

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (College)

INSTITUTION:	Westfield House of Theological Studies
ADDRESS:	30 Huntingdon Road Cambridge CB3 0HH
HEAD OF INSTITUTION:	Dr Joel Humann
ACCREDITATION STATUS:	Accredited
DATE OF INSPECTION:	12 March 2019
ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:	Continued accreditation, 23 May 2019

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

Westfield House of Theological Studies (the Institution) is part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England (ELCE), which is a charity registered in England and Scotland. It is located in the centre of Cambridge and operates from buildings that are held in trust for the Church by the ELCE Trust Limited, which is a registered company. The Preceptor is supported by the Principal and reports to the ELCE Executive Council.

The Institution is the theological training institution of the ELCE and was established in 1962. It prepares its students for ministry in the Lutheran Church. It offers accredited certificate, diploma, modules for undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses in theology which are delivered through university partnerships as well as a Westfield House certificate course in Lutheran teaching. Since the last inspection, the Institution has developed its course offer to include courses at master's and doctorate degree level, but as yet there are no students enrolled on these programmes.

The aim of the Institution is to reach out with the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the mission of equipping men and women with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for service in the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Institution provides a programme of studies that combines reading for a university certificate, diploma or undergraduate degree in theology with a Westfield House certificate course that covers specific Lutheran teaching and practical training. Courses are full-time and most students are accommodated on campus. They attend classes throughout the week and may also apply for leave to attend lectures at the University of Cambridge.

The majority of students study abroad students, including undergraduates from Valparaiso University, Indiana, United States of America (USA), or from Concordia Universities or seminars, a group of colleges and universities operated by the Lutheran Church in the USA. The remaining students are registered directly with the Institution. The Institution has a number of memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with Lutheran universities and seminaries around the world but principally in the USA. At their university, these students are following courses in the Liberal Arts including Theology, Religious Studies, Philosophy, English and History.

The majority of provision is categorised as Higher Education (HE) and is delivered face to face. The majority of students come to the Institution for one term, beginning in October or January, to follow Study Abroad programmes, in which they attend course modules agreed with their home institution. They obtain credits for these modules, which count towards the degree awarded by their home institutions. Study Abroad students are eligible to apply for leave to attend lectures at the University of Cambridge. Valparaiso University has an agreement with Anglia Ruskin University so that their students can take courses there. In 2013, the Institution became a Registered Centre of the University of London's International Programmes and it is recognised as an Affiliate Centre for this programme. The Institution offers modules for the University of London Bachelor of Divinity course, which can be taken over a period of three to five years. In 2018, the Institution became a full member of the Cambridge Theological Federation (CTF), thus establishing a formal relationship with the University of Cambridge. CTF has developed postgraduate degrees with Anglia Ruskin University, enabling the Institution to offer courses at all HE levels.

Westfield House also offers its own Certificate in Lutheran Ministry programme, comprising modules designed to meet the requirements of church bodies and which were not put together within the Higher Education Framework.

In the Spring Semester 2019, there are 15 students enrolled, of whom ten are on one-term Study Abroad programmes. There are also four students on the five-month Westfield House Certificate programme and one following the University of London Bachelor of Divinity course over four years. All students are over the age of

eighteen, and the majority are male. The majority of students are from the USA, with a smaller group of students from Ghana and one from Bulgaria.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out by one inspector over one day. Interviews were conducted with the Preceptor and the Principal and a meeting was held with teachers. Additional meetings were held with a group of students and with the Student Wellbeing Counsellor. Two classes were observed and a tour was made of the Institution's premises. The inspector scrutinised student registration and attendance records and reviewed a range of documents. The Institution co-operated fully with the inspection and provided all requested information promptly.

4. Inspection History

Inspection Type	Date
Full Accreditation	2-3 March 2009
Interim	23 April 2010
Supplementary	1 March 2011
Re-accreditation	23 May 2013
Interim	28 May 2015
Re-accreditation	1-2 March 2017

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

In September 2018, the Institution became a full member of the CTF. As a result, it established a formal relationship with the University of Cambridge, which has enabled it to extend its provision to include an Advanced Diploma in Theology for Ministry and modules for a Bachelor of Theology for Ministry and, with Anglia Ruskin University, Masters and Doctorate degrees in Divinity. Students are now able to take course modules offered by the CTF.

As a member of the CTF, the Institution has access to its administrative systems and the online platform. Work has begun to integrate the Institution's student admissions records, information technology system and library with that of the CTF. Where appropriate, policies and procedures have been modified in line with the CTF, and there have been changes in the way that certain information is collated and shared. For example, a new Academic Handbook containing information relevant to academic staff and students has been created and uploaded to the online platform, where all shared documents such as policies, annual reports and Health and Safety information are now stored. The platform is also used for storing course documentation and resources. In addition, the Institution is in the process of setting up a new website that will demonstrate its affiliation to the University of Cambridge.

Since the previous inspection, the Institution has also outsourced its Human Resources and Health and Safety management functions to a specialist provider.

2. Response to action points in last report

3.3 The Staff Handbook must be amended to include sections on staff appraisal and classroom observations and the cycle for staff performance appraisals must be reduced to one year.

The Employee Handbook, which applies to all staff, now includes a section on staff appraisal and states that these take place annually. Appraisal records demonstrate that they are conducted in line with the new schedule. The Academic Policies handbook provided to teachers outlines a suitable procedure for classroom observations, which prescribes that all faculty members are observed delivering each of their modules over a period of three years, with a minimum of one observation annually.

8.2 A report which brings together the performance data produced by the Institution systems must be produced annually.

A report on performance is produced annually and reflects a thorough process of self-evaluation, providing a clear account of current challenges faced by the Institution and the progress made towards strategic goals. The report includes comparative data on student recruitment, which supports new developments in the recruitment strategy. The review of all aspects of academic provision is well reported although student achievement is not addressed systematically, and data for whole cohorts is not included. Student feedback is reported on appropriately although analysed data is not provided to support judgments on trends in student satisfaction.

15.3 The Institution must introduce a system of external moderation for its internal courses.

An appropriate system of external moderation has been introduced for both written assignments and assessed student presentations and has resulted in appropriate modifications to grades awarded. Samples of assignments are provided to a partner university for second marking. An external teacher sits in on a sample of assessed student presentations grading them at the same time as the course teacher. The final grade for the moderated work is agreed between the internal and external assessors. The process provides effective feedback to the Institution on their grading and has led the Institution to review the wording of assignment rubrics to ensure that criteria are clear to everyone involved. External moderation of written assignments has not yet been extended to all internal teachers and course modules

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

In the event that the provision be extended significantly, it is recommended that the level of administrative support be reviewed.

The provision has not been extended significantly. The level of administrative support continues to be sufficient.

The implementation of an electronic record system should be given a higher priority.

This is currently being addressed through integration of the Institution's record systems with that of the CTF using the CTF administrative systems and online platform.

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

Student recruitment procedures are robust, ensuring that students are placed on courses well matched to their needs and aspirations. All applicants are recommended by partner organisations, so that initial selection for level and checks on suitability are made by trusted experts in their home country. The Principal makes annual visits to partner organisations to brief them on developments at the Institution. Once accepted, students are well advised on the options open to them and programmes are tailor-made to reflect their interests, drawing upon the wide range of modules made available through the CTF and Anglian Ruskin University. Current students confirm that they are very happy with the programme they are following and this view is reflected in the feedback of previous cohorts. Student registration records include all relevant information and copies of passports and entry visas.

The Institution makes very effective use of feedback from students and staff. Student feedback is taken informally at weekly teatime meetings of managers and students in the on-campus accommodation. Students confirm that they can and do approach staff at any time with issues that arise and that wherever possible, the Institution responds promptly. The students provide extensive written feedback at the end of their course. This is carefully analysed and used to drive systematic improvements to provision. Feedback demonstrates consistently high levels of student satisfaction. Staff confirm that they share their views formally at fortnightly scheduled meetings and informally at other times as they work in close proximity in the small Institution. Communication between staff and managers is excellent, and staff are closely involved in the development of the Institution.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Course provision is excellent and teaching within the Institution is of a high standard. Teachers are extremely knowledgeable and suitably experienced for their roles. Content of lessons is well focused on planned learning outcomes and appropriately pitched to the level and needs of the students. Delivery takes place in small groups and there are good opportunities for student participation, with students required to deliver presentations and prepare in advance to question the arguments of their peers. This effectively supports development of independent learning skills.

The Institution has an adequate policy on classroom observations and a procedure for addressing significant weaknesses identified through observation. The observation report from does not make explicit reference to

evidence of student learning and focuses on the teacher's performance. However, no college observations have taken place over the past year, so these have not informed the appraisal process.

Appraisals are now completed annually and result in continuing professional development plans that are designed to meet the future academic needs of the Institution, as well as supporting personal development.

Students are happy with the high quality of teaching and academic support at the Institution. They understand how they are to be assessed and confirm that they receive suitable feedback, which informs them of how well they are progressing. Study Abroad students are particularly positive about the more interactive style of delivery at the Institution in comparison with their home institutions. All consider the weekly academic supervisions to be very effective in consolidating and extending their learning.

15.3 External moderation of written assignments has not yet been extended to all internal teachers and course modules.

Students have access to an excellent range of resources in the Institution's well-stocked library and through the University of Cambridge library.

4.3 Student Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Students feel very well supported. They confirm that they were provided with appropriate pre-arrival information, including advice from former students, and a helpful on-arrival orientation, which enabled them to quickly settle into their course and accommodation.

High levels of welfare support are provided throughout their stay. An appropriately qualified Student Wellbeing Counsellor meets with all students at the start of their course then meets with them individually every month. The focus is pastoral, but the Counsellor also acts as a bridge between students and academic staff if students are having academic concerns that they are finding difficult to broach. Relationships throughout the Institution are very positive, and students say they feel able to approach a range of staff with any issues.

Students value the social life they have in their accommodation and the regular programme of free time activities offered by the Institution. This enables them to easily visit places of interest around the country to further their experience of English culture and make effective use of their time in the UK. They also have access to activities organised by the University and the Lutheran Church in Cambridge. Student feedback indicates that that they participate in a caring community at the Institution, which they are sorry to leave at the end of their stay.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The premises are secure, safe, spacious and welcoming. All areas are clean and well maintained. Classrooms are suitably equipped. The library includes comfortable areas for self-study area. Currently there is only one computer available for student use, as until recently the vast majority of students came with their own laptop computers. The Institution has plans to address this.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

Effective use of student and staff feedback is made to improve provision across all programmes at the Institution.

Individualised course provision, which is well tailored to student needs and interests.

Continuing high standards of teaching.

Highly effective academic and pastoral support for students.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

The institution must carry out regular classroom observations of all teachers in line with its policy.	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
15.3 The institution must ensure that modules delivered by all teachers on internally assessed courses are subjected to external moderation.	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low

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

It is recommended that the Institution improve the effectiveness of the annual performance report by making systematic reference to student achievement and analysed feedback data.

The Institution should consider including a focus on student participation and learning in classroom observations to further improve the quality of teaching.

The Institution should implement its plans to provide additional computer access for students.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

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