



## **BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT**

### **END OF PROBATION REVIEW (College)**

**INSTITUTION:** Tobias School of Art and Therapy

**ADDRESS:** Coombe Hill Road  
East Grinstead  
West Sussex  
RH19 4LZ

**HEAD OF INSTITUTION:** Ms Gillian Mary David

**ACCREDITATION STATUS:** Accredited

**DATE OF INSPECTION:** 12 December 2023

**ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:** Continued accreditation, 28 March 2024

## **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. The Institution was established in 1979 and is based in East Grinstead, West Sussex in the United Kingdom (UK).

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 two 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, managers have made changes to the student facilities, enhancing the student kitchen, relocating the library and reinstating the therapy room.

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

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The Institution offers accredited courses 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, which is 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 (City & Guilds). City & Guilds is an awarding organisation recognised by the UK regulator, the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual). The Institution also provides a programme of short courses in the summer months, ranging in duration from one to three days. Topics include creative sessions using collage and colour, mindfulness techniques and workshops exploring nutrition issues and eating disorders.

At the time of the inspection, there were 63 students enrolled. Just under half of students attend classes on a full-time basis. All students are aged over 24, and most are female. Most full-time students are UK nationals. Part-time students are from the UK and European and international locations, including Hungary, China, Malaysia, Estonia, the United States of America (USA), Brazil, Greece, India, Iceland and Norway.

The Institution has a total capacity of 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.

### **3. Inspection process**

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The inspection was undertaken by one inspector over one day on site 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 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
Interim	15 March 2022

## **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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A tour of the premises demonstrates that the library has been relocated and expanded. Book stock has been reorganised and is more clearly labelled and catalogued. As a result, students report that the library now provides a comfortable space that is conducive to learning and helps support their studies and assignment work. Inspection findings confirm this view.

The student kitchen area has been expanded and modernised. The large kitchen area now provides a warm and welcoming space for students to mix and socialise, as well as to prepare and consume meals and drinks. Students report that the kitchen area is now at the heart of the Institution, and this allows them to interact with students in different groups more easily. This helps to build positive relationships.

Managers have reinstated the therapy room and provided a dedicated area for tutors to deliver online teaching sessions. Tutors have access to modern computing equipment with high-speed internet access. This supports tutors in providing high-quality remote training sessions to students studying online.

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

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

This action has been met. Managers have implemented an effective system for reviewing staff performance. Staff complete a self-assessment form, evaluating and reflecting on their performance. Self-assessments are used well to inform a professional conversation between staff members and their managers. Review records clearly identify areas of strength and opportunities for further enhancement. Any actions and targets are systematically reviewed to check on progress. Staff report that the performance review process is beneficial and helps to inform their training and professional development planning. The inspector's findings confirm this view.

*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.*

This action has been met. Managers have implemented an annual report summarising relevant performance data, including overall student satisfaction, retention, achievement and completion rates. The report also includes relevant additional data in relation to facilities and finances. The annual report is presented to trustees, providing helpful data that enables them to support and challenge senior leaders on the performance of the Institution.

*Managers must implement a quality improvement action plan to ensure areas for improvement are identified and put in place.*

This action has been met. Managers have produced a clear, well-structured and specific quality improvement plan. The plan identifies a range of relevant action points, lines of responsibility, key deadlines and a completion status. Managers confirm that the formalised plan helps to ensure that areas for improvement are identified and put in place. Inspection findings confirm this view.

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

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

This recommendation has been met. Managers have recently implemented a new digital student record database. The database provides managers and tutors with a clear and accessible digital record of students'

details, including their academic records, assessment results and details of their clinical placements and supervisors. The database helps to ensure that academic results are logically and accurately administered.

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

This recommendation has been met. The library catalogue has been digitally recorded and updated to give students and tutors a clear record of items in the lending and reference library.

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

This recommendation has been met. A review of the Institution's online learning resources demonstrates that all students can now access free and paid-for electronic academic texts. Links to online learning resource libraries are clearly signposted through the Institution's own online learning environment. Students report that they have good access to the electronic learning resources they need to support their studies, including practical video tutorials, case studies and articles. Inspection findings confirm this view.

#### **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**

Discussions with managers and a review of management and meeting records demonstrate that the Institution continues to have a clearly defined and effective management structure. The Head of Institution and other senior managers are suitably qualified and experienced. They fully understand their responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out.

The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the Institution. Managers have recently introduced a new digital database that allows tutors and managers to organise and track students' academic records and results clearly. As a result, data collection and collation systems are efficient and effective.

Managers have recently introduced more robust and rigorous systems for regularly reviewing staff performance. A review of completed performance reviews and discussions with tutors confirms that the system effectively identifies areas of strength and opportunities for further enhancement. Managers ensure that actions and targets are systematically reviewed, and training and support are put in place where appropriate to support staff in their Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Publicity materials, both printed and electronic, provide prospective students with accurate and up-to-date information on the Institution and its curriculum. The website has been updated and redeveloped since the last inspection, providing students with a user-friendly platform to review details of the courses on offer, the training structure and the application process. Accurate details of the Institution's programme of short summer courses are clearly presented on the website and in a printed brochure. As a result, students have access to reliable information to inform their studies and course choices.

Managers have enhanced their student recruitment procedures since the previous inspection. A review of the redeveloped student interview sheet demonstrates the more detailed and in-depth questions students are asked during the application process. This helps managers to understand better whether prospective students are well suited to meet the academic and psychological demands and requirements of the courses and curriculum. Students spoken with during the inspection confirmed that they were properly briefed on the nature and requirements of the courses they had applied for. Inspection findings confirm this view.

The attendance policy is clear and appropriate. The attendance requirements are effectively disseminated and communicated to staff and students via detailed staff and student handbooks and the Institution's

website. Students must meet published minimum attendance levels to be eligible for externally accredited qualification awards.

Managers regularly obtain, record and analyse feedback from students. Managers share a summary of student feedback with visiting tutors and take appropriate action where necessary to address any areas for improvement. Students confirm that tutors and managers take their feedback seriously and respond promptly where necessary. Inspection findings confirm this view.

The Institution has effective systems in place to review its own standards and assess its own performance with a view to continuing improvement. Managers ensure that trustees receive an annual report summarising relevant performance data, including overall student satisfaction, retention, achievement and completion rates. This enables trustees to understand the performance of the Institution. Managers have implemented a clear, well-structured and specific quality improvement plan to ensure that areas for improvement are identified and put in place. Inspection findings confirm this view.

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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**

Academic management is effective. The Head of Institution is suitably qualified and experienced and provides very effective academic leadership. Students confirm that classes are clearly timetabled, and rooms are allocated appropriately for the courses offered.

A review of tutors' Curricula Vitae (CVs) demonstrates that managers work with a range of specialists and well-qualified visiting tutors who are allocated to specific classes that are well matched to their areas of expertise. This ensures that students receive a high-quality and consistent learning experience from industry professionals.

Schemes of learning demonstrate that courses are well planned and sequenced to ensure that students develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to succeed in their assignments and clinical work placements. Students confirm that they are supported very well to develop their academic knowledge and practical art and therapy skills. Inspection findings confirm this view.

Students and tutors have access to a good range of appropriate learning resources and materials for study. A review of the resources available demonstrates that students can access helpful recorded tutorials, case studies, presentations and handouts to support their studies and independent learning.

Discussions with students and a review of marked assignments confirm that students benefit from detailed, personalised and constructive feedback on their performance and progress. Oral and written feedback is regularly given to individual students and tailored to their specific needs. This helps students to understand how to improve further.

Managers and tutors have a clear policy and procedure to deal with any formal cases of malpractice, maladministration or plagiarism. The student malpractice policy does not yet include consideration of malpractice through artificial intelligence.

The Transpersonal Arts for Health and Well-being qualification at Level 5 and the Transpersonal Art Counsellor course at Level 7 continue to be accredited as professional recognition awards by the City & Guilds.

Students continue to benefit from appropriate advice and guidance on progression opportunities from academic staff, including tutors and the Head of Institution. Students confirm that they receive regular tutorials highlighting relevant opportunities to continue their studies, for example postgraduate qualifications in various applied and clinical-related disciplines. Inspection findings confirm this view.

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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**

Students receive effective pastoral support that is appropriate to their age, background and circumstances. Discussions with managers, tutors and students and a review of academic records demonstrate that all students receive high-quality pastoral support that meets their individual needs. All students receive a formal tutorial once in each term or module, depending on their mode of study, and additional support where required.

The Institution has a suitable policy, risk assessment and action plan in place to protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Staff have completed relevant online training and understand their roles and responsibilities well.

International students are provided with effective advice and assistance. Managers offer a range of helpful open events online to provide international students with relevant information and guidance related to studying online modular courses. International students continue to benefit from a useful welcome pack that supports them in visiting the Institution for their in-person modules. The pack includes relevant information to help them settle into their courses quickly.

The Institution has clear, fair and transparent contractual terms and conditions in place. Students sign a formal agreement that sets out the appropriate terms and conditions concerning participation and attendance requirements, placements, fees and finance. This ensures that students are clear on the applicable terms and conditions related to their studies and their time at the Institution.

A tour of the residential accommodation and discussions with students demonstrate that the accommodation remains fit for purpose and is well maintained and appropriately supervised.

Students continue to enjoy a range of social activities, which include end-of-term and end-of-year celebrations, hospitality events and the evening guest lecture series. Students confirm that events are interesting and meet their individual needs and interests.

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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 Institution has secure possession of and access to its premises. Tobias Trust Limited owns the main school building and the accommodation block and grounds on behalf of the Institution.

A tour of the Institution and the residential accommodation confirms that the premises provide staff and students with a safe, secure and clean environment. A good range of signage is provided throughout the premises, including relevant health and safety and welfare information on notice boards in key areas and in staff and student handbooks.

Classrooms and other learning areas are appropriate for the courses offered. Well-equipped studios and workshops provide students with light and spacious areas for developing their artwork, including fine art, models and sculptures. An on-site materials shop provides students with access to the materials and resources they need to support their practical work. Students spoken with during the inspection highly valued the range and standard of facilities and resources available to them.

The recently extended and remodelled kitchen area provides students and staff with a spacious and attractive central meeting place and an area in which to prepare meals and hot drinks. Washroom facilities are clean, accessible and sufficient for the number of staff and students on site at any one time.

Students have access to a specialist lending and reference library, which has been moved and extended since the last inspection. The new library space includes a good range of literature on a wide range of topics that support students' independent study. The library books are well organised and catalogued. As a result, students report that the library provides a comfortable space that is conducive to learning and helps support their studies and assignment work. Inspection findings confirm this view.

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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 FINDINGS**

**FURTHER WORK TO MEET OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

None

High    Medium    Low

**FURTHER WORK TO MEET OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

None

**ADDITIONAL ACTIONS REQUIRED**

None

High    Medium    Low

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

Managers may wish to consider updating the student malpractice policy at the next review to include consideration of malpractice through artificial intelligence.

**THE INSPECTION WAS CARRIED OUT BY:**

Steve Ingle

Lead Inspector