

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (College)

INSTITUTION: Emerson College

ADDRESS: Hartfield Road
Forest Row
East Sussex
RH18 5JX

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Mr Steve Briault

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 22 January 2019

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation 28 March 2019

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

Emerson College (the Institution) is a privately-owned organisation established in 1962 which is registered as a charitable company. The Institution offers full and part-time courses, in child-care and education, holistic therapies and performance arts.

The Institution is located on an estate covering 23 acres in East Sussex, approximately five miles from East Grinstead. The site has 15 buildings which include offices, teaching rooms, studio spaces and residential accommodation blocks.

The Institution works as a living and learning community, based on the work and philosophy of Rudolf Steiner. The philosophy is known as Anthroposophy, which describes and supports pathways of personal development. The mission of the Institution is to work as a learning community inspired by Anthroposophy, that helps people to develop and integrate the spiritual, social and practical dimensions of life and work.

A board of five trustees, as well as the Directors of Development and Operations as the senior managers, acts as the governing body for the Institution. The Director of Development is supported by the Director of Operations and the Education Manager. The trustees are elected by an Association of 59 members made up of past and present staff and other stakeholders, many of whom are drawn from the local community.

The full-time three-year courses are no longer being offered and have been replaced with shorter module-based provision which runs over semesters lasting for two or ten weeks.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Institution offers courses in Anthroposophic Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics accredited by the School of Spiritual Science at the Geotheanum, Switzerland; Rhythmical Einreibung, which is massage therapy; Professional and Personal Development Training in Mental Health and Foundations of Anthroposophic Medicine accredited by the Crossfields Institute. It also offers Holistic Baby and Child Care accredited by the Northern Council for Further Education and the Council for Awards in Childcare and Education (NCFE CACHE), along with non-accredited short courses in storytelling and performance arts. Courses are delivered mainly as residential provision, whether as short weekend provision, or semester long modular courses.

New programmes are being introduced in 2019. These include Biodynamic Gardening and the Foundation in Painting and Relational Arts and Organic Design, which replaces the former three-year full-time programme in Visual Arts and Sculpture. Courses are delivered on campus through taught sessions and workshops. For the Holistic Baby and Child Care Diploma, students are required to undertake 100 hours of placement time in nurseries or primary schools, and to keep a reflective journal of their experiences. All provision has advertised start dates and duration of provision, and students are able to enrol for specific start dates.

At the time of the inspection, the Institution had 39 full-time and 73 part-time students enrolled on eight courses. The majority of students are from the United Kingdom (UK). Approximately 20 per cent of students are European Union (EU) nationals, and small minority are from outside the EU and include students from Canada, China and the United States of America. A significant majority of students are female. Students' ages range from 18 years to early 80s. The Institution has an active social inclusion approach to recruitment.

3. Inspection process

The inspection visit was undertaken by one inspector over one day. Meetings were held with the Director of Development, the Head of Centre, senior managers and academic and administrative staff. A range of documents

were reviewed prior to the inspection. No courses were being delivered on the day of the inspection visit. The Institution engaged and cooperated fully with the inspection processes.

4. Inspection History

Inspection Type	Date
Full Accreditation	22 November 1995
Re-accreditation	8 May 2001
Interim	17 January 2006
Re-accreditation	4-5 December 2007
Supplementary	1 October 2008
Supplementary	20 November 2008
Supplementary	20 July 2010
Re-accreditation	18-19 June 2013
Interim	10 June 2015
Re-accreditation	24-25 October 2016

PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgments and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

The changes that have taken place to the provision include the discontinuation of the full-time three-year course in Visual Arts and Sculpture. The Institution now offers full-time residential courses, of a shorter duration, including new provision in Relational Arts and Organic Design, Foundation of Painting, Gestural Performing Arts and Biodynamic Gardening. The duration of the provision varies in length from week-end courses, week long courses and modules run over ten-week semesters.

The Institution has invested in the refurbishment of some of the accommodation buildings, with new bathrooms fitted in two blocks. The kitchens and communal areas have been redecorated.

2. Response to actions points in last report

11.4 The Institution must discuss the need for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) with its staff and formulate a suitable programme.

All teaching staff are self-employed professionals who are engaged by the Institution to manage and deliver its courses. Both teaching and non-teaching staff are now offered opportunities to engage in CPD activities supported by the Institution. This includes two days free access to any of the courses run at Emerson College. Staff may also apply for support to undertake other development activities, as appropriate. The access to CPD now effectively supports the ongoing development and quality of the course delivery.

25.3 The induction sessions must include information about health and safety procedures in the studios. A document must also be created for the students to sign confirming that they have received appropriate training.

Health and safety training is included as part of the student induction programme. Students are made aware of the health and safety arrangements across the Institution, including in studio and accommodation areas. Signs effectively reinforce health and safety information, and regular alarm and systems checks are conducted by the Maintenance Manager.

Students are required to sign a form to confirm that they have received their health and safety briefings, and completed forms are retained by the Education Manager. This enables the Institution to consistently check and ensure that all students have been appropriately briefed and are aware of potential hazards and the correct use and storage of studio equipment.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

As the Institution offers a number of short courses, it is recommended that the Institution's responses to student feedback should be shown on the Institution website so that students and short course participants can see that their comments have been addressed.

A new Institution website is currently under development. To date no student feedback is shown on the current website, although there are some quotes from students related to their learning experiences. The staff responsible for the development of the website confirmed that an area for student feedback is being built into the new website. The summary of student feedback on the website and through posters in the Institution, will serve to demonstrate that the Institution is responsive to points made by its students in the review and enhancement of its provision.

A more detailed scheme of work should be created for the sculpture element of the Visual Arts and Sculpture course, this could be similar to the scheme of work for the painting element of the course.

The Visual Arts and Sculpture course is no longer offered by the Institution, with all former students having completed the programme. Detailed schemes of work have now been introduced for all courses, particularly those leading to accredited certificates and diplomas, and are checked and approved by course leaders. The detailed schemes of work effectively detail teaching activities designed to meet learning outcomes.

Teachers on the Visual Arts and Sculpture course should update their CVs with information about the teaching they have done and the teaching qualifications they have gained.

The Institution asks lecturing staff to provide updated CVs at least annually and, as appropriate, before each new course intake. CVs clearly detail qualifications, relevant teaching and professional experience and professional development undertaken. They effectively support the appointment of well qualified staff. The Education Manager and course leaders are able to review staff CVs in relation to the teaching requirements of individual courses as part of the effective course management.

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

Clear and effective governance and reporting structures are detailed through the organisation chart and job descriptions, which effectively support the management of the Institution. Institution managers and trustees are active in the ongoing development and expansion of provision to ensure the sustainability of the Institution.

Administrative support meets the management needs of the Institution, and systems and procedures are clearly documented. Staff confirm that these are effectively disseminated. The experience and qualifications of staff are effectively reviewed to ensure that they meet teaching and pastoral support requirements.

The Institution's current website provides clear information on the content of courses and the course dates, and information is regularly updated to ensure accuracy.

The admission of students is effectively managed and English language proficiency checked through interviews, many conducted online.

The Institution has a clearly documented internal quality assurance process which robustly supports the management of quality and standards, including assessment decisions.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Academic staff are appropriately qualified and experienced for the courses they teach. All courses have clear schemes of work which effectively support course planning and delivery.

Teaching facilities and materials are appropriate to the courses delivered and meet course requirements.

Clear schemes of work are devised by lecturers and checked by course leaders to support effective course delivery.

Assessment schedules are clearly set out in handbooks, and students receive clear and constructive written feedback on their work.

Students have access to advice and guidance through tutorials, as well as a newsletter published on the Institution website, which includes information about employment as well as further personal and professional development opportunities.

4.3 Student Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Students are provided with the contact numbers of House Managers and the senior member of staff responsible for student welfare, as well as an emergency contact number, which effectively ensures support is available as required.

Appropriate advice on travel and living in the UK is provided to international students on the website and through course handbooks.

Students have access to staff who speak a range of languages and are familiar with a range of cultures. The Institution also provides clear information to students on a range of social activities.

Residential accommodation is clean and well maintained.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Institution continues to have secure tenure on its premises.

All facilities including teaching, residential and social areas are clean and well maintained, and supported by an ongoing programme of maintenance.

Clear health and safety signage is displayed in classrooms, studios, accommodation areas and social areas, along with clear signage and signposts to various buildings.

Students receive appropriate health and safety briefings as part of their induction and are required to sign forms to confirm they have understood the information and guidance provided.

The Institution provides classrooms and studios which are well equipped and appropriate to the courses and the numbers of students.

Students have a range of areas available for private study including study-bedrooms, two library spaces and access to classrooms and studios outside of teaching hours.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

The experienced managers and trustees are active in managing and supporting the ongoing review and expansion of provision to ensure the sustainability of the Institution through the development of new projects and courses.

The Institution has a clearly documented internal quality assurance process which robustly supports the management of quality and standards, including assessment decisions.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

High Medium Low

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT *(to be reviewed at the next inspection)*

It is recommended that both student feedback and actions taken in response are made available on the new website and through posters or other internal communications mediums to existing students.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE