



## **BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT**

### **RANDOM SPOT CHECK INSPECTION (Independent Higher Education)**

**INSTITUTION:** Redcliffe College

**ADDRESS:** College Green  
Gloucester  
GL1 2LX

**HEAD OF INSTITUTION:** Dr Rosalee Vellosos Ewell

**ACCREDITATION STATUS:** Accredited

**DATE OF INSPECTION:** 5 September 2019

**ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:** 28 November 2019

## **PART A – INTRODUCTION**

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### **1. Background to the institution**

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Redcliffe College (the Institution) was established in 1892. It was initially based in Chelsea, later moving to Redcliffe Gardens in Kensington, from which the current name of the Institution is derived. The Institution originally offered training to women, who wished to be involved in missionary work and was the first of its kind in England. It moved from London to Gloucester in 1995.

The Institution's mission is to enable students to fully engage in God's mission through empowering them with the theological, personal and practical tools which can be used in all areas of life. The Institution provides education and training to students from over thirty countries. It is an interdenominational evangelical college focused on providing bible-based training at postgraduate level.

The Institution is situated in the centre of Gloucester, close to Gloucester cathedral. It is comprised of two large buildings, from which all academic, administrative and pastoral needs are delivered. More recently, the Institution has begun to deliver some intensive face-to-face elements of the programmes through learning hubs overseas, for example, in Australia and New Zealand, to which the Institution's staff travel to deliver the programmes. A further learning hub will be established in Thailand in October 2019. The provision offered in the United Kingdom (UK) only is subject to BAC accreditation.

The Institution is legally structured as a charity, limited by guarantee. It is overseen by a board of trustees, which meets four times each year. Day-to-day management of the Institution is the responsibility of a principal who leads a team of senior academic, administrative and support staff.

The Institution's postgraduate courses are validated by the University of Gloucestershire. A recent review of the previously very close collaborative arrangements between Redcliffe College and the University of Gloucester has resulted in a clear separation between the two parties so that it is now clear that the students are registered as Redcliffe College students and that Redcliffe College is responsible for their welfare.

In addition, the Institution has collaborated for a number of years with Wycliffe Bible Translators. The relationship involved the delivery of two linguistic Master of Arts (MA) programmes, through which the students were prepared to enable them to work with people speaking minority languages around the world. These two programmes are in the process of being phased out.

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

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The Institution currently offers five MA programmes that are validated by the University of Gloucestershire. These are an MA in Contemporary Missiology, an MA in Member Care and an MA in Leadership in a Complex World. The MA programme in Field Linguistics and Literacy Programme Development are currently being taught out as the students are finalising their dissertations. It is anticipated that the programme will close completely in two years' time.

The programmes are delivered in a blended learning mode, which includes face-to-face instruction through intensive summer schools or other intensive form, for example, weekend sessions, and self-study learning. Students do their preparation and pre-reading online, undertake an intensive week of study face to face and then have time to focus on their particular areas of interest at their own pace. During this self-study period, some students engage with their tutor and some not depending on their preference. Other online activities include discussions in a live group facilitated by the tutor. The Institution also offers assessment driven learning where students complete written assessments that consist mostly of essays and some presentations.

At the time of the inspection, 125 students were enrolled on the programmes. They are all over the age of 18. The majority of the students are from either the UK or from elsewhere in the European Union. The remainder of students come from a wide range of other countries, including Nigeria, the Republic of Chad, the United States

of America, the Netherlands, Malawi, Brazil and the Republic of Ireland. A small majority of the students are female.

Students are able to enrol on programmes on three occasions each year. These entry periods are February, July and October. The entry requirements are in line with those set by the University of Gloucestershire. They are the holding of an undergraduate degree in a relevant related discipline and a required level of English language competency.

### **3. Inspection process**

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The inspection was carried out by one inspector over half a day. Meetings took place with the Vice-Principal, the Academic Coordinator, a course facilitator who is also the librarian and two members of the lecturing faculty. The inspector also carried out a tour of the premises and scrutinised various documentation. The Institution's staff co-operated very well with the inspector.

### **4. Inspection history**

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<b>Inspection Type</b>	<b>Date</b>
Full Inspection	25-26 August 2016
Interim and Supplementary Inspection	16 November 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 have been some staff changes since the last inspection. A marketing manager is due to join the Institution in October 2019. The Institution is in the process of developing a marketing team to support the manager to include a person responsible for managing the Institution's social media platforms. In addition, the Institution has pursued a decentralised model for the recruitment of its faculty, members of which are now increasingly based around the UK.

Since the last inspection, the number of students has increased substantially by 20 per cent. As a result, there is potential to enrol an increasing number of students on the current courses going forward. Growth targets have been set at 70 to 75 new students per year across the provision.

Following the review of the relationship with the University of Gloucestershire, the Institution has now taken on greater responsibility for providing appropriate support services to their students.

With regard to the academic provision, two MA programmes offered jointly with Wycliffe Bible Translators have been recently phased out. Where necessary, the students, who are now completing their dissertations, are being taught out. The Institution has developed an intensive three-week summer school that consists of the delivery of one of the Institution's core modules within its current premises. Consideration is being given to launching an additional hub in London that will offer one or two of the existing modules as well as the summer school.

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

There were no action points in the last report.

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

There were no recommendations in the last report.

### **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**

The Institution is effectively governed by appropriately qualified and experienced senior managers who understand their specific roles and responsibilities well. The organisational structure is clear and presents an accurate picture of the current staff as well as future appointments.

The staff, including members of the faculty, are encouraged to provide their views on and input into the formulation of the Institution's strategy. These views are taken into account, for example, regarding the content of courses and the timing of their delivery. As a result, the staff feel they have some ownership of the Institution's future direction and are aware of the strategic priorities.

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#### 4.2 Academic Management and Administration (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

**Comments**

There are appropriate procedures for the design of the programmes that take full account of the mission of the Institution and market demands. Individual modules are developed through collaboration between the relevant members of the faculty and the full-time academic staff. Ideas for programme content may come from either teachers or the academic staff. Discussions take place to ensure that the modules fit appropriately within the overall programme to avoid duplication and so that appropriate additional materials can be produced.

The Institution's postgraduate courses are validated by the University of Gloucestershire and meet the University's requirements.

The procedures for the performance appraisal of the academic staff include regular classroom observations, the outcomes of which are used for the dissemination of good practice. Regular recorded peer observations of teaching take place. Resulting feedback is provided to the teachers and suitable follow-up action is taken if a serious deficiency is noted that requires remedial action. Any areas for improvement are noted although these are not systematically carried forward to the next observation to ensure effective follow up and to facilitate continuous improvement.

In addition to the observations, the teachers' overall performance is appraised by members of the academic staff. The results of the observations are reviewed as part of the appraisal discussions. As a result, the teaching staff know what they are doing well and what areas they need to develop.

There are regular formal and informal faculty meetings as well as one-to-one meetings between members of the academic staff. The results of the observations are discussed in these meetings in order to facilitate the sharing of best practice. In addition to these informal opportunities for the academic staff to access continuing professional development, the University of Gloucestershire suggests that staff pursue appropriate development activities such as the Higher Education Academy (HEA) fellowship programme.

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

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

**Comments**

Academic staff are well qualified in terms of their subject knowledge and have appropriate experience for the courses to which they are allocated.

The Institution offers assessment driven learning. This consists of presentations and a focus on the submission of written work in the form of essays. It is self-directed and requires high levels of independent study skills. There is a system through which draft essays are reviewed by a tutor who provides feedback before final submission. As a result, appropriate support is provided to these students.

In response to feedback, the Institution has undertaken a number of appropriate actions to improve the quality of the feedback provided to students on their written assessments. These have included staff training and the sharing of best practice through teachers moderating each other's marked assessments. Standardisation discussions take place with the teachers to encourage consistency in the level of detail provided in the feedback. There is a policy that is effectively implemented to ensure that constructive developmental feedback always forms part of the feedback to the students. Feedback also includes positive comments. As a result, students know what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve their work.

Students have been specifically surveyed to obtain their views on the assessment feedback they receive. The results verified that students are happy with the nature and detail of the feedback.

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

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

**Comments**

The Institution enrolls suitable high-quality students onto its courses. The students are typically mature and take their studies very seriously. They are able to contribute a wealth of experience and learning to their classroom sessions. This leads to rich conversations and facilitates an effective learning environment for all.

There are appropriately qualified staff members responsible for student welfare. Pastoral support is provided by chaplains and students have access to a trained independent counsellor. Contact details for these staff are provided to the students.

Since the change of relationship between the Institution and Gloucestershire University, the student support services have been expanded to include a formal personal tutor system and the complaints and appeal processes have been revised. Students can now make complaints to the Institution, the University of Gloucestershire and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

With regard to academic support, students have access to a course leader or a leader of their particular subject specialism. This member of staff acts as their dissertation tutor and works with them throughout their study time. The staff member has regular contact with their students to ensure they are effectively supported. The outcomes of the academic support meetings with students are discussed in faculty meetings that are recorded.

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#### 4.5 Premises, Facilities and Learning Resources (spot check)

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

**Comments**

The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for staff and students. There is a reception area, from which approaching visitors can be easily seen and a buzzer system for entry. In the teaching building, there are good classrooms that are well equipped. There are two rooms that can be made into one large room so that there are teaching spaces of varying sizes to meet the needs of the different teaching groups. The premises are located next to Gloucester cathedral and the Institution can hire attractive additional classroom space in the cathedral complex, for example, the cathedral parliament room.

The teaching building also has various areas, including in the library, where students can undertake private individual study as well as a kitchen for the use of the students. The teaching faculty has appropriate space to prepare lessons and mark work. There is a staff kitchen and adequate toilet facilities. There is also a pleasant outside space for relaxation. Students are provided with food whilst they are on the premises. Administrative offices are appropriate to ensure the smooth running of the Institution.

The students no longer have access to the Gloucestershire University's library and, therefore, significant investment has been made in the Institution's own library facilities to ensure that they meet the students' needs. There is a wide range of appropriate academic resources accessible through the library, including journal and other external subscription databases, electronic books and hard copy books. Students also have access to good research methods material which they find very useful.

Students and module leaders can request books to be purchased. The library provision is reviewed annually and the library committee meets regularly to ensure that the library stock is current and meets the Institution's needs.

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#### 4.6 Quality Management, Assurance and Enhancement (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

**Comments**

All quality management policies and procedures are clearly documented in an appropriate quality handbook. The handbook includes information about course planning, validation, modification, periodic review and revalidation as well as the arrangements for externality and the role of its students in quality assurance. The handbook is well communicated to staff, students and other relevant stakeholders and is accessible through a shared computer drive. The handbook does not currently include a review date to demonstrate that it is regularly reviewed.

Very detailed module evaluations are carried out and discussed in the course committee meetings. The meetings include the student representatives, one of whom is assigned to each of the MA programmes. The module leaders respond to any suggestions for change that are made and communicate any changes made to the students so that they are well informed. The course committee meetings are recorded and the minutes are available to students through the learning management system. A representative of the University of Gloucestershire attends the meetings of the course committee and the academic board, to which the committee reports.

The Institution regularly obtains and records feedback from students and other stakeholders and takes appropriate action where necessary. There are regular and appropriate feedback mechanisms. Comprehensive written feedback is obtained regularly by each module leader on specific modules. Discussion groups meet to look at what could be done better so that improvements can be identified. Surveys are also used to obtain feedback about the students' whole experience. The views of the faculty are also taken into account.

The feedback is collated by the module leaders and analysed with the leadership team so that appropriate actions can be taken. Identified actions are incorporated into a written detailed action plan.

Although trends are identified and reviewed, the reporting systems do not allow the easy analysis of year-on-year trends to aid improvement planning and specific improvement targets are not set to ensure continuous improvement.

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#### 4.7 Compliance Declaration

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

Yes     No

**PART C – SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS**

**ACTIONS REQUIRED**

None

High

Medium

Low

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

It is recommended that any areas for improvement that are noted as a result of classroom observations are systematically carried forward to the next observation to ensure effective follow up and to facilitate continuous improvement.

It is recommended that the quality handbook includes a review date to ensure that it is regularly reviewed.

The Institution should review and amend its reporting systems so that they allow for the easy analysis of year-on-year performance trends and so that specific measurable improvement targets can be set to ensure continuous improvement.

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