

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM AND SUPPLEMENTARY INSPECTION CHANGE OF MANAGEMENT/STAFFING (College)

INSTITUTION: Tilsley College

ADDRESS: 78 Muir Street
Motherwell
North Lanarkshire
ML1 1BN

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Dr Allan McKinnon

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 22 November 2019

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation 20 February 2020

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

Tilsley College (TC/the Institution) is a Christian theological college run by a charitable trust. It offers certificated courses at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Levels 7 to 9 and uncertificated part-time courses. TC is owned by the charity Gospel Literature Outreach Europe (GLO), an international evangelical mission organisation which is part of the Brethren church.

TC is situated in the centre of the Scottish town of Motherwell on a site owned by GLO. The site also accommodates other GLO activities such as conferences, informal meetings, training, functions, exhibitions and seminars.

TC is committed to deepening students' understanding of the Bible, promoting Christian character, and developing gifts and practical skills for Christian ministry. Its objective is to foster students' Christian faith, knowledge, values and missionary skills to serve congregations in the United Kingdom and overseas.

GLO has overall responsibility for the College. The GLO-Europe Board has delegated its college functions to TC's College Council (CC). The CC is the equivalent of the College board and comprises senior members of TC staff including the Principal and the Academic Dean, GLO's General Director, and externs from GLO's partner Christian organisations. The Principal of the Institution reports to the GLO Board's Training Director, one of four GLO directors, and is a member of the GLO Board.

The training offered by GLO in Motherwell started in 1974 as a short course in Bible study, evangelism and local church ministry. The name Tilsley College was adopted in 1995 to reflect the vision that the Institution would not be solely a training ground for GLO workers but also for others who wished to be equipped to serve. It has offered a one-year programme since the 1990s, a two-year programme since 2008, and a three-year programme since 2017.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Institution offers three certificated courses. These are a one-year Certificate, a two-year Diploma and a three-year European Baccalaureate (EB) in Biblical Studies and Christian Ministry. Obtaining the Certificate requires 60 credits on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the equivalent of completing the first year of a bachelor's degree. The Diploma is awarded after 120 ECTS credits, the equivalent of the second year of a bachelor's degree. The student is awarded the EB after obtaining 180 ECTS credits, the equivalent of completing the third year of a bachelor's degree. Students with satisfactory performance on the Certificate course can proceed to the Diploma course, and successful Diploma students may stay for a further year to complete the EB. The awarding body in all cases is the European Council for Theological Education (ECTE).

The certificated courses are delivered primarily face-to-face with a small minority of online learning. They are full time and residential. Each course includes a period of practical church activity.

TC also offers uncertificated courses subject to demand. Joshua is a SCQF Level 6 course of study in Christian theology and practice delivered as an evening course over two years and includes online learning. TC also makes modules from certificated courses available on a part-time or open-access basis on request. There is online and blended learning uncertificated provision including a Learning to Lead Christian leadership course and a First Serve missionary-focused programme for 18 to 30-year olds which begins with a month at the Institution.

At the time of the inspection there were eleven students on the certificated courses with eight on the Certificate programme and three on the Diploma programme. There are currently no students on the EB programme. Most students on the Certificate and Diploma are male. There were four United Kingdom (UK) students, with three from Italy and one each from Ireland, the United States of America, Ukraine and the Faroe Islands.

An additional student was taking some modules in Biblical Studies and Christian Ministry on an open-access basis at the time of the inspection. There were 36 students enrolled in the Joshua programme. There were no students on the Learning to Lead or First Serve programmes at the time of the inspection. All the students are over the age of 18.

Enrolment on certificated courses is on an academic year basis with courses commencing in September each year. TC is flexible about enrolment on other courses.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was undertaken by one inspector over one day in Motherwell. Interviews were conducted with the Principal, Academic Dean, administrative and student welfare staff, teachers and students. The inspector observed a lesson, inspected the premises and scrutinised relevant documentation. The Institution fully cooperated with the process, with the required information made available and clearly presented.

4. Background to the supplementary inspection

The interim inspection was expanded to an interim and supplementary inspection as a result of a recent changes of staff in the posts of Principal and Academic Dean.

5. Inspection history

Inspection Type	Date
Stage 2	28 July 2009
Stage 3	16 October 2009
Interim	7 September 2010
Re-accreditation	6-7 June 2013
Interim	1 September 2015
Re-accreditation	30-31 May 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

The Principal and the Academic Dean were appointed to their posts in September 2019. Both were previously members of the Institution and had taken on acting responsibilities in the roles to which they have now been appointed. The new Principal spent ten years as Academic Dean and the new Academic Dean is a former lecturer. They both teach on the course. They provide suitable overall and academic leadership for the Institution.

GLO is changing its status from a charitable trust to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), an optional legal form for Scottish charities. Legally the transactions of an SCIO are undertaken by it directly, rather than by its charity trustees on its behalf. The charity trustees of an SCIO are in general protected from incurring personal liability and this is the primary rationale for the proposed change. The Institution has obtained the necessary authorisation from the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and will be making the transition in the next six months. TC will continue to be regulated by OSCR. TC anticipates that there may be governance changes as a result of this change, but the details have yet to be determined.

The EB course was introduced following the previous inspection. There were five EB students in 2017 to 2018 and three in 2018 to 2019. The course is dependent upon demand and no students enrolled for the 2018 to 2019 course. TC is in contact with Diploma alumni and hopes that it will be possible to run an EB course in 2020 to 2021 to enable successful Diploma graduates to continue their studies.

TC is considering whether to expand the e-learning components on the certificated courses. It would be on the one-year Certificate course initially, with the possibility of extension to the Diploma and EB programmes. TC has advertised for an E-learning Developer although there is also some in-house expertise. TC may pilot increased e-learning components in the next academic year depending on progress made in the interim.

2. Response to actions points in last report

18.7 Staff must undergo training to raise awareness as to how they can protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Senior staff have undergone appropriate training and are certificated. This has raised their awareness as to how they can protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. However, not all staff have had appropriate training.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

There were no recommendations for improvement in the previous report.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (supplementary inspection)

The numbers below refer to the standards as presented in the college scheme document and main full inspection report

1. The institution is effectively managed

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 1.1 | The management structure is clearly defined, documented and understood, including the role and extent of authority of any owners, trustees or governing body. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 1.2 | The head of the institution and other senior managers are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 1.3 | There are clear channels of communication between the management and staff. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

There are four GLO directors, a General Director responsible for leadership and directors with designated responsibility for Training, Missions, and Finance. The College Council has clear terms of reference which are published in the Institution's Strategic Plan. The management structure is therefore clearly defined, documented and understood within the Institution.

The Principal and AD are appropriately qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective managers who support high-quality teaching and learning.

Staff confirmed there is excellent routine informal communication with management with an open-door policy. Formal minuted all-staff meetings are held regularly and result in action points that are monitored from meeting to meeting. This ensures clear channels of communication.

2. The administration of the institution is effective

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 2.1 | Administrators are suitably qualified or experienced and understand their specific responsibilities and duties. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.2 | The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the institution. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.3 | The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented and understood. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.4 | Policies, procedures and systems are well documented and effectively disseminated across the institution. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.5 | Data collection and collation systems are effective. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Registrar is responsible for student administration. She is suitably qualified and experienced and understands her specific responsibilities and provides effective support.

The size of the team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of TC. If necessary extra administrative assistance is provided for the Registrar at times of high activity, for example, in organising graduation, so that efficiency is maintained.

The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented and understood within the Institution, promoting effective administration.

A comprehensive TC handbook for staff and students contains academic information and practical information and policies. It is an excellent source of information about all aspects of life and learning at TC and ensures that policies, procedures and systems are well-documented effectively disseminated.

Data collection and collation systems are a mixture of electronic and paper-based that are effective for current needs.

Students were very positive about TC's administration and reported that it effectively supported their learning.

3. The institution employs appropriate managerial and administrative staff

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|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 3.1 | There are appropriate policies and effective procedures for the recruitment and continuing employment of suitably qualified and experienced staff. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3.2 | Experience and qualifications claimed are verified before employment. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3.3 | There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Members of staff are volunteers who are active members of the Church. They may approach TC to offer their services, or may be approached by TC, or TC may advertise. TC alumni are a significant source of teaching staff. In each case, TC verifies experience and qualifications to ensure that staff are equipped for the post. Senior staff, including the Principal and Academic Dean, are confirmed by the CC. The Principal has a master's degree in education and the Academic Dean is a qualified teacher and they have the skills and experience to select high-quality staff.

Staff do not have contracts because of their volunteer status. There is the equivalent of a contract in the form of a schedule of services which sets out the member of staff's accountability, purpose, main responsibilities, hours of work and review process. This individual agreement is supported by the information in the TC handbook. This ensures clarity about staff members' role and obligations.

An effective system is in place for regularly reviewing staff performance. Each member of staff meets the Principal for an annual formal appraisal which discusses staff views and performance and identifies development needs. This formal system is supplemented by routine informal discussion and review and ensures that staff performance is maintained and that any development needs are met.

4. Publicity material, both printed and electronic, gives a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the institution and its curriculum

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|-----|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 4.1 | Text and images provide an accurate depiction of the institution's location, premises, facilities and the range and nature of resources and services offered. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4.2 | Information on the courses available is comprehensive, accurate and up to date. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Text, images and course information available in hard copy and on the website are accurate, comprehensive and up to date. They provide applicants with the relevant information they need to make a decision about studying at TC.

The Institution is currently working on modernising its website to make its design and format more attractive to prospective students and increase interest in the courses.

5. The institution takes reasonable care to recruit and enroll suitable students for its courses

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|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 5.1 | Entry requirements for each course are set at an appropriate level and clearly stated in the course descriptions seen by prospective students. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 5.2 | A formal application process ensures that students meet the entry requirements and any claimed qualifications are verified. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

5.3	Students are properly briefed on the nature and requirements of the courses for which they apply, and all application enquiries responded to promptly and appropriately.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
5.4	Any overseas recruitment agents are properly selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA
5.5	Students receive a proper initial assessment which includes language ability to confirm their capability to complete the courses on which they are enrolling.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Entry requirements are set at an appropriate level and are clearly stated on TC's website. The spiritual commitment of the applicant is part of the specified admissions criteria.

There is an appropriate application process set out in TC's admission, continuation and graduation policy. The process is overseen by the Registration Committee and ensures that students meet the entry requirements and have appropriate qualifications.

Students are appropriately briefed and the Registrar responds promptly by e-mail or by telephone to all application enquiries.

All entrants are interviewed by the Academic Dean and/or Principal to ensure that they are equipped to undertake the course. The Institution policy is that students whose first language is not English are expected to have a Test of English as a Foreign Language score of 6.0. This ensures that students have the capacity to successfully complete the course.

6. There is an appropriate policy on student attendance and effective procedures and systems to enforce it

6.1	There is an appropriate, clear and published policy on student attendance and punctuality.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
6.2	Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all students, collated centrally and reviewed at least weekly.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
6.3	Student absences are followed up promptly and appropriate action taken.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

There is an appropriate, clear and published policy on attendance and punctuality disseminated through the Institution's handbook.

Class registers are kept and regularly reviewed by the Registrar.

Any unexplained absence or pattern of absence is followed up by the teacher and as appropriate the Academic Dean and action is taken as necessary. The small size of classes means that any unexplained absence is easily identified and addressed.

7. The institution regularly obtains and records feedback from students and other stakeholders and takes appropriate action where necessary

7.1	The institution has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from students and other stakeholders (such as staff, partner institutions and employers) on all aspects of the institution's provision, including formal student representation where appropriate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
7.2	Feedback is obtained, recorded and analysed on a regular basis.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

7.3	The feedback is reviewed by management and action is taken where necessary.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
7.4	There is a mechanism for reporting on the institution's response to the feedback to the student body.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

TC has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from students and other stakeholders. There is a student council with a remit to discuss issues and make recommendations to TC leadership. A staff member appointed by the Principal is part of the council and this ensures an effective channel of communication between the student council and the Principal. Feedback from stakeholders is obtained from placement supervisors' evaluation of students' practical experience in the church community.

TC solicits detailed formal feedback from students at the end of each term. Questionnaires obtain students' views on their academic and spiritual development and on the TC environment. Students are also surveyed about each subject taught on the course and each teacher's performance.

The resulting information is consolidated, reviewed and analysed by the Principal and Academic Dean. They take any action that is indicated and inform the students about actions taken, either informally or through the student council. The data is also used in formal and informal staff appraisal.

This comprehensive system for formal feedback together with regular informal feedback ensures that students' views are listened to and actioned. Students were very positive about the Institution's commitment to obtaining and using their feedback.

8. The institution has effective systems to review its own standards and assess its own performance with a view to continuing improvement

8.1	There are effective systems for monitoring and periodically reviewing all aspects of the institution's performance.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
8.2	Reports are compiled at least annually which present the results of the institution's reviews and incorporate action plans. Reports include analysis of year-on-year results on student satisfaction, retention, achievement, examination results and completion rates.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
8.3	Action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed, with outcomes reported to the management.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Quality assurance tools include the termly results of student feedback from surveys and from the student council, staff appraisal, peer review of teaching practice, alumni feedback, external moderation of marked papers and external accreditation. A College Council Quality Assurance Sub-Committee undertakes a two-day review of all aspects of the Institution's activity every two years.

Findings are discussed by TC staff, at meetings of the CC, at meetings between the Principal, Training Director and CC Chair, and with the Board of Directors and action is taken where necessary.

Results also feed into the Institution's Strategic Plan and Operational Plan, which includes quality assurance objectives, performance indicators and action plans. Action plans based on an analysis of performance are updated regularly by the Principal to reflect developments and achievement of goals. The CC members are provided with updates at their quarterly meetings.

Together these form an effective system for TC to review and monitor progress and achievements for the purpose of quality enhancement.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

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

Comments

Teachers are well-qualified and experienced with many having a postgraduate qualification and extensive teaching experience. Students were positive about the quality of the teaching and this was evident in the observed lesson and in students' completed evaluation forms.

The Institutional handbook provides students with comprehensive and detailed information on curriculum content, learning outcomes, assessments and grading criteria. It is an effective means of ensuring that all students have access to the information they need to support their studies.

The placement component of the courses is well-integrated within the overall programme with a clear structure, effective monitoring and formal grading. A Practical Ministries Tutor liaises with the students' field supervisor to check the student progress. There is formal end-of-placement evaluation of the student by the tutor and of the tutor by the student. This systematic approach ensures that students derive maximum benefit from this key part of the programme.

4.3 Student Welfare (spot check)

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

Comments

The Spiritual Formation Tutor is the pastoral welfare lead and lives on site so is readily available. TC has decided that the Bursar post will shortly include a student welfare management function, providing an additional source of advice and support.

Each student has a mentor who may be a teacher or a member of the local GLO community. There is formal end-of-mentorship evaluation of the student by the mentor and of the mentor by the student. This enables the Institution to monitor the individual student's experience and the success of the mentorship system.

There is detailed information in TC's handbook that explains the support that is available, enabling students to access it easily.

18.7 Not all staff have completed appropriate training on radicalisation and extremism. In addition, the Institution does not have a published policy and process to protect students from radicalisation and extremism.

The TC handbook includes the BAC complaints procedure.

TC provides an effective and supportive environment that enables UK and international students to thrive academically and personally. All students were very positive about TC's pastoral support and praised TC staff for their approachability and caring attitude.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

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

Comments

The capacity and equipment in TC's classrooms are appropriate for the courses offered. Space for private study is available in the well-stocked library and in the individual study bedrooms of the on-site residences. There is a canteen that serves three meals a day to students and staff and appropriate relaxation and social space for students and staff.

TC's co-location with GLO means that students can access GLO's facilities. These include a large bookshop and a 200-seater auditorium used for guest speakers and church events.

TC premises and facilities therefore provide a suitable environment for living and learning for both staff and students.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes

No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

The effective management provided by the Principal and AD is reflected in the high quality of the Institution’s programmes and in student satisfaction.

The comprehensive Institutional handbook provides a consolidated and easily accessed source of policies and procedures which are informative for staff and students.

There is effective formal and informal communication between the staff and students which means that students’ voices are heard and their views are considered in TC’s decision-making.

Effective and nurturing systems support students’ well-being and personal development which students greatly appreciate.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

18.7 The Institution must develop and implement an anti-radicalisation and extremism policy and risk assessment and ensure that all staff are trained in order to protect students.

High Medium Low

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

None

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE