



## **BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT**

### **INTERIM INSPECTION (College)**

<b>INSTITUTION:</b>	Tobias School of Art and Therapy
<b>ADDRESS:</b>	Coombe Hill Road East Grinstead West Sussex RH19 4LZ
<b>HEAD OF INSTITUTION:</b>	Ms Gillian Mary David
<b>ACCREDITATION STATUS:</b>	Accredited
<b>DATE OF INSPECTION:</b>	15 March 2022
<b>ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:</b>	Continued accreditation, 19 May 2022

## **PART A – INTRODUCTION**

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

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Tobias School of Art and Therapy (the Institution) is a privately owned college and a registered charity. It provides courses in arts for health and well-being and transpersonal arts in therapy. Established in 1979, the Institution moved to its current premises in East Grinstead, West Sussex in 1981.

The Institution aims to provide professional training in relation to the transformative power of artistic processes for well-being, personal growth and social change.

Tobias School of Art and Therapy is led by the Head of Institution. The Head of Institution is supported by three teaching staff, the Office Manager and the Company Secretary, who also acts as the Facilities Manager. Overall governance of the Institution is provided by four Directors, who form the Tobias Trust Board.

Originally founded in 1979, the Institution follows the developmental philosophy founded by Rudolf Steiner, known as Anthroposophy, a modern spiritual path that respects the freedom of each individual. Students are invited to explore this approach in order to come to their own judgements about its validity and relevance. This is taught within a critical context, including psychodynamic and humanistic theory and practice.

Since the previous inspection, there has been a change of Company Secretary and Chair of Trustees. Three new teaching staff have also been appointed. The Institution now offers part-time students a blended learning study option, with a mix of on-site and online learning.

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

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The Institution offers an accredited course in Transpersonal Arts for Health and Well-being, and Transpersonal Arts in Therapy. The Transpersonal Arts for Health and Well-being qualification, at level 5, is a one-year, full-time programme delivered in person at the Institution's premises or studied on a part-time, modular basis over two years. The modular training programme consists of one residential module for two weeks during April each year, and six two-day online modules spread throughout the remainder of each year.

On successful completion, students may be eligible to progress to the Transpersonal Arts in Therapy course at level 7. Students are enrolled on a full-time programme, delivered in person at the Institution's premises, over two years. Students attend classes for two days a week, with a further day in a community clinical supervised placement. Students can also study on a part-time, modular basis, with a blend of residential and online modules every year for four years.

Both courses are accredited as professional recognition awards by the City & Guilds of London Institute.

The Institution also provides a programme of short courses in the summer months, ranging in duration from one to three days. Topics include working with pigments, nurturing arts, bookbinding, and a creative workshop using the butterfly metamorphosis.

At the time of the inspection, there were 65 students enrolled. Just over half of students attend classes on a full-time basis. All students are aged over 24, and most are female. Almost all full-time students are United Kingdom (UK) nationals. Part-time students are from the UK and other European and international locations, including Hungary, Malaysia, Estonia, United States of America (USA), Brazil, Greece, India, Iceland and Norway.

The Institution has a total capacity for 100 students to be enrolled at any one time, based on a mix of full- and part-time delivery.

Students on full-time programmes are enrolled in September each year. Admission to the part-time modular programme is once every two years, commencing in the spring term.

Students must meet published entry requirements to enrol on each course. These typically include a first degree or relevant life experience and evidence of sufficient English language competency.

### **3. Inspection process**

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The inspection was undertaken by one inspector over one day, onsite at the Institution's premises. Meetings were held with the Head of Institution, the Office Manager and the Company Secretary. The inspector observed teaching sessions and held meetings with students and tutors. The inspector carried out a tour of the premises, including of the residential accommodation. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised. All requested information was made available. The Institution co-operated fully with the inspection.

### **4. Inspection history**

<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Date</b>
Full Accreditation	10 & 13 July 2020

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## **PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE**

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*The following judgements 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**

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Since the previous inspection, the Company Secretary has retired from the role in September 2020. A new Company Secretary has been appointed, who also acts as the part-time Facilities Manager and Administrator and is a Company Director and Trustee. He has relevant professional experience and qualifications in management, economics and finance.

A new course leader and three new members of teaching staff have been appointed since the retirement of the previous senior lecturer. All teaching staff have the relevant qualifications and professional experience required to carry out their roles.

A new Chair of Trustees has been appointed, following the departure of two previous trustees. At the time of the inspection, a new trustee was in the final stages of formal appointment. The Chair of Trustees brings a background of significant financial expertise to the Tobias Trust Board.

The Institution now offers part-time students a blended learning option. Students attend in person for an intensive two-week teaching block once a year, with six two-day online modules spread throughout the remainder of each year. Online teaching is offered at different times of the day to ensure that international students are able to attend relative to their international time zone.

### **2. Response to action points in the last report**

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*3.3 An effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff must be fully implemented.*

Teaching staff meet regularly, formally and informally, to discuss teaching performance and to identify areas for improvement. A programme of peer review is implemented, which provides formal feedback to teachers based on observations of their teaching practice. Feedback provides valuable suggestions for improvement, where relevant. However, managers have not yet implemented an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of all staff.

*8.2 Managers must compile a formal annual report to present the outcomes of monitoring and review, including a year-on-year analysis of student satisfaction, retention, achievement and completion rates.*

Managers have plans in place to present a draft annual monitoring report to staff and trustees by the end of the academic year. However, the report has not yet been fully compiled.

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

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*It is recommended that the annual External Examiner's report is formally reported at the Board of Trustees' meetings.*

The previous External Examiner's report was reported to trustees at the December 2021 meeting and is now a formal agenda item at Board of Trustees' meetings.

*It is strongly recommended that the Institution consider automating key data collection and collation systems.*

Managers have made limited progress in collating students' community clinical placement information in online folders to securely share information between relevant stakeholders. Managers recognise the benefits of digitally collecting and collating students' assessment and academic results, but this information has not yet been automated.

*Managers should consider implementing a more formal, overarching quality improvement plan.*

Managers plan to incorporate a formal quality improvement action plan as part of the annual monitoring reporting process. However, this has not yet been implemented.

*The Institution should consider providing part-time international students with access to a greater range of online learning resources.*

Students now have access to an online student zone, where they can access a broad range of learning resources to support their studies and skills development. Resources include video lectures, handouts, articles and reading lists. Students value the opportunity to use the online resource area to share examples of their own work with other members of their group, and to share ideas and inspire each other.

*The Institution should compile a library catalogue that lists all current items in the lending and reference library.*

The library catalogue has not yet been compiled.

#### **4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements**

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##### **4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)**

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

#### **Comments**

Experienced and appropriately qualified managers work very well together to ensure the Institution is professionally managed. Managers work in partnership with the Tobias Trust Board to ensure robust academic and financial oversight is provided. Effective staff succession planning takes place to ensure that the high quality of education is maintained.

Communication between managers, administrators and academic staff is effective. Staff meet regularly, both formally and informally, to ensure the Institution's smooth day-to-day running.

Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly, and updated and shared with students and other stakeholders through the Institution's website.

Managers have started the process of migrating some of the Institution's administration processes to a digital format to facilitate the secure recording and sharing of key student data. However, this process is ongoing and not yet complete.

Managers monitor the performance of teaching staff through peer reviews and regular informal support.

3.3 However, a more formal system for regularly reviewing the performance of all staff has not yet been implemented.

Prospective students have access to clear and useful publicity materials that accurately represent the Institution's premises, location, facilities and curriculum. Course information guides provide students with clear guidance on entry requirements, along with details of the nature and requirements of each course on offer.

The student application, recruitment and selection processes are rigorous and robust and ensure that the Institution recruits students with integrity to learning programmes that meet their needs and progression goals.

The attendance policy is clear, appropriate and effectively communicated to staff and students. Students must meet published minimum attendance levels to be eligible for externally accredited qualification awards. Accurate records of student attendance are maintained.

Student feedback is regularly collected and analysed to identify any areas for improvement. Managers act quickly in response to student requests where appropriate, to ensure that the high quality student experience is maintained.

Managers informally review and monitor all aspects of the Institution's performance on a continuous basis.

8.2 However, a formal annual report that presents the outcomes of the Institution's evaluations, along with associated improvement action-planning, is not yet produced.

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

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

#### Comments

The Head of the Institution provides very effective academic leadership. Teaching staff are appropriately qualified, experienced and well respected in their disciplines. They use their experience and expertise to plan practical courses and lessons that inspire and motivate students. Tutors expertly model practical artistic techniques that students can use with their own clients in clinical community placements. For example, in one lesson, students applied their understanding of different elements and colour theory to explore representations of their personal biographies.

Teachers are well supported in their Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Staff are able to request funds from the professional development budget to participate in a range of relevant training events and activities to maintain their professional skills, for example in sculpture, pottery and eco-therapy methods.

Students benefit from an effective blend of lectures, workshops, experiential exercises and group exercises to support their progress and development. Tutors create a reflexive, calm and supportive learning environment where students can develop their understanding of different psychological approaches and the importance of self-care and resilience. In online teaching sessions, tutors use break-out rooms effectively to allow students to work in pairs and smaller groups to discuss and develop their ideas. As a result, students develop their practical art and therapy skills effectively.

Students have access to a wide range of learning resources to support their practical skills and academic knowledge. Students attending the school on-site have access to a well-stocked art shop with a broad range of art materials, and a library that provides a range of specialist literature on a wide range of topics that support students' independent study. Online resources provide all students with access to useful handouts, recorded lectures and articles to support their studies.

Students studying online do not have access to electronic copies of core academic texts to support their assignment work further.

Students highly value the detailed, specific and constructive written and spoken feedback they receive from their tutors, which helps them to improve over time.

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#### 4.3 Student Welfare (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

#### Comments

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Students are very well supported by caring staff who embody the values and ideas of the Institution. This high level of care, support and challenge creates an enabling and secure environment where students can develop confidence and trust in their own abilities.

Students receive clear advice and guidance before and on the commencement of their learning to ensure that they are able to settle into their studies quickly. International students receive appropriate advice before their arrival on travelling to and staying in the UK.

Students benefit from regular one-to-one tutorials that provide high levels of ongoing care and support. The learning environment is very inclusive. Students value the opportunities to support and learn from each other in a supportive and nurturing environment.

Students have access to the Institution's complaints policy, which was updated during the inspection to provide details of BAC's complaints procedure.

Residential accommodation is clean, safe, secure and comfortable. Students are invited to attend a limited range of social activities, such as end-of-year meals, celebrations of specific events and a graduation ceremony.

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#### 4.4 Premises and Facilities (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 students and staff. The school is located in attractive grounds that provide a calm and welcoming environment for the study of art therapy. The premises are adequately heated, ventilated and decorated.

Students benefit from large, bright and well-equipped classrooms, studios and meeting spaces to support their studies and develop their practical artistic skills and techniques.

A suitable range of signage is provided throughout the premises, including relevant health, safety and welfare information. Signs displaying the emergency contact details for staff are updated to ensure that the information displayed is current.

There are toilet facilities of an appropriate number and level of cleanliness.

Managers and administrative and teaching staff have access to a range of appropriate office and working areas for holding meetings, preparing resources and marking assessments.

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#### 4.5 Compliance Declaration

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

Yes     No

## PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

### STRENGTHS

The highly supportive, nurturing and enriching learning environment effectively supports students to develop confidence and trust in their own abilities.

Students benefit from high levels of academic, practical and pastoral support, which allows them to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to be successful art therapists.

### ACTIONS REQUIRED

3.3 An effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff must be fully implemented.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
8.2 Managers must compile a formal annual report to present the outcomes of monitoring and review, including a year-on-year analysis of student satisfaction, retention, achievement and completion rates.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Managers must implement a quality improvement action plan to ensure areas for improvement are identified and put in place.	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low

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

Students' assessment and academic results should be compiled and recorded digitally and administration processes should be moved to a digital format.

The Institution should compile a library catalogue that lists all current items in the lending and reference library.

It is recommended that students studying online have access to core academic texts electronically.

### COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

The designated first-aid staff member's training certificate expired in February 2021. Managers had identified this and arranged a confirmed booking for update training, but this had not yet taken place at the time of the inspection.