

CA Institute of Languages

Quality Management Manual

AJSA Standards for Quality Language Teaching

The principles and requirements of the Association of Language Schools and Agencies' Standards (AJSA Standards) were laid down at an AJSA Board meeting held in České Budějovice on 25.11.2011 and 26.11.2011 with the aim of ensuring and maintaining the high quality of language teaching at members of AJSA Association of Language Schools and Agencies CR, and to obtain a Certificate for AJSA from an independent certification company testifying compliance with the conditions of the Standards.

These Standards are to be used exclusively for the certification of AJSA through an audit of its members. The subject-matter of certification is the quality of language teaching provided by the language schools involved.

These Standards are binding for all language schools which are members of AJSA, Association of Language Schools and Agencies CR, and which have signed up to meet the requirements set out below; it should be noted that the participation of language schools is voluntary.

Requirements: Written undertaking to comply with the Standards and the Code

A language school which involves itself in the process of certification through AJSA must make public its undertaking to comply with the requirements of these AJSA Standards for Quality Language Teaching and with the AJSA Code of Quality. These Standards and the Code must be generally accessible to all employees of the schools involved, to cooperating organizations or persons and to all clients.

Infrastructure and responsibility

1. During an audit, each language school must prove its ability to ensure all requisites of the language teaching provided in accordance with the requirements of these Standards.
2. The school must make public basic information on what its focus is (contact address and person, opening hours etc.).
3. The school must define responsibility and appoint a person responsible for compliance with the points of these Standards and the AJSA Code of Quality.
4. The school must prove that it has appropriate space and equipment as corresponding to the purpose and focus of teaching:
 - a language school must have at least one brick-and-mortar branch which the public/clients may contact; the branch/head office of a language school must be open for a minimum of 10 office hours a week spanning a minimum of 2 days a week;
 - a language school must have a website on which the AJSA logo is also presented.
 - Each classroom at a language school must be equipped with a CD player (or other equivalent sound file player) and a board or flip chart.

The provision of teaching for companies must be such that the teacher is able to use a CD player (or other equivalent sound file player) in each lesson without limitation.

A language school must have a library for teachers on its premises and this must be accessible during the office hours of the language school.

Each language school must have appropriate amenities for teachers (areas in which to prepare lessons).

Methodology of language teaching and teachers

1. A school must define a written methodology for the provision of language teaching aimed at harmonizing procedures and achieving the aims of teaching and must also prove the existence of a methodologist at the language school responsible for setting out and adhering to the relevant methodology.
2. A school must prove that a minimum of 80 % of its teachers comply with the qualification requirements laid down by these Standards. A teacher is considered to be qualified if:
 - he/she has successfully graduated from language-related Masters or Bachelors studies (teaching or other language studies), or; has graduated from university in a discipline not related to languages and has either
 - a minimum of 3 years of provable experience and a TEFL or other appropriate certificate, or;
 - has completed secondary education and has either a minimum of 5 years of provable experience or has passed an examination at level C1 / C2.

Documents and records

1. The school must keep documents and records proving the planning, management and monitoring of the services provided.
2. These documents must be stored and must be available for inspection; documents from the current calendar year and the previous year will be checked during an audit.
3. The language school must primarily prove the existence of the following: lesson plans; a methodology and a methodologist at the language school; analyses having been carried out of the language needs of students;
 - a system of testing language abilities;
 - mechanisms for allocating students to language courses;
 - records of teaching that was completed (class register or equivalent document);
 - attendance sheets;
 - in-house questionnaires relating to the quality of teaching and satisfaction with the language school;
 - records of lesson observation and a specification of the frequency of lesson observation;
 - a system of awarding certificates
4. The school must have set mechanisms for monitoring client satisfaction. Each language school must also present the following records for inspection in addition to its in-house questionnaires:
 - the language school which provides courses for companies and for the general public shall present 3 AJŠA client surveys (satisfaction questionnaires) from corporate clients;
 - the language school which only provides courses for the general public shall present three AJŠA client surveys (satisfaction questionnaires) completed by students attending courses for the public.
5. A school must have a system of dealing with claims and complaints in place. Records must be kept of the settlement of written claims.

Inspection (audit):

1. An AJSA certification cycle of 4 years begins in the first year with an audit (inspection) of the language schools involved, selected according to the rules laid down below. The certification company will award AJSA a Certificate if 1/4 of the language schools involved are successful in the inspection. The validity of the AJSA Certificate will be checked every year of the cycle and will be prolonged if another 1/4 of the language schools are successful in the audit.
2. Each language school which voluntarily signs up to comply with the AJSA Standards will be entered in the Register for the Certification of Prepared Language Schools. Schools that wish to be included in the certification process at a later date will always be able to do so at the autumn meeting of the AJSA Board and will be included in the register for the following year.
3. The certification body selects the specific language schools at which an audit is to be conducted in the given year, using the Register for the Certification of Prepared Language Schools, which is administered by the AJSA presidium. In the event that a language school chosen for inspection has more than one branch, the AJSA presidium will determine which branch (including the head office of the language school) is to be checked; this is decided by drawing lots.
4. The language school will undergo inspection by the independent certification body, which will have access to the documentation and records outlined above, in accordance with the program. The inspection body will also have the opportunity to access areas relating to the activities of the language school.
5. An auditor from the Bureau Veritas CR will carry out an inspection at the language schools selected for compliance with the requirements laid down in the AJSA Standards and according to the criteria of an Inspection Questionnaire. The inspection will involve examining documents and records, speaking to the responsible employees and checking facts.
6. The language school will compile a full list of teachers at the given language school or branch so that a check on the qualifications of the teachers at the language school can be conducted. The list will consist of names, numbers or first names and the first letter of surnames. During the first round, the auditor from the Bureau Veritas CR, will choose a sample of 10 teachers and if 8 of them satisfy the qualification requirements, the given criterion will have been met. If this is not the case, then another sample of 10 teachers will be chosen. If this sample is still not met, then they are unable to satisfy the requirements on qualifications and the school will have to submit the qualifications of all teachers at the language school or branch. Qualifications are checked on the basis of the teachers' diplomas and certificates and CV when assessing the teacher's experience.
7. The inspection of the language school will be followed by the report of the auditor from the Bureau Veritas CR, which will express the degree to which the school complies with the requirements laid down above. What the auditor has learned in relation to individual criteria will be presented in the report in the form of comments (when compliance with the requirements is proven in full), findings (when minor faults are found and requirements for improvement have been identified) and non-compliance (when serious faults that cannot be remedied in a short period of time have been identified and confirmed during the inspection).
8. If the criteria are not met, i.e. if the auditor identifies non-compliance, the presidium will check the circumstances and make out a record of non-compliance. The language school will then have six months to rectify the situation. An inspection will then be carried out. In such a case the presidium may put forward a different group of involved language schools, from which the auditor chooses two language schools at which to conduct a supplementary audit. The aim is to satisfy the condition that a minimum of 1/4 of the language schools involved are successful in each year of the cycle.
9. Each language school that has successfully passed an audit according to the requirements of the AJSA Standards for Quality Language Teaching (without any documented non-compliance or is successful in a follow-up audit after taking corrective action to resolve non-compliance) will receive a Bureau Veritas CR Certificate.
10. If a sample of 1/4 of language schools successfully passes the audit according to the requirements of the AJSA Standards for Quality Language Teaching in the given year of the cycle, all language schools involved in certification will receive an AJSA Sub-certificate (with the exception of those which did not successfully pass the audit).

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