

Brit College's provision of the Diploma in Education and Training course: A summary of the Office for Students' investigation

Executive summary

This report summarises findings from the Office for Students' (OfS) investigation into Brit College and concerns about its Diploma in Education and Training (DET) course.

Brit College was a registered higher education provider offering Higher National Diplomas. It also offered the Diploma in Education and Training, a course which no longer exists in the form it did up to 2023-24. In 2023-24, 869 students were recorded as studying the DET at Brit College.

During the investigation, Brit College stopped offering Student Loans Company (SLC) funded higher education and left the OfS Register of providers. As a result, the OfS concluded its investigation. However, the information we obtained in the course of the investigation raised serious concerns relating to quality, standards and governance. These concerns included the suitability of student placements and their assessments, concerns around staff qualifications and limited oversight by Brit College of DET course delivery.

Figures provided by Brit College showed a total of 1,174 students enrolled on the DET across five cohorts between September 2022 and September 2023. None of those students have been awarded the qualification. Figures provided by the SLC indicate that Brit College was paid over £5 million in tuition fees over the same period.

We have published this summary to help other providers running, or considering running, similar courses (particularly those with a significant placement element), to prevent similar concerning outcomes arising in future. We are working closely with Ofqual to ensure that where our regulatory concerns relate to qualifications delivered by awarding organisations it regulates, we can ensure our regulatory approaches align. This work is ongoing in light of increased activity in this space being introduced by the new Lifelong Learning Entitlement. We consider this to be particularly relevant to any provider delivering, or considering delivering, qualifications awarded by bodies regulated by Ofqual at such time as the new Lifelong Learning Entitlement is introduced.

Introduction

In November 2024, the OfS launched an investigation into Brit College to examine whether:

- it had complied with the OfS's requirements relating to the quality of academic provision
- it had complied with the OfS's requirements relating to provision of information to the OfS and to its designated data body

- it had effective management and governance arrangements in place.¹

As part of this investigation, we carried out an audit covering Brit College's student data return. Brit College was not able to support all the student data it had provided with evidence. The audit also found particular concerns relating to the provision of the DET course. In response to the findings of our audit and in light of other concerns, the Department for Education instructed the SLC to suspend tuition fee payments to Brit College and sought representation from Brit College on a minded to decision to revoke designation of student funding. The Secretary of State revoked designation on 4 June 2025, meaning courses that Brit College was delivering were no longer eligible for student funding, therefore students in study at that time would need to transfer to a new provider to continue to receive student finance for their studies.

Students at Brit College were told that their higher education courses would be closed, and the awarding body for qualifications, Pearson, contacted affected current students to explain their options, including for further study. City and Guilds, the awarding organisation for the DET course, liaised with Brit College to contact students who had paid to study that course but who had not achieved their qualification.

Following engagement with the provider about its financial position and on the basis that it was no longer delivering higher education, we notified Brit College of our intention to remove it from the OfS Register. Brit College then applied for voluntary de-registration and was formally de-registered in July 2025.

The investigation

At the time Brit College was de-registered, we had analysed the information obtained during the investigation, and identified serious concerns about the quality of course provision, standards and governance at the provider.² These included matters that related to the OfS's ongoing conditions of registration for quality and standards (B conditions) and management and governance (E conditions).³

Quality and standards

In the area of quality and standards, we found evidence indicating poor delivery and administration of the DET course, including the following specific concerns:

1. Placement organisations

- The course requirements included a minimum of 100 hours of teaching/training practice. Many student placements were listed at organisations which were, in our view, not suitable as 100 hours of teaching could not have been expected to have taken place. We used a sample of 122 students registered for the DET course, with placements recorded as having been hosted by 63 different organisations. We analysed the records for 28 of those organisations. We found that 25 of those 28 organisations appeared incapable of satisfying the requirements of the DET course, with some placements at:

¹ The OfS investigation found evidence of concerns wider than just these and the investigation would have formally been expanded had Brit College remained in operation.

² Due to the lack of material available, the OfS has not been able to test this assessment with Brit College.

³ See more about our [conditions of registration](#).

- organisations that had been listed as inactive at the time of the placement; and
 - organisations with no clear link to education (for example small local restaurants).
- Brit College’s policy was that observations should have been conducted by the provider’s staff, including tutors, programme leads and the placement co-ordinator, in order to ensure that the observer had suitable training and experience. However, in reviewing records of observations (through which a qualified person should observe teaching practice during a placement), we noted that in all cases we analysed, observations were instead conducted by placement mentors.
 - The information provided by Brit College did not contain a record of the skills or qualifications or other metrics of suitability for these mentors who were completing observations of students at placements. This was a concern to the OfS as the DET course specifically requires that staff involved in the above roles that oversee the placements and assess the quality of the teaching practice need appropriate qualifications.⁴
 - Consequently, we could not verify whether the placement mentors had the qualifications and experience they needed to assess student teachers on the DET course in a way that would meet the requirements of the awarding organisation. Where individuals without appropriate qualifications observed student teachers, this would lead to the provider delivering the course in a non-compliant manner. Moreover, the lack of evidence means that we could not assess whether these individuals involved in the DET course at Brit College had appropriate qualifications (in line with our ongoing condition of registration B2).

2. Placement records

- The records of placements also raised other concerns. Many of the records of students’ placement activity we analysed were identical in various ways other than student names and locations (that is, the dates, duration and subject of sessions taught by the students were the same).
- The OfS had concerns that the provider had not ensured that genuine, individual observations and assessments were undertaken for each student at their placements.

These observations raise widespread concerns regarding the credibility of evidence of placements.

Given that completion of placements is a core requirement of the course, the concerns above mean those students would not be able to pass the DET course. Consequently, failures by Brit College in relation to DET student placements have a direct link to failures to comply with the OfS’s conditions of registration concerning effective delivery of courses, providing support to students that they need to succeed, delivering successful outcomes for all students and ensuring qualifications are appropriate (conditions B1, B2, B3 and B4).

At the time of Brit College’s de-registration, none of the DET students had received certification, as City and Guilds had not received sufficient evidence that the course requirements had been met. At the time of publication of this summary (November 2025), that remains the case.

⁴ As set out in ‘City and Guilds Qualification Handbook – Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training’.

Management and governance

In the area of governance, we found evidence indicating failures of management, governance and oversight of the provision of the DET course:

3. Reliability of information

- While Brit College provided some records of placements, the partial nature of the information and concerns over the accuracy of those records made it difficult to assess the reliability of this information. Consequently, we were unable to take assurance as to the degree of control and oversight that Brit College had over its staff, courses and provision, both generally and specifically, in relation to the DET course.

4. Quality assurance and governance

- The OfS was also concerned that Brit College did not provide evidence of quality assurance process or oversight for those staff involved in the provision of the DET course placements. These concerns related to the OfS's condition of registration E2, specifically whether Brit College had complied with the public interest governance principles relating to risk management and value for money, and whether it provided and delivered the higher education DET course advertised.
- In addition to the specific concerns about the DET course, the OfS found evidence indicating few controls and inadequate governance across Brit College generally. For example, its accountable officer, with key responsibilities in terms of compliance with the OfS regulatory framework, was not contactable at times and resigned without nominating a replacement. Similarly, there was a lack of clarity as to the identity of the chair of the governing body, with different individuals identified at different points in time and no-one apparently in this role at the point Brit College left the Register.

Wider regulatory concerns

In addition to the concerns detailed above, there were a range of other concerns regarding Brit College:

- It was subject to negative judgements from the Office of Independent Adjudication (OIA) in relation to the DET course and compensation recommended by OIA remains unpaid to the relevant students at the time of publication of this summary.
- It issued certificates to students, leading them to believe they had received awards, only to withdraw these.
- It stated to the designated data body that it had no capacity or resources to submit data returns, and the data audit conducted as part of the investigation gained no assurance over the 2023-24 student data returned to the designated data body. This meant the OfS could not have confidence even in the number of students registered for courses, including the DET course.
- It failed to make payment of the final quarterly instalment of its OfS registration fee for 2024-25 which was due despite the deregistration.

Conclusion

Had Brit College not voluntarily de-registered, we would have proceeded with our proposal to remove it from the register, subject to any representations it made.