to integrate their experiences from the outside world into their lessons.
- ix. **English- language medium.** Teachers and students of all levels must use English only in class at all times in order to maximise opportunities for language practice. This will also help students to diminish their reliance on translating word for word, thereby increasing their ability to use English naturally and appropriately, which will accelerate their rate of progress.
- x. **Pronunciation.** This is often an area of weakness for students who have only studied in their home countries. It is also one that they expect and need to focus on and develop while studying and living in the UK. Pronunciation teaching should be integrated within lessons, to help students' oral and aural communication. There should also be dedicated classes/ slots within lessons for this and teachers should receive ongoing support and training in this.