



## BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

### INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

<b>PROVIDER:</b>	Godolphin Flying Start
<b>ADDRESS:</b>	Dalham Hall Stud Duchess Drive Newmarket Suffolk CB8 9HE
<b>HEAD OF PROVIDER:</b>	Ms Clodagh Kavanagh
<b>ACCREDITATION STATUS:</b>	Accredited
<b>DATE OF INSPECTION:</b>	1 & 8 December 2022
<b>ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:</b>	Continued accreditation, 18 May 2023

## **1. Background to the provider**

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Godolphin Flying Start (GFS/the Provider) is the trading name of the Godolphin International Thoroughbred Leadership Programme (GITLP). GFS offers fully funded scholarships for 12 trainees a year for its two-year training course in management and leadership in the international thoroughbred racing and breeding industry.

The GFS programme is managed from the Kildangan Stud in County Kildare in Ireland, where senior managers are based and where key decisions are made. The course in the United Kingdom (UK) is delivered at the Dalham Hall Stud in Newmarket.

The aims of GFS are to provide an outstanding opportunity to future industry leaders to develop their character and performance and to be a dynamic force in the sustainability and success of the global horseracing industry.

The programme's management structure includes an Executive Director (ED) and Management Assistant (MA), who are based in Ireland. They are supported by the UK Co-ordinator, who has responsibility for the day-to-day training delivered in Newmarket. The Trustees of GITLP are senior members in the breeding and horse racing industry. They provide oversight and control of the programme.

## **2. Brief description of the current provision**

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The two-year management programme offered by GFS is designed to prepare participants for professional careers in thoroughbred horse training, thoroughbred-horse breeding and stud-farm management.

The programme consists of five phases. These take place in Ireland, the United States of America (USA), Australia, the United Kingdom (UK) and Dubai. In the first three of these countries, participants attend a course at university. The phase at Newmarket in the UK is the second phase. British Accreditation Council (BAC) accreditation is for the second phase only.

The programme covers diverse aspects of equine and business management. Participants attend in-person lectures delivered by experts in specialist subjects such as international horseracing, media skills and financial management. There is a strong emphasis on individual personal development and building interpersonal and leadership skills.

The UK-based phase of the programme lasts seven weeks and focuses on aspects of the equine industry that are specific to the UK. Besides the lectures from guest speakers, participants also take part in practical rotations, which are either office based or delivered on equine premises, go on industry visits or attend Tattersalls sales in Newmarket. There is also a short study tour to Lambourn, an area of concentrated equine businesses.

At the time of the inspection, there were 12 participants undertaking the programme at Dalham Hall Stud. There were equal numbers of male and female participants. The majority came from Ireland and the UK, with the remainder from Australia, New Zealand and the USA. All participants are over the age of 18.

Applicants for the programme are enrolled once a year on the basis of an assessment of their academic qualifications and experience in the equine industry. They must have basic horsemanship skills and have to submit a video of themselves demonstrating these skills.

Participants whose first language is not English are required to have a recent International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score at an appropriate minimum level. All applicants must hold a full driving licence as they are expected to drive themselves to lectures and equine settings that form part of the programme.

## **3. Inspection process**

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The inspection was undertaken by one inspector over one and a half days. The first day was on site at Dalham Hall Stud, and the half-day was carried out online. The inspector held meetings with senior managers, participants and guest trainers. Lectures were observed and documentation was scrutinised. Video footage of

the two houses providing residential accommodation was reviewed. The staff were very supportive and responded promptly to all requests for information.

#### 4. Inspection history

<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Date</b>
Full Accreditation	12 September & 18 November 2008
Interim	15 December 2009
Re-accreditation	6 & 12 November 2012
Interim	17 December 2014
Re-accreditation	12–13 December 2016
Interim	7 December 2018
Re-accreditation	14 & 22 December 2020

## **PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE**

*The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the provider.*

### **1. Significant changes since the last inspection**

Accommodation is now offered in two local houses, rather than one. This means that each participant has their own room, and facilities are shared by fewer people in each house. As a result, the accommodation offers a more comfortable living environment.

The programme now includes a study tour to Lambourn, which, after Newmarket, is the largest centre of racehorse training in England. The opportunity to visit Lambourn has broadened the scope of the programme, further adding to the specialist knowledge gained by participants.

The criteria for applications have changed to include horsemanship skills. This has increased the scope of the experience that applicants can offer, so widening access to the programme.

### **2. Response to action points in last report**

*4.3 The Provider must provide links to key policies through the website.*

The website does not provide access to key policies.

*16.7 The policy for the prevention of radicalisation and extremism must be fully implemented.*

The policy for the prevention of radicalisation and extremism has been ratified by the trustees and has now been appropriately implemented.

### **3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report**

There were no recommendations identified in the last inspection report.

### **4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements**

#### **4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)**

**The standards are judged to be:**

Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

The management structure is well defined, and the structure and the role of trustees are clearly understood.

Senior managers are highly effective in carrying out their duties. They are not only experienced in the equine industry, but also have considerable experience as leaders. They are further supported by the specialist experience and knowledge offered by the Board of Trustees. The ED and MA operate from Ireland and provide effective leadership to the team in Newmarket.

Highly effective communications between staff in Newmarket and managers in Ireland, through in-person meetings, video calls, emails and texts, ensure that all staff are well informed about all aspects of the provision.

The Provider's vision and purpose, which are published on the website, are clear with regard to the focus of the operation. This has resulted in an excellent programme that is valued by participants and the industry.

The members of the administrative team are highly experienced and can call on support from other parts of the organisation if necessary. They are highly effective in carrying out their duties at GFS.

Policies are detailed and effectively disseminated via the intranet, allowing all staff to be well informed.

The system for data protection is clearly stipulated in the data protection and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) policy, which is made available to participants and coordinators in their respective handbooks and to staff via the intranet. As a result, everyone is kept informed of the policy in place.

Appropriate checks are undertaken prior to the employment of staff. Records are suitably maintained by the human resources department. Staff can request to attend training as part of their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and are very well supported by the Provider.

The website is of an excellent standard and includes detailed and up-to-date information on the programme. This means that participants know exactly what the course entails. Curricula Vitae (CVs) of current participants published on the website offer prospective applicants an understanding of the level of experience required for the course.

4.3 The Provider's policies are not accessible through the website.

Substantial information is made available to participants prior to the start of the course to ensure they are fully aware of the programme requirements.

Stringent entry requirements are in place for the programme, with only 12 participants being selected each year. Places are fully funded, so competition is high. The process starts with applicants making a 60-second video on a preset question, as well as submitting specified documentation, as detailed on the website. This includes the level of English required for those whose first language is not English. The expectation is that applicants will already have some knowledge and experience in the industry.

A formal application process, with different stages and requirements, is in place. As the course is highly specialised, only those candidates who best demonstrate aptitudes and skills according to the entry requirements are accepted. The timelines for the selection process are published on the website so that applicants are clear about what happens and when.

There is no system to identify participants who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to enable appropriate support to be provided.

The attendance policy is made known to participants in their handbook. A strict attendance monitoring system ensures high levels of attendance. Participants are expected to attend all sessions and if they are absent, they must inform GFS immediately. The Provider keeps records of participants' absence. As soon as there is an absence, a very efficient system is triggered, allowing all who need to know to be aware of the absence. Consequently, there are extremely few absences. Any absences are followed up immediately by staff to address issues that arise.

An appropriate amount of feedback is obtained from stakeholders, who have formal and informal mechanisms to offer their views on the provision. This is viewed positively and acted on if necessary.

The ED chooses two participants to take responsibility for obtaining regular feedback from the other participants at meetings. The resulting feedback is passed to the Course Co-ordinator at weekly meetings. Any issues that require immediate action are dealt with promptly. Formal, detailed feedback from participants is obtained at the end of the programme phase. This is recorded, collated and analysed.

Feedback is reported to and reviewed by the management and the trustees as part of the quality assurance process. Several positive changes to the provision have been implemented as a result of this.

Responses to the feedback from participants are reported via the meetings with the Course Co-ordinator. Consequently, participants are kept informed of management responses to their feedback. Action plans are drawn up and acted on to ensure continued excellence.

#### 4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

**The standards are judged to be:**

Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

An experienced Course Co-ordinator, who is based in Newmarket, is responsible for the day-to-day running of the course. The ED in Ireland has oversight of the programme's management and delivery. This leads to the delivery of a well-controlled and excellent educational programme.

The content of the teaching sessions is planned in advance, and information is given to the participants so that they know what to expect. The programme has a specially allocated room for the duration of the programme that effectively supports the provision of a comfortable training environment.

Programme materials are reviewed in advance by the ED or other managers to ensure the quality of the content. The programme is aimed at familiarising participants with the latest information and practice in all aspects of the industry. This information and practice are regularly reviewed to ensure their on-going relevance.

The programme consists of teaching sessions that are both experiential and classroom based. At Newmarket, the programme consists of a practical, hands-on element involving horses at the Racing School. This element has an appraisal at the end, followed by practical learning elements on Business, Leadership and Bloodstock Breeding and Racing that are conducted as lectures or facilitated workshops. In this way, participants develop the knowledge and skills that meet the needs of employers.

Trainers are all specialists in subjects related to the thoroughbred industry. They are selected because of their knowledge and expertise and consequently deliver training to a very high standard. The trainers make effective use of appropriate question and answer techniques in order to engage participants and to check their understanding of the content. Participants were quick to respond to questions, showing high levels of interest.

Continuous assessment during the programme includes appraisals, projects and assignments on the theoretical and practical material covered. These suitably reflect the standard of the final assessments.

Each participant has a grade card that clearly charts how well they are progressing. They have regular one-to-one Personal Development Plan (PDP) meeting with the ED in order to map out what they want to achieve and then to ensure they are on target to achieve their desired outcomes. These high levels of progress monitoring in turn effectively support high levels of success.

If a participant is not performing satisfactorily, they are given additional support to ensure they achieve the expected standard.

Throughout the programme, participants are provided with feedback so that they know how well they are progressing. The detailed and helpful marking of the assessments allows the participants to know how well they have done and what should be improved to achieve the intended objectives.

Ongoing discussions during the programme about career prospects allow participants to better understand future job opportunities. Particularly helpful in this respect are reviews of their PDPs and the one-to-one mentoring with the ED, which steer them in appropriate directions for future careers. The visiting lecturers also successfully highlight career opportunities and invite participants to contact them for further information. Consequently, participants are well briefed on the job market.

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#### 4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

The Course Co-ordinator is responsible for the welfare of the participants. The participants confirmed that they know whom to go to for help.

Participants receive helpful information prior to starting the programme through the handbook and links on the online learning platform. This includes information on Newmarket and a video on their accommodation. Consequently, they are well briefed prior to arrival.

On arrival, participants receive an appropriate induction. This is supported by the handbook, which has information on the course and policies, including policies on harassment and bullying and extremism and radicalisation. A risk assessment relating to radicalisation and extremism has been undertaken, and staff have been suitably trained.

International participants receive appropriate advice prior to their arrival. This helps them settle easily into their new environment in Newmarket.

Participants are helpfully given an out-of-hours number to use in case of an emergency. Contact details for the participants and their next of kin details are recorded. These may be accessed by staff, if necessary, out of course hours.

Participants have access to a suitable complaints policy, which is provided in the handbook prior to the start of the course. They are advised of BAC's complaints policy and so are well informed in case they need to make a complaint.

Residential accommodation is provided in two local houses. One house accommodates four participants and the other eight participants. Each participant has their own bedroom and makes use of appropriate, shared facilities. The houses are modern, clean and well decorated. Good arrangements, that are well communicated to the participants, are in place to ensure that the participants are safe whilst in the accommodation. Welfare at the residential accommodation and any issues that arise are dealt with promptly by the Course Co-ordinator.

A range of social events is on offer that are aimed specifically at the participants and their involvement in the equine world. These consist of visits to local equine establishments, which participants much enjoy, as well as a visit to the races. The social activities include networking events, a lunch event at the beginning of the programme and drinks reception at the end. Participants are afforded opportunities to meet important players in the equine world whom they would not otherwise have had the opportunity to encounter. These activities further support the delivery of an excellent training programme.

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#### 4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

The premises used by GFS are owned by GILTP. Consequently, the Provider has secure access to the areas it uses. Any extra rooms that might be needed are readily available on the premises.

The reception area, which is staffed by a receptionist, faces the entrance of the premises, and therefore those going in and out of the building can be seen. As a result, access to the premises is appropriately restricted and secured.

The premises are of a particularly high standard. They are spacious, modern, bright, well decorated and have high standards of cleanliness, so supporting a comfortable working and learning environment.

Appropriate signage allows staff and participants to know where to go in the case of an emergency evacuation.

A great deal of circulation space for staff, participants and visitors is available throughout the building. This contributes to the comfortable environment.

Central heating suitably provides warmth in cold weather. Ventilation, when necessary, is excellent, as the windows in the building can be opened when required.

The training room is well equipped. It is large and has small break-out areas. This supports the effective delivery of courses.

Participants have access to a small, specialist library, which further supports their learning about the equine industry.

Participants and trainers have their own area in which to prepare hot drinks. A large cafeteria provides a comfortable area for all to socialise and enjoy the free lunches provided daily.

A large area is allocated for administrative offices. This provides suitable accommodation for the effective administration of the organisation.

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#### 4.5 Compliance Declaration

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**Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.**

Yes  No



**PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS**

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**STRENGTHS**

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A wide-ranging programme of specialist learning and practical activity provides participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully enter the jobs market.

A stringent selection process leads to a high calibre of participants.

A high level of feedback from participants is recorded, collated, analysed and actioned to support ongoing improvements to the programme.

Excellent accommodation, both for training and for living, ensures the provision of a very comfortable studying and living environment.

**ACTIONS REQUIRED**

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4.3 The Provider must provide links to key policies on its website.	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
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A system must be put in place to identify participants who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
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**RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT (to be reviewed at the next inspection)**

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None

**COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE**

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