

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

END OF PROBATION REVIEW (Independent Higher Education)

INSTITUTION: Newbold College of Higher Education

ADDRESS: St Marks Road
Binfield
Bracknell
Berkshire
RG42 4AN

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Dr John Baildam

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accreditation Probation

DATE OF INSPECTION: 22 May 2019

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Approved accreditation, 16 July 2019

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

Newbold College of Higher Education (Newbold College/the Institution) is one of the oldest academic institutions of the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is part of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist education network, which is the largest Protestant Christian education network in the world with over 1.8 million students studying from primary to doctoral programmes.

Newbold College is a registered charity and has a Board of Governors, which is appointed by the Trans-European Division. This Board, which works together with the Principal and its Executive Committee, confers the operation of the College to the Institution as a trust.

The Institution's aims are to provide and facilitate high-quality, creative and challenging learning opportunities within a Christian context, to promote and mentor the spiritual growth of students and staff, to nurture and support students throughout their learning experience and to promote opportunities for service to meet the needs of others.

The Institution is accredited by the Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges and Universities. In addition, the three current international university partners are all recognised by United Kingdom (UK) National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC). These are Andrews University, Michigan, United States of America (USA), Washington Adventist University, Maryland, USA, and Theologische Hochschule Friedensau, Sachsen Anhalt, Germany. There is currently no recruitment for the Theologische Hochschule Friedensau programme. Its other academic partner is the University of Wales Trinity Saint David which, since 2015, has validated a number of the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

Since the 2015 inspection, the previous School of English has been replaced by a new English Language Centre. In addition, the Study Abroad Programmes and the School of Business have been merged to form the Department of Business and Humanities.

The current premises are situated between Bracknell and Wokingham. They consist of an 80-acre campus, which was originally in the grounds of a mid-Victorian mock Tudor mansion. The mansion was redesigned in the Edwardian era and now houses a residence for some mature students, a student common room and cafeteria. On the campus there are two large purpose-built buildings, Salisbury Hall and Murdoch Hall, housing classrooms and administrative offices as well as two purpose-built halls of residence, a modern library and houses for staff and students with families.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Institution offers a variety of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in humanities, theology and business studies some of which are Gap Year-style or Study Abroad programmes. It also provides English language courses, which are not part of this accreditation. However, the English Language Centre does provide language support for students undertaking the programmes which are part of this accreditation.

Although the Institution does not see itself as exclusively a college for members of the Adventist faith, the overwhelming majority of the student body belongs to the Church and a high proportion are intending to work within the Church. At the time of this interim inspection, there were 127 students studying full time and 65 students studying part time. Half of the students are aged under 25 years. A large majority of the students are male.

Half of the students are pursuing degrees in Theology at undergraduate or postgraduate level. A very small minority of the students are from the UK, around the same number from elsewhere in the European Economic

Area (EEA), notably Scandinavia, and a slightly higher percentage come from other areas within the Trans-European Division of the Church, including students from Albania, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and the Netherlands. Some 35 students are from the USA, mainly on either Andrews or Washington Adventist University degree programmes or as year abroad students under the Adventist Colleges Abroad scheme. The largest number of students are recruited from Brazil to learn English as a foreign language. In all, some 60 different countries are represented at the Institution.

Enrolment patterns for the University of Wales Trinity Saint David programmes mean that students typically enrol each September. For the programmes of the USA universities, enrolment takes place on a rolling basis with students joining their courses each semester dependent upon the modules to be studied. Students on the Adventist Colleges Abroad Scheme typically enrol for a single semester or for one academic, and at times they often transfer to other programmes and stay longer.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out by a senior inspector over the course of one half-day. Meetings took place with senior staff. A comprehensive range of documentation was reviewed. The Institution was highly co-operative throughout the inspection.

4. Inspection history

Inspection Type	Date
Full Accreditation	5-7 March 2008
Interim	20 January 2010
Re-accreditation	9-10 April 2013
Interim	12 August 2015
Re-accreditation	11-12 October 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

There are a number of changes to report since the 2017 re-accreditation inspection.

The first concerns the creation of new professional service staff posts. Newbold College has created a new post of Student Information Systems Manager to oversee the management of student data internally and to report statistically where required by the awarding bodies. This role reports to the Academic Registrar. Newbold College has also created the post of Enhancement Co-ordinator to ensure that enhancement permeates throughout all the Institution's activities.

There have been further changes to the provision of support to students. This is now provided through the appointment of a Student Experience Co-ordinator with wide-ranging responsibilities for overseeing student support including careers. There is a Residential Life Manager supported by two Associate Residential Life Managers to head up pastoral care.

Whilst there have been no significant changes to the courses delivered, work has or is taking place to enhance provision. An in-depth review is underway of the business studies degree offered by and in affiliation with Washington Adventist University. The purpose of the review is to identify where enhancements can be made and in particular where revisions can be made to accommodate potential professional body exemptions. Also, the Gap Year programme has been re-titled Year in Mission and Service, although the key features remain the same, with students spending a semester in the college followed by a semester of voluntary service. Another development concerns the hosting of a Doctor of Ministry degree on behalf of Andrews University. This arrangement sees Newbold College providing only the premises for the delivery of this course with Andrews University staff administering and teaching on the course.

Newbold College continues to enhance the quality of its campus for the benefit of its staff, students and other stakeholders, including the local community. The gymnasium has been refurbished, is now known as the Sports Hall Auditorium and provides a state-of-the-art facility for users. The Grade 2 listed building, Moor Close, is being refurbished to provide conference facilities which will be used for Newbold College as well as for the local community in Bracknell.

The agreement between Newbold College and its German partner, Theologische Hochschule Friedensau, has been revised but currently there are no students registered.

Finally, Newbold College continues to support its academic staff and the Academic Board is currently discussing the possibility of developing a strategy through which staff can gain membership of Advance HE.

2. Response to actions points in last report

6.5 Newbold College must ensure the effective collection and evaluation of data on student progression, retention and achievement in order to support the management and monitoring of its students and programmes.

Newbold College now uses an appropriate template as part of its annual monitoring reports to analyse data including achievement data in order to support the management and monitoring of its students and programmes. To further enhance its use of data, the Institution has also appointed a Student Information Systems Manager.

25.2 Newbold College must implement a periodic review process for all programmes not validated by the University of Wales and ensure this process makes use of appropriate external assessment.

Newbold College has now developed its own periodic review process for its USA programmes which will commence in January 2020 and take place quinquennially. The process is comprehensive and robust. It includes an external review panel member and focuses on the key issues of curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment, resources and student enrolment, retention and performance. It would be helpful, however, if the written process clearly indicates the conclusions that a periodic review panel can reach and provides a template for the review report. This will ensure consistency in the conduct of and reporting on reviews. By the time of the next inspection, one periodic review will have been completed and a report will be available for review.

26.4 The Institution must identify key performance indicators to monitor and evaluate student outcomes and utilise these within its overall monitoring processes.

Newbold College's approach to the use of data to monitor student outcomes has been enhanced to ensure that a requirement for such analysis is mandatory. Key performance indicators clearly inform this analysis although it would be helpful if these indicators were stated within the monitoring procedures to assist staff in the data analysis process.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

It is recommended that the Institution ensures that its programme approval and validation arrangements clearly indicate the period of validation and the process to be followed for revalidation.

This has been addressed through a review of the memoranda of understanding with partners. The periodic review process to be implemented clearly implies that the validation period is five years.

It is recommended that Newbold College consider making more specific reference to the outcomes of peer observations within the staff appraisal process.

The appraisal template has been redesigned to make specific reference to the outcomes of peer observations. The Institution acknowledges that it needs to ensure that all appraisals use the template.

It is recommended that the Institution addresses the inconsistencies in the provision of learning materials provided on the virtual learning environment across subjects.

Newbold College has introduced a requirement for the online resources for each module to be independently checked at the beginning of each semester.

It is recommended that the College prioritises its work on enhancing the consistency of feedback to students on assessment.

Newbold College has clarified its assessment return timescale as 20 working days. A review of external examiner reports noted that a number of examiners are now commenting favourably on the quality of the assessment feedback to students.

It is recommended that the Institution reviews its approach to careers advice to ensure that this provision is systematic and consistent.

The newly appointed Student Experience Co-ordinator has a specific responsibility for careers advice. A successful Careers Fair was held in March 2019.

Newbold College is recommended to ensure that personal tutors are routinely provided with student achievement data to further assist them in supporting students.

The institution has made efforts to enhance the management of data. The Student Information Systems Manager ensures that data is available to all staff who require it to monitor the performance of students.

It is recommended that there is a requirement for annual programme monitoring to include reference to the evaluation of student admissions, retention, progression and achievement data.

The annual monitoring process now includes a template which requires analysis of student admissions, retention, progression and achievement data.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Governance, Strategy and Financial Management (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

No changes have been made to the comprehensive arrangements in place and the systems in place continue to work effectively.

4.2 Academic Management and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Administrative management has been significantly enhanced through the new staff appointments and particularly through the improvements in the provision and use of data. Appraisals now use a standard template and Newbold College is aware of the need to ensure that all appraisals are conducted using the template.

4.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Students continue to be highly complimentary about their learning experiences at Newbold College as evidenced by annual monitoring reports. External examiners comment favourably on the close tutor interaction and supervision for students generally and for projects in particular. They also comment favourably on the quality of the assessment feedback to students. Peer observation is now feeding effectively into the appraisal process.

4.4 Student Recruitment, Support, Guidance and Progression (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Institution's student support processes continue to work well. The appointment of a Student Experience Co-ordinator has the potential to significantly enhance what is already a comprehensive and effective student support system.

4.5 Premises, Facilities and Learning Resources (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The refurbishment of the gymnasium and the planned refurbishment of Moor Close is ensuring that staff, students and other stakeholders continue to benefit from safe, secure and pleasant premises.

4.6 Quality Management, Assurance and Enhancement (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

A key enhancement with reference to quality generally has been the provision of data and an associate increase in its use, particularly within the annual monitoring process. This is being further enhanced through the appointment of the Student Information Systems Manager.

4.7 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

FURTHER WORK TO MEET OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

None	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
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FURTHER WORK TO MEET OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

None

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS REQUIRED

None	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
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ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT *(to be reviewed at the next inspection)*

It is recommended that the periodic review process includes specific reference to the potential outcomes of the review and includes a template for the review report.

It is recommended that Newbold College considers making specific reference, within the annual monitoring processes, to the key performance indicators which are used in evaluating progress.

It is recommended that Newbold College ensures that all appraisals use the standard template to ensure that the outcomes of peer observation are considered in all academic staff appraisals.