Higher Education Review of The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts

May 2015

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts. The review took place from 18 to 20 May 2015 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Professor Hilary Grainger
- Professor Alan Howard
- Mr Laurence McNaughton (student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts and to make judgements as to whether or not its academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. These expectations are the statements in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)[1] setting out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and of each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

In Higher Education Review, the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
  - the setting and maintenance of academic standards
  - the quality of student learning opportunities
  - the information provided about higher education provision
  - the enhancement of student learning opportunities
- provides a commentary on the selected theme
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. Explanations of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 6.

In reviewing The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, the review team has also considered a theme selected for particular focus across higher education in England and Northern Ireland.

The themes for the academic year 2014-15 are Student Involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement and Student Employability,[2] and the provider is required to select, in consultation with student representatives, one of these themes to be explored through the review process.

The QAA website gives more information about QAA and its mission.[3] A dedicated section explains the method for Higher Education Review[4] and has links to the review handbook and other informative documents. For an explanation of terms see the glossary at the end of this report.

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code
[2] Higher Education Review themes: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=106
[3] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.
[4] Higher Education Review web pages: www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education/higher-education-review

Key findings

QAA's judgements about The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of its degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts.

- The comprehensive range of individually tailored and flexible support provided for students (Expectation B4).
- The strategic approach to the use of deliberate and collaborative interdisciplinary practice, which prepares students for long-term employability (Enhancement and Expectation B4).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendation** to The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts.

By September 2015:

- work with the awarding body to clarify and implement the policy on assessment to ensure that students receive feedback and marks in a timely manner (Expectation B6).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions that The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students.

- The work being undertaken to ensure full alignment and implementation with the awarding body's academic framework and regulations (Expectation A2.1).
- The steps being taken to embed the process of peer observation of teaching (Expectation B3).

Theme: Student Employability

The Institute's learning environment provides a variety of opportunities for students to gain an extensive range of knowledge, skills and understanding of the performing arts. The Institute aims to get as many graduates as possible into sustained work within the

performing arts sector and employability plays a key and integral role in the curriculum. Central to this is the professional development strand of modules embedded within all programmes.

There are many opportunities for students to engage with industry through music, dance and acting showcases. Many students have the opportunity to undertake work placements. Employability is also a key co-curricular activity with additional support provided for student enterprises, including showcases and student-led conferences.

Practitioners from the performing arts industry are involved in the delivery of the curriculum. Visiting professionals and a network of established visiting practitioners from industry also contribute to modules, deliver master classes and provide first-hand professional knowledge to students. There are varied efforts to promote the employability of students and engage employers, particularly in the delivery of the curriculum and through support for placements. There is a strategic approach to the use of deliberate and collaborative interdisciplinary practice, which prepares students for long-term employability.

Graduates have access to varied funding opportunities provided by the Institute, including the First Year Out Fund, the Graduate Business Development Fund, and the Our Graduate Sponsorship Fund.

Further explanation of the key findings can be found in the handbook available on the QAA webpage explaining [Higher Education Review].

About The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts

The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA, the Institute) is a small specialist higher education institution co-founded by Sir Paul McCartney, Lead Patron, and Mark Featherstone-Witty, Principal and CEO. LIPA opened in 1996 to provide a holistic curriculum that maximises sustained careers in the creative and performing arts. The Institute was initially housed in an old school, which was transformed into a specialist college that could enable LIPA to deliver its proposed curriculum. In 2006 LIPA was designated as a higher education institution.

LIPA's higher education purpose, as stated in the Strategic Plan 2012-17, is to provide students with the skill and attributes for 'sustained work'. The Institute provides learning for the main skills needed for supporting, creating and delivering an event, production and performance, blending specialist and generic skills.

There are currently 715 students registered on undergraduate degree programmes. There are 55 students registered on level 3 foundation certificates which allow for progression on to level 4 study. The student body is international with representation from around 40 countries. International students represent approximately 35 per cent of the student body. LIPA operates a bursary scheme and a programme of widening participation activity which is described in the annual Access Agreement for the Office for Fair Access.

The Institute works in partnership with Liverpool John Moores University (the University), the validating and awarding body for all undergraduate and foundation provision, since the Institute's foundation in 1996. Since 2002, LIPA has operated according to annually agreed variances to the University's regulatory framework as an accredited institution. Over the last four years the University has been changing its approach to managing partnership activity, and during this period indicated that all partners would be expected to operate under the University regulations and associated policies and procedures without variance.

Between 2012 and2014 LIPA explored the strategic possibility of moving to another awarding body, or applying to QAA to obtain Teaching Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP), in order to maintain the Institute's autonomy and philosophy. In 2014-15 the Institute entered into a new relationship with the University, falling in line with the new requirements as a collaborative partner and no longer as an accredited institution. This has meant a significant period of transition, as LIPA has had to concede a number of historic variances to its Academic Framework. A new partnership agreement covering the period 2014-24 was signed with the University in August 2014. The Institute is now operating under the University's Academic Framework with programmes working across a number of the different University faculties. The Institute is currently working towards implementing revised policies and procedures, where appropriate, for 2015-16. A specific challenge for LIPA is to ensure that institutional oversight of quality and standards is maintained following the transition. LIPA is responding to this challenge by the implementation of a new quality framework. The governing body subsequently agreed that a TDAP application would no longer form part of LIPA's medium-term strategic plan.

Since 2012 the Institute has conducted a rolling programme of value for money reviews, with each review having a focus on a particular area of activity. These reviews are considered to be an important tool in reviewing economy, efficiency and effectiveness. As part of this financial review, the Institute assessed the financial viability of its suite of MA programmes. These have been discontinued as they were deemed not to be financially viable in the longer term, and the underwriting of these programmes by other income was not strategically sound given the uncertainty surrounding future funding arrangements in the sector. As a result, postgraduate programmes were discontinued and taught out.

The Institute has made good progress in further developing the three areas of good practice, and in addressing the four advisable and four desirable recommendations from its previous QAA review in 2009. This progress was confirmed in the mid-cycle review report. A number of these areas are also addressed within this report.

Explanation of the findings about The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a brief glossary at the end of this report. A fuller glossary of terms is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the review method, also on the QAA website.

1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations

Expectation (A1): In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies:

a) ensure that the requirements of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* are met by:

- **positioning their qualifications at the appropriate level of the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **ensuring that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **naming qualifications in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the frameworks for higher education qualifications**
- **awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes**

b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics

c) where they award UK credit, assign credit values and design programmes that align with the specifications of the relevant national credit framework

d) consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.

Quality Code, *Chapter A1: UK and European Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.1 The Institute does not have its own degree-awarding powers and delivers programmes in partnership with Liverpool John Moores University (the University). The qualifications provided by the Institute adhere to the principles laid out in the University's Academic Collaborative Partnerships Operations Manual and the Validation/Review of New Collaborative Programmes Procedures Manuals. These specify the external reference points, including *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and relevant Subject Benchmark Statements that form the basis of programme validation. Respective responsibilities are set out in the agreement between the University and the Institute.

1.2 The Institute plays a key role in programme development, review and consideration of modifications in line with the University's Programme Validation Procedures. The University is ultimately responsible for approving programme specifications, including any substantive changes following annual review. Programmes are subject to regular institutional review and revalidation by the University.

1.3 Staff involved in programme development and review are supported by University link tutors, a new quality support team and the Director of Higher Education, who oversees

the operation of programmes at the Institute. These arrangements allow Expectation A1 to be met in theory.

1.4   The review team reviewed relevant Institute and University documentary evidence, including documentation for programme development and approval, quality assurance policies and procedures, validation reports, external examiners' reports, and talked to link tutors, senior Institute staff and others involved in programme delivery.

1.5   The Institute works effectively with the University to ensure compliance with delivery, assessment and award requirements. A constructive working relationship is already evident between newly appointed programme link tutors and Institute staff. The institutional link and programme link tutors attend relevant quality assurance committees, oversee quality and standards and provide guidance on the University's Academic Framework and implementation of policies. Key Institute staff are conversant with external reference points, and their understanding of the Quality Code has been enhanced following an exercise to map current operations to each chapter of the Code, including standards.

1.6   The operation of programmes in line with Subject Benchmark Statements is confirmed each year via the external examining process. External examiners also confirm alignment between academic standards of proposed awards and there is clear evidence that mapping levels in the FHEQ, Subject Benchmark Statements and programme learning outcomes is undertaken.

1.7   Overall, the Institute discharges its responsibilities effectively within the context of its agreement with its awarding body. The Institute meets its awarding body's threshold academic standards, and has robust internal processes to manage its responsibilities. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met in design and operation and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.1): In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.

Quality Code, *Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.8   The Institute's new partnership agreement for 2014-24 with the University allows it to operate as a collaborative partner within the University's Academic Framework. This represents a change to the previous agreement whereby the Institute operated as an accredited institution, with annually agreed variances to the regulatory framework. An Academic Oversight Panel has been established to oversee the new partnership, which includes the institutional link and other senior staff from the Institute and University.

1.9   The Institute has an established committee structure to monitor standards and quality and ensure alignment with the University's Academic Framework. The Teaching and Learning Board (TLB), a subcommittee of the Institute Council, delegates most functions to the Institute Quality Committee (IQC) from where it receives reports. The IQC receives annual monitoring reports (AMRs), external examiner reports and responses, and other reports from programme boards. Newly established programme link tutors from three University faculties sit on programme boards to advise on aspects of the Academic Framework and related policies. Examination boards are managed and operated by the University. These arrangements allow Expectation A2.1 to be met in theory.

1.10   The review team evaluated the effectiveness of the Institute's processes by scrutinising documents relating to its agreement, reading minutes of the IQC and programme boards, and talking to senior management, teaching staff and students.

1.11   The Institute is in a period of transition as it moves to full implementation of the University's Academic Framework from 2015-16. The team found deliberate steps being taken to facilitate the necessary changes, including publication of an internal quality framework document, which demonstrates a positive institutional approach to embracing the University's Academic Framework. The process of change is being kept under review by the IQC and implementation discussed at programme boards. Key staff are familiar with their responsibilities relating to the Academic Framework. Students note that the Institute has communicated changes effectively to ensure there is minimal disruption during the transition.

1.12   The Institute now works with three University faculties for monitoring and review, with liaison facilitated by five programme link tutors who attend programme boards. There is a positive and collegial working relationship between link tutors and Institute staff. The review team **affirms** the work being undertaken to ensure full alignment and implementation with the awarding body's academic framework and regulations.

1.13   Overall, academic frameworks and regulations are in place and are well understood. The Institute's governance structure and quality management processes are appropriate, clearly understood by staff, and interact with the requirements of the awarding body. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.2): Degree-awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.

Quality Code, *Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.14   The Institute works in collaboration with the University to produce definitive information about its programmes' aims, intended learning outcomes, structure, and assessments. Programme specifications are made available to students through the virtual learning environment (VLE) and the Institute's website. The specifications detail the award titles and intermediate exit awards. There are also reference points to relevant Subject Benchmark Statements and the FHEQ. The University holds the definitive record of each programme. Changes to the programme must be approved by the University.

1.15   The Institute's internal quality procedures stipulate that programme leaders should take account of the academic frameworks of the awarding body when developing new programmes. This is in accordance with the memorandum of understanding with the University. Programme development is also informed by higher education sector experts, the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Statements, which leads to the development of validation documentations and programme specifications. On completion, these documents are referred for approval to the TLB and the IQC. The Institute has not developed any new programmes since its foundation, although programmes are regularly monitored and revalidated. These arrangements enable Expectation A2.2 to be met in theory.

1.16   The review team evaluated these processes through consideration of internal documentation, including external examiners' reports, scrutinising information available to students, including on the VLE. The team met senior managers and programme leaders and considered the frameworks and working models for the validation of programme specifications to assess the effectiveness and accessibility of definitive programme information.

1.17   Programme teams undertake a rigorous mapping of subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills. In addition, programme teams also undertake a detailed mapping against Subject Benchmark Statements. All programme specifications are comprehensive and provide students with valuable information about programme aims, objectives and learning outcomes, course structure and content, assessment methodologies, quality assurance, the role of external examiners and support information. Staff informed the team that there is a rigorous set of checks conducted internally before presentation to the awarding body.

1.18   The Institute demonstrated a range of procedures and practices to ensure it adheres to the requirements of the University. The team saw evidence of module evaluations where students are given the opportunity to feed back, including on assessment, course content and delivery. Feedback is then discussed in a variety of forums and the team viewed documents that demonstrate the Institute's process for review and monitoring, including action plans. These documents included committee minutes and the Institute's AMRs. This approach was verified by staff in meetings with the team.

1.19   Students are aware of specifications and how they relate to their respective programmes. Minutes from the Institute's committee meetings demonstrate a regular review

of processes to assure alignment with its awarding body's regulations. The Institute's approach to monitoring and review of programme details and specifications conforms with the requirements of the awarding body.

1.20   Overall, the team found staff have a clear understanding and ownership of the process of monitoring the definitive records. Information about the aims, intended learning outcomes and expected achievement is readily available to students. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.1): Degree-awarding bodies establish and consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with their own academic frameworks and regulations.

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.21   The University approves all new programmes and any changes. Since 2014-15 the Institute has been working towards compliance without variance to the University's Academic Framework. The Institute Quality Framework published in December 2014 articulates a constructive institutional approach to embracing the University Quality Framework and ensuring alignment.

1.22   Processes regarding the design and approval of higher education courses offered by collaborative partners are outlined in the University's Academic Collaborative Partnerships Operational Manual and the Validation of Collaborative Programmes Manual 2014-15. The Institute's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook 2014-2015 provides clearly articulated information for staff. Qualifications delivered are appropriately aligned with the FHEQ and other external reference points. These arrangements enable Expectation A3.1 to be met in theory.

1.23   The team reviewed documentation supplied in the self-evaluation portfolio and the accompanying evidence, which included programme specifications, validation reports, external examiners' reports, and quality handbooks. The review team also held meetings with representatives of the awarding bodies, staff and students.

1.24   The University approves changes in line with its programme and module changes processes. Programme boards can approve editorial changes to existing programme documentation including, for example, the updating of bibliographies. Minor modifications to programmes are proposed at programme boards and overseen by the IQC. Major changes are considered at TLB before presentation to the University for approval.

1.25   The regulatory framework of the University defines the academic standards of the award. The Institute takes account of the requirements of the University through its policies and procedures for higher education. The internal process and University validation events confirm that programmes are aligned with the Quality Code. Institute and University staff liaise on assessment matters to assure academic standards following approval by the joint Academic Oversight Panel. Staff development has been provided to support the understanding and implementation of the changes, including the Professional Development Week, which included sessions from University staff, a quality and enhancement newsletter on its document-sharing platform, Institute staff briefings and the Learning and Teaching Assessment Handbook.

1.26   The business case for a new programme is first considered by the Institute Directorate prior to a proposal being presented to the University. This takes into account competitor analysis and financial viability. The TLB gives final approval for new programme proposals. The internal approval processes are to be further formalised, and both the Institute and the University acknowledge the role of the link tutor as being central. A University Link Tutor Guide 2014-15 is provided and the role is articulated in the University Collaborative Partnerships Operational Manual.

1.27   The University Academic Oversight Panel takes responsibility for the academic aspects of the partnership, including external examiners' reports, validation and programme review reports, AMRs and all data relating to student progression and achievement, retention and employment. There is provision for an appropriate level of externality in panel membership of validation events, although no courses have been validated since the last QAA review. However, approval in principle for a programme in new music is currently being considered by the University.

1.28   Overall, the team concludes that it has confidence in the Institute's management of its responsibilities, as set out in its partnership agreement, which ensures that each qualification is allocated to the appropriate level of the FHEQ. Academic standards are set at appropriate levels for the qualifications offered. There is close integration between the work of the Institute and the University. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.2): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:

- **the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment**
- **both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.**

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.29   The University has well established frameworks and regulations to govern the award of credit. Credit is awarded in relation to the assessment of learning outcomes, as approved by the University at validation. Assessment, marking and moderation take place at the Institute in accordance with the University Academic Framework. Relevant information is made explicit in student programme and module handbooks. University awards are aligned with the FHEQ. The Quality Code is a key reference for the development of the University's processes and programmes, while Subject Benchmark Statements inform academic programme development.

1.30   The University is responsible for the approval of the modules, programmes and qualifications, the assessment of learning outcomes and the monitoring and review of alignment with the UK threshold academic standards and the University's own standards. The Institute and University's partnership agreement and management structures and processes in place enable oversight of its higher education provision. These processes allow Expectation A3.2 to be met in theory.

1.31   The review team considered a wide range of documentary evidence, including the University Academic Framework and regulations, module and programme specifications, validation reports, external examiners' reports and programme and institutional reviews. The team also met a wide range of staff and students.

1.32   The Institute has a shared responsibility for setting assessments. Assessments are approved by external examiners, and are set in line with approved module specifications. The Institute undertakes first and second marking and manages moderation in accordance with the University requirements.

1.33   Externality in processes is an underpinning principle of the quality framework and is evidenced, for example, in the role of the external adviser and the role of the external examiner. External examiners are appointed by the University for all taught programmes. Their responsibilities are outlined in the External Examiners' Guidelines 2014-15. Examiners confirm that the assessment processes measure student attainment rigorously and fairly against the intended learning outcomes of the programme, and are conducted in line with the University's policies and regulations. Criteria for the appointment of external examiners, together with the definition and requirements of their role, are included in the external examining guidelines and guide for staff.

1.34   External examiners are required to report annually to confirm standards. Programme leaders respond to their reports and the University's Head of Academic Quality responds in instances where institutional level issues have been identified. A summary report is prepared at faculty level for the University Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Committee and a summary is considered at the Academic Board. In addition an internal overview report on external examiner reports is considered by IQC and the TLB.

1.35   The University's arrangements for assessment boards and external examiners are outlined in the Institute's Quality and Enhancement Handbook. The University operates a single tier assessment board system for taught programmes. Boards are classified either as progression or award boards. The roles, membership and duties of the examination boards are set out in the Academic Framework Regulations. Details regarding requirements for marking and moderation of assessments are contained within the Methods of Practice Handbook. The University's Academic Framework is made available to staff and students on the Institute's intranet and is clearly signposted for students in the Green Book, to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the requirements of credit.

1.36   Assessment boards operate in line with University requirements and include external examiners and representatives from the University. From 2014-15, examination boards are being run and managed by the University and chaired by the relevant University director of school. All students receive a transcript detailing performance on modules studied.

1.37   It is a strategic aim of the University and LIPA that, where programmes can be accredited or recognised by external or professional bodies, this recognition/accreditation will be sought. A number of LIPA programmes are accredited or recognised by external bodies.

1.38   The Institute and the University have developed appropriate mechanisms for the award of credit and final qualifications. Assessment is used to give students the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the relevant learning outcomes. In order to ensure that threshold academic standards are met, decisions to award credit or qualifications are based on robust evidence that the learning outcomes have been achieved.

1.39   Overall, the Institute has systems in place to ensure that it is compliant with the academic regulations of the University in respect of the award of credit, and these are working effectively. The team concludes that Expectation A3.2 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.3): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.40   The Institute operates under the University processes for monitoring and reviewing programmes as outlined in the Academic Collaborative Partnerships Operation Manual 2014-15 and in the Institute Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook. The University's annual monitoring processes are further outlined in the University Annual Monitoring Procedures Manual. All programmes are subject to annual monitoring. The University is responsible for Periodic Review on a five-year cycle, which is further outlined in the Programme Review of Collaborative Procedures Manual. The Institute has a management structure and processes in place to enable oversight of its higher education provision. This approach enables the Institute to meet Expectation A3.3 of the Quality Code in theory.

1.41   The team reviewed documentary evidence, including annual programme review reports, AMRs, and the University Programme review of collaborative programmes, Procedures manual. In meetings, senior staff and link tutors were questioned about the process of annual monitoring and review.

1.42   The Institute is working closely with link tutors to implement the new process for annual monitoring introduced by the University. AMRs from the Institute programmes are now sent to three University faculties, with the University School Director writing an overview report. AMRs are also considered by the IQC. The Institute considers feedback at the Academic Oversight Panel. The Institute also produces its own overarching annual monitoring review report which is considered at the IQC. AMRs draw on external examiners' reports, student retention and attainment data, National Student Survey (NSS) data and, where appropriate, employer feedback and, if relevant, from the professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs).

1.43   The five link tutors work with the Institute staff and the three University faculties in supporting annual monitoring and review processes, facilitating discussions and as 'critical friends'. Link tutors attend programme boards, and the institutional link tutor attends IQC. Their involvement in annual monitoring has been limited in this first year of implementation, but the Institute is already benefiting from the external viewpoint provided by their role.

1.44   The Institute has effective monitoring and review mechanisms in place to enable oversight and regular review of the standards of its provision, from module level to the senior levels within the Institute. The team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.4): In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:

- **UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved**
- **the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained.**

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.45 External examiners are employed on all programmes and report explicitly on the setting and maintenance of academic standards. Recently appointed link tutors from the University provide continuing academic support and advice to senior staff and programme leaders. Panels established by the University to validate the Institute's programmes, and to undertake institutional review of programmes, include external academic representation. The Institute has close links with performing arts sector employers.

1.46 External examiners' reports are considered at relevant programme boards and inform specific action points in the annual monitoring review. Reports and responses from all discipline areas are discussed at IQC. An overarching document is produced that goes to the TLB, which highlights any issues arising or examples of good practice. Although limited in scope, external expertise is used to confirm standards, through annual external examiner reports and external involvement in validation panels and institutional review. These activities enable Expectation A3.4 to be met in theory.

1.47 The team tested the use of external expertise by reading external examiners' reports, annual programme and institutional review reports and minutes of meetings of the IQC, and through meetings with staff and students.

1.48 External examiners' reports confirm that academic standards are being maintained and contain appropriately detailed comment and sometimes recommendations. For example, one report included concern about the allocation of credits when calculating students' degree classifications. The issue was explicitly addressed in the IQC's report to the TLB. The Institute's response to the examiner included clarification that this adjustment is part of the University's framework for classification of degrees, and that students must pass all credits to qualify for an honours degree.

1.49 No new programmes have been developed since 2009, although existing programmes were revalidated by the University in 2010-11, 2013 and 2014. Accreditation reports from industry bodies feed into the validation process and the review team confirmed that external academics are members of University validation panels. Links with the performing arts sector are strong, but at present there is no deliberative structure to formalise the role of employers in programme review and development. However, from July 2015, the Institute plans to hold formal consultation events on a biennial basis with employers, industry practitioners and alumni.

1.50 Overall, the Institute engages external expertise in different ways to help support the maintenance of standards. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations: Summary of findings

1.51   In reaching its judgement about academic standards the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published Handbook.

1.52   All the applicable Expectations in this area have been met, and the risk is judged low in all areas. In all sections related to academic standards, the College is also required to adhere to the procedures of its awarding body.

1.53   The review team made no recommendations and identified no areas of good practice. There is one affirmation which supports the work being undertaken by the Institute in the time of transition to ensure full alignment and implementation of the academic frameworks of the awarding body.

1.54   The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the Institute's degree-awarding body **meets** UK expectations.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

Expectation (B1): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes

Quality Code, *Chapter B1: Programme Design and Approval*

Findings

2.1   The Institute's Teaching and Learning Board assumes strategic oversight of programme development. However, no academic development has taken place since the last QAA review in 2009. The new partnership agreement requires the Institute to operate within the University processes for programme design, development and approval, as set out in the University Academic Framework and the Validation of new collaborative programmes, Procedures manual September 2014.

2.2   The Institute ensures that it operates effective processes for the design and development of programmes prior to submission to the University for approval. The Directorate considers the business case, taking into account competitor analysis and financial viability, before submission to the University. Final internal agreement to present to the University is taken by the TLB. The approach the Institute takes towards programme design and approval enables it to meet Expectation B1 of the Quality Code in theory.

2.3   The review team considered a range of documentary evidence and responses from staff and students in meetings to investigate the approach adopted by the Institute to programme design, development and approval.

2.4   The Institute is formalising its internal procedures prior to submission to the University. Proposed changes and developments to existing programmes emanate from the relevant programme board. This procedure takes into account the programme team's reflection, external and examiners' comments, student feedback and feedback from industry professionals and, where appropriate, PRSBs. From 2014-15, with the introduction of link tutors, minor changes will need to be presented to the relevant University school and then considered by the relevant Faculty Quality and Enhancement Committee.

2.5   The Institute and the University continue to provide support for staff in their understanding and implementation of the new arrangements. The University offers staff development and training events which are open to Institute staff. Guidance on policy and procedure in this area is provided by the University and, in future, will be provided through link tutors. The establishment of the Institute Quality Team, comprising the Quality Manager and two administrative posts, ensures support and advice is provided from the outset.

2.6   There are opportunities for input from external sector professionals and advisers in the design and approval stage, in addition to the considerable industry expertise of the Institute staff. In addition, PSRB alignment is sought to provide input to validation events.

2.7   Overall, the Institute operates effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes in line with the awarding body. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B2): Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.

Quality Code, *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission*

Findings

2.8   The Institute has a comprehensive admissions policy that underpins the entire process. It is very clear what is required for each programme with regard to auditions or interviews. Prerequisites for the course are outlined in the prospectus and, following a prospective student's application, through UCAS. The admissions team manages all admissions. Each programme has an admissions tutor who is responsible, in conjunction with the relevant head of discipline, for the selection of candidates.

2.9   Admissions criteria are regularly reviewed, taking into account input from staff and students. The admissions policy is updated every year as necessary. There is a complaints procedure that deals with issues surrounding recruitment, selection and admissions. Prior to application, the Institute holds open days. On the offer of a place, a variety of information is sent to an incoming cohort. There is also a designated orientation day for international students. Information for prospective students is available through the prospectus, website and Key Information Set (KIS). Further developments to the process include developing a student recruitment and admissions code of practice. These arrangements allow Expectation B2 to be met in theory.

2.10   The team reviewed all documents relating to the Institute's approach to admissions. This included the admissions policy and induction information. Additionally, the team reviewed programme minutes that demonstrated the approach to the review of admissions processes. The team had discussions with staff and students involved with recruitment, selection and admissions to examine the effectiveness of the admissions policy and procedures for application, enrolment and induction.

2.11   Support for prospective students during the admissions process is comprehensive. There are consultation opportunities at open days and learning needs assessments at induction. Students confirmed that the information provided in advance of their studies was comprehensive and well understood. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities during the application and interview or audition process. Furthermore, staff confirm that there is an annual review of the admissions process following feedback from students.

2.12   Overall, the team concludes that recruitment, selection and admissions processes are robust, fair and accessible. The College has effective policies in place and the admissions process is well managed, and students reflect positively on their experiences. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B3): Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.13   The Institute's strategic approach is articulated in its Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. Students encounter a blend of learning opportunities, including collaborative and group-based learning, and all students undertake shared professional development modules. Engagement with professional practice, including work-based learning, master classes and extracurricular performances, is a common characteristic of provision. Students on BA (Hons) Community Drama, BA (Hons) Music, Theatre and Entertainment Management and BA (Hons) Theatre and Performance Design/Technology undertake a credit-bearing placement module as part of their programme. The overall learning ethos is focused on preparing students for sustained work.

2.14   Information is provided to students through the Green Book, available on the VLE, along with programme and module handbooks. All courses are taught by permanent staff and visiting professionals. Over 80 per cent of teaching staff hold fellowship, or associate fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA). The Institute operates its own HEA-accredited fellowship scheme in collaboration with Rose Bruford College. A network of established visiting practitioners from industry contributes to modules and run master classes. Programme leaders oversee content delivery, and each student is assigned a learning guidance tutor who monitors progress. The approaches taken to delivery and management of teaching and learning enables the Institute to meet Expectation B3 of the Quality Code in theory.

2.15   The review team tested this process by reading a range of documentary evidence, including policies and strategy documents, handbooks, staff CVs, self-assessment reports and quality improvement plans, lesson observation data, student questionnaires and strategy documents. The team met senior managers and teaching staff, students from across the provision, and representatives of the awarding body.

2.16   Programmes are developed in line with Subject Benchmark Statements and some are accredited with relevant industry bodies. Students are taught core material on theory and context, starting at level 4 and continuing at level 5. Increasingly, students work collaboratively on projects, which helps put theory into practice. At each stage students are encouraged to conceptualise their practice. At level 6, students undertake an independent research project, and they appreciate the change in focus to more independent and critically-minded study expected at this level.

2.17   Students generally rate teaching highly, express strong overall satisfaction with their programme, and appreciate the Institute's close links with the performing arts industry. Where issues have arisen, through NSS feedback relating to programme delivery or management, the Institute has reflected and made appropriate constructive changes. NSS feedback indicates there may be demand from students in some programme areas to re-examine the range of optional modules available. Similarly, employers expressed individual preferences for curriculum content, but overall were very positive about the programmes offered and the preparation they gave students for professional life.

2.18   The professional development strand of modules is embedded within all programmes. Modules focus on shared generic skills and understanding of professional practice at level 4 with subsequent programme specific modules at level 5. There is increasing opportunity for students to engage with industry in music, dance and acting showcases. The future development of this provision is being overseen by a new Head of Student Employability and Enterprise.

2.19   Use of e-learning technologies, including the VLE, for supporting learning and teaching is considered an area for development. A full-time Technology Enhanced Learning Developer has recently been appointed and the Institute intends to produce guidelines on minimum expectations for the use of the VLE. However, the review team heard good examples from students of the use of technology enhanced learning, including recorded online lectures, blogs and wikis. Social media is frequently used to enable group collaboration, with instructors able to oversee and contribute to discussions.

2.20   Teaching staff appointments are approved by the University in line with their Staff Qualification Policy and new staff are allocated a mentor. Visiting professionals are appointed to temporary posts and report to programme leaders. Many permanent staff also engage in professional practice. All staff undergo an annual appraisal, including observation of teaching. As part of the Institute's enhancement of teaching and learning a system of peer review has been introduced to form part of the established observation process for full-time staff. However, the review team found little awareness or experience of this among teaching staff. The review team therefore **affirms** the steps being taken to embed the process of peer observation of teaching.

2.21   Individual staff training needs are identified through the appraisal process and are open to academic and professional support staff. The team saw evidence of a range of activities undertaken, including staff working towards postgraduate qualifications. Staff are notionally allocated 35 days each year for research and scholarly activity. One staff member had been granted a sabbatical to undertake research into entertainment law, and other staff members are undertaking research degrees. The University's most recent institutional review report questioned whether the Institute had a strategic approach to managing opportunities for research and scholarship, and to monitoring the outcomes. However, the review team found that the Institute takes deliberate steps to resource and support varied professional development activities, including many that directly contribute to the development of teaching and learning. The Institute aims for 100 per cent of teaching staff to gain fellowship of the HEA and for all senior lecturers and programme leaders to be senior fellows by the end of 2017.

2.22   Overall, staff at all levels demonstrate a strong sense of their investment in, and commitment to, the Institute's approach to delivery of effective learning and teaching. The Institute articulates and implements appropriate processes to ensure that teaching and learning effectively support student achievement. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B4): Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

Quality Code, *Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement*

Findings

2.23   The Institute's approach to enabling student development and achievement is articulated in both its Strategic Plan and its Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. All students are assigned a learning guidance tutor allocated from among the teaching staff, and have access to a range of learning resources and support services. Training sessions in study skills and ICT skills are provided by learning resource centre staff. Students can request one-to-one sessions for guidance on topics such as referencing, writing skills, essay planning and online resources. The learning resources centre employs six specialist librarians and provides access to books and journals. Access to ICT facilities, rehearsal space and auditoriums is provided on site with support provided by a technical services and production department. Students may also book study space at the University and use its careers advice service. The services and systems provide a support framework which enables Expectation B4 to be met in theory.

2.24   The review team tested this by evaluating the arrangements in place by scrutinising documentation, including quality improvement plans, publications, minutes of meetings, student guidance information and programme specifications, and met a range of support staff and students from across the provision.

2.25   Meetings with learning guidance tutors are compulsory for students at level 4 and occur when needed at levels 5 and 6. Tutors provide guidance to support student induction, academic development and progression. Under the University's Academic Framework the current learning guidance tutor system may be superseded by the University's personal tutor system. This places greater emphasis on pastoral support with compulsory meetings at all levels. The Institute is currently working to establish whether this change in practice will be a necessity from the 2015-16 academic year. Students are generally positive about the support and guidance received from their learning guidance tutor. Further support for students in academic, personal and professional reflection and planning is embedded in professional development modules. Employability plays a key and integral role in the curriculum and there is strong support for students. This includes regular interaction with industry professionals, and access to the University's careers advice service (see B3, Enhancement, Theme).

2.26   Students provide feedback on resources informally to staff and more formally through programme boards and annual Learning Resource Centre surveys. External examiners and the institutional review frequently praise the provision of learning resources for students. However, NSS feedback has highlighted some pressures which the Institute has sought to address by the recent purchase of a neighbouring building. Continued development and updating of physical resources is supported through an annual institutional capital bids process.

2.27   A well-staffed support centre provides a range of services to which students may self-refer. Students are invited to declare disabilities at application, induction and throughout their programme. Individual learning plans are agreed by support centre staff with programme leaders and include reasonable adjustments, although retrospective adjustments for previously assessed work are not usually made. Support remains available to students working away from the Institute on placements. Additional support is provided on Saturday mornings for international students seeking language and study support. These sessions are

usually group based but are sometimes tailored to individual students depending on their needs. The Student Support Centre and its services are highly regarded by students. The Centre and its staff are responsive to individual needs. The review team identified as **good practice** the comprehensive range of student support which provides individually tailored and flexible support for students.

2.28   Overall, the review team found strong evidence that there are effective resources and support to enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. The Institute appropriately monitors and evaluates their implementation. Therefore the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B5): Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

Quality Code, *Chapter B5: Student Engagement*

Findings

2.29   The Institute has a strong commitment to ensuring the views of students, individually and collectively, are captured and addressed. At least one student per level of study is elected as a representative for each programme. Representatives sit on their respective programme boards. In addition to this there is the Independent Student Board and students are members of the Teaching and Learning Committee and the Institutional Quality Committee.

2.30   As part of the Institute's formal monitoring and review mechanisms, students feedback through module evaluation forms, the AMR and the NSS. The small student body allows for numerous opportunities for students to feed back informally and for staff to gather students' views outside the committee process.

2.31   The Institute does not have a Students' Union. The management of student representatives' activities is led by the Director of Higher Education. Information is relayed to students at induction and this is then bolstered by the recruitment of student representatives from each cohort in the first two weeks of the new academic year. The opportunities outlined enable the Institute to meet Expectation B5 of the Quality Code in theory.

2.32   The review team reviewed all documentation relating to the engagement of students with the Institute's quality assurance procedures, including terms of reference and minutes of relevant committees, the Student Charter, student surveys, student representative training information and the Student Submission. In addition to this, the team met staff and students to clarify how the processes operate, and discussed examples of how students had been involved in them.

2.33   There is a clear and well embedded system of representation and student engagement. Students are clear about how the representative structure worked in practice and stated that information and training available for student representatives were concise. Staff are clear about their responsibilities for assisting the process of student representation. Students understand the committee structure and how their feedback was heard in the deliberative process. A number of informal team and cohort meetings are available to students and are organised variably within each discipline area; however, the review team was confident that there was a parity of experience for all students. Students confirmed that matters raised at meetings are dealt with efficiently and effectively.

2.34   Students are invited to complete end-of-module evaluation forms and end-of-year surveys. These contribute to the Institute's AMR. Staff are clear about how the process works and are highly complimentary of students' engagement with reporting mechanisms. The ethos of the Institute encourages a significant amount of cross collaboration between departments and disciplines, with both staff and students being able to contribute to each other's learning.

2.35   Institute students have full access to services on offer at the University, although they are not members of the University Students' Union. The team confirmed the role of constant informal dialogue between staff and students, which ensures that students' views are well represented, and listened and responded to by the Institute.

2.36   Overall, the Institute places great value on student contribution and uses a variety of ways to encourage participation, which is widespread. It actively and effectively seeks feedback from its students and responds appropriately. There is a wide range of formal and informal initiatives to gather and respond to student feedback. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B6): Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.

Quality Code, *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning*

Findings

2.37   The University is responsible for the validation and review of programmes to ensure effective assessment practice. Assessment design ensures the alignment of learning outcomes and corresponding assessment tasks with the FHEQ and relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. The variety, type and level of assessment are determined at validation.

2.38   Assessment is operated in line with the University Academic Framework 2014-15 and information is articulated in The Green Book, to which staff and students are referred. Further details are included in the Institute's Learning and Teaching Strategy. Assessment methods are also outlined in programme specifications. These policies and procedures enable the Institute to meet Expectation B6 of the Quality Code in theory.

2.39   The team reviewed a range of documentary evidence, including programme specifications, the Institute's Learning and Teaching Strategy, and the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manual 2014-15. Staff and students were questioned in meetings about the design, development and conduct of assessment.

2.40   Assessment maps are provided as part of programme validation and review to ensure that the volume, timing and nature of assessments are aligned with module and programme learning outcomes. Assessment design is underpinned by the institutional strategy of embedding deliberate practice for learning. A series of institutional level grading criteria for broad assessment types are articulated in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Handbook to ensure equity within and across disciplines. Module handbooks for some disciplines provide specific criteria and grading examples relating to individual assessment tasks. Students reported that module handbooks information regarding assessment is clear. External examiners review assessment tasks annually to ensure the appropriateness of the level. From 2014-15 examination boards are chaired by the relevant University director of school.

2.41   The Institute operates the University's regulations regarding the Recognition of Prior Learning and the details of application processes are included in the University Academic Framework and the University's recognition of prior experiential learning handbook. These were reviewed recently by the University and will be available to prospective students via the website. The Institute acknowledges the need for enhanced guidance for staff engaged in the support of RP(E)L students and this will be provided by the link tutors.

2.42   The Institute uses standard module summative assessment forms, which detail marking and feedback for each element of assessment. Module leaders are responsible for the collation and generation of a final mark sheet for each component. Marking takes place in line with the University's framework and from 2014 a record of moderation is completed on a University template as part of the pre-assessment board. Staff reported, however, that new processes for moderation methods are not completely embedded. Staff development is in

place and there are also mandatory training sessions relating to assessment in the annual Professional Development Week.

2.43   The conduct of assessment boards is articulated in the University Assessment Guidelines and membership of boards is outlined in the Academic Framework. Students are given a minimum of six weeks for referral work and can trail up to 24 credits if reassessment is not possible. Achievement is recorded using a management information system and an updated progress record is provided to students. This indicates credit awarded, or outstanding, following confirmation of marks at examination boards. The Institute has plans to roll out an e-vision portal for students to access their progress.

2.44   Assessment is carried out securely, and examinations are conducted in line with the University requirements. Examinations are invigilated and examination papers printed and stored securely. The necessity for a formal policy for the security of student work held or transported off-site has been identified. Reasonable adjustments to assessments are made on an individual basis as outlined in a document prepared by the student support team.

2.45   Students are encouraged to develop an understanding and develop the necessary skills to demonstrate good academic practice, academic integrity and referencing by means of embedded provision in specific modules at level 4 and above. The Learning Resource Centre provides guides to academic practice for students. Plagiarism-detection software is the primary tool for identifying instances of academic misconduct, and is also used as a formative mechanism for developing students' understanding of good academic practice. Suspected cases of academic misconduct are brought before an Academic Misconduct Panel in accordance with University policy.

2.46   Students are given a minimum of six weeks to undertake a reassessment. Where the nature of the assessment is such that appropriate support and facilities cannot be adequately provided, as in the case of performance-based assessments, students are permitted to trail reassessments.

2.47   The Institute's feedback turnaround policy complies with that of the University and is normally provided within 15 working days From September 2014, the provision of assessment feedback and numerical marks has been disaggregated for level 4 students to encourage a focus on the content of feedback. It is intended to review this approach at the TLB before implementation at levels 5 and 6, originally planned to take place over the next two years. Staff indicated that this disaggregation was likely to be continued but limited to one week. Some students indicated concern over the timeliness and inconsistency of summative feedback. There was uncertainty on the part of both staff and students over an agreed timescale for providing marks. Staff reported that marks were issued a minimum of two weeks after feedback, but students reported that in practice it could be much longer. The review team **recommends** that by September 2015, the Institute works with the University to clarify and implement the policy on assessment to ensure that students receive feedback and marks in a timely manner.

2.48   Overall, the team found that the Institute operates fair, transparent and equitable processes of assessment in accordance with the regulations of the awarding body, although clarification needs to be provided on the implementation of feedback and marks. Assessment practice allows students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes for the programmes of study. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B7): Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.

Quality Code, *Chapter B7: External Examining*

Findings

2.49   External examiners for each programme are nominated by the Institute and appointed by the University in accordance with its code of practice. External examiners moderate assessments, receive samples of marked work for moderation and attend relevant assessment boards. External examiners' reports are considered at programme boards and, where appropriate, give rise to specific action points in annual programme review. Reports and responses from all discipline areas are discussed at IQC. An overarching document is produced for discussion at the TLB to highlight issues arising for action, and examples of good practice. Any report that requires an institutional level response is sent to the Director of Higher Education for a response. Reports are made available to student representatives at programme boards and to all students through the VLE. All current external examiners are academic members of staff at other higher education institutions. In theory, the use made of external examiners enables the Institute to meet Expectation B7.

2.50   The review team scrutinised selected external examiners' reports, looked at relevant policies on the induction and use of examiners, minutes of relevant committees and correspondence, and held meetings with staff and students.

2.51   The process for consideration of external examiner reports is robust. Issues raised by examiners in their reports are considered at relevant programme boards and, where appropriate, are translated into specific action points in the annual programme review and discussed at IQC. Reports for 2014 were considered at the IQC with an overarching report presented to TLB. Student representatives confirm that they have access to reports tabled at programme boards. However, although they are routinely made available to all students via the VLE relatively few students report knowing about them.

2.52   External examiners' reports predominantly praise the quality of the learning experience, including the learning environment, resources and professional development strand, which is common to all programmes. Issues regarding individual staff workload and access for examiners to student work have been raised and responded to directly by the Institution. One external examiner questioned the consistent application of a grading policy related to attendance. The team found that in response deliberate steps were taken culminating in the withdrawal of the policy.

2.53   Overall, the review team is satisfied that the Institute is making appropriate and scrupulous use of external examiners and therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B8): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.

Quality Code, *Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review*

Findings

2.54   The Institute articulates the ways in which it complies with University's regulations through its Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook. The processes, roles and responsibilities for programme monitoring and review are defined by the University and communicated by link tutors. Representatives from the University are members of the IQC and programme boards. The University takes responsibility for reviewing programmes on a five-year cycle, in accordance with its framework 2014-15 and Programme review of collaborative programmes, Procedures manual. The Institute has a management structure and processes in place which enable oversight of its higher education provision, and to meet the requirements of the University, allowing Expectation B8 to be met in principle.

2.55   In testing the Institute's processes, the team met senior staff, academic and support staff, and students. It reviewed documentary evidence, including annual monitoring review reports, minutes of relevant committees including the IQC and programme boards.

2.56   Prior to 2014, the Institute operated its processes for annual monitoring in line with its previous memorandum of agreement with the University. The first iteration of the annual monitoring process operating under the new agreement within the University's Academic Framework took place in 2014-15. The first Institute Overarching Annual Monitoring Report was presented to the IQC in February 2015. All AMRs are submitted to the relevant University directors of school and considered through the relevant University Faculty Quality and Enhancement Committee.

2.57   The University's school directors produce an overview report which is received by the relevant faculty and at institutional level. Programme leaders receive individual feedback on their report. It was reported that in practice these reports are less specific about generic Institute issues. Additionally, the Institute produces its own oversight report, which is considered at the IQC, in order to identify specific areas for attention and examples of good practice. The Institute is working closely with link tutors to ensure that the new process is working in line with University procedures. Link tutors' involvement this year has been limited as they are new to this role, but there is evidence of strong communication and support. Furthermore, informal liaison between the quality teams in each institution ensures that the processes are understood and effective.

2.58   In evaluating the performance of programmes, the AMR process for taught programmes draws on a broad range of evidence, including programme data, including student progression and retention, benchmarked against relevant University key performance indicators, external examiners' reports, student feedback and reports from PSRBs and other external bodies. The AMR reflects on the learning opportunities provided to students, attainment and the currency and relevance of programmes. The AMR requires comment specifically where data is flagged as being outside of the expected range.

2.59   The University processes incorporate appropriate reference points and ensure externality. Externality includes the involvement of external examiners and advisers and PSRBs. Students are involved in programme monitoring and review and are represented on the IQC and the TLB. They provide feedback on modules, engage with the NSS and AMRs.

Reports are discussed at programme boards where student representatives are in attendance.

2.60   The process for programme review is set out in the University Programme review of collaborative programmes Procedures Manual. Review takes place on a five-yearly cycle and programmes may be clustered and reviewed together. Collaborative programme review assures the quality of the student learning experience, includes student involvement, scrutinises data, including student feedback, and focuses on measures to enhance learning, teaching and assessment. The involvement of external advisers and students is central to the University review process.

2.61   Overall, the Institute has effectively introduced the new University requirements for monitoring and review, although these are still to be further embedded. Policies and procedures governing regular and systematic processes for the monitoring and review of programmes, taken together with the processes in place at the Institute, allow the team to conclude that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B9): Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.

Quality Code, *Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints*

Findings

2.62   The Institute's approach to appeals and complaints is clear and information is given to students during induction. While it has its own internal complaints procedure, the Institute uses the University academic appeals procedure. However, students can pursue complaints with the University if a resolution has not been found. For both processes informal resolutions are first sought within the Institute. Programme advice and guidance is offered by the Student Support Manager, the Director of Higher Education, the administration team, as well as the University. Students can also seek advice from the University Students' Union. Information is available through the Institute's intranet site and the Green Book which details all the Institute processes. Complaints and appeals are considered at relevant committees and formed part of the Institute Quality Report. These arrangements, in theory, enable the Institute to meet Expectation B9 of the Quality Code.

2.63   In order to test this process, the team reviewed information regarding responsibility for complaints and appeals, along with information available to students. The team also discussed complaints and appeals procedures with staff and students to test how well the policies and procedures are understood and implemented. There were no instances involving the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

2.64   Students are clear about how the processes for complaints and appeals work and students know where to find relevant information. Staff were able to articulate clearly how the processes work in practice, and the team considers the Institute's approach to appeals and complaints to be fair, accessible and timely. The information provided is clear, fit for purpose and complies with the expectations laid out in the Institute's agreement with the University. Owing to the size of the Institution resolving matters informally is often achieved.

2.65   Overall, the Institute's complaints and appeals procedures are clear and fit for purpose. Processes are effective and well understood by students and staff. The academic appeals process is made clear to students within the requirements of the awarding body. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B10): Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding body are implemented securely and managed effectively.

Quality Code, *Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*

Findings

2.66   The Institute does not deliver learning opportunities with other organisations. However, it does have responsibility for the effective management of its arrangements with employers and placement providers, where learning takes place within the work environment and constitutes an integral aspect of the student's programme of study.

2.67   The Institute provides opportunities for its students to undertake work-based learning, including compulsory credit-bearing placements on programmes in BA (Hons) Community Drama, BA (Hons) Music Theatre and Entertainment Management and BA (Hons) Theatre and Performance Design/Technology. Students take responsibility for finding placements, which are subject to approval and the establishment of a learning agreement with the provider. Students are allocated a mentor, and a staff member visits students while they are on placement. Individual discipline areas take responsibility for arrangements with placement providers and for producing the relevant module guides within the requirements of the Placement Policy and Handbook. The institutional approach taken towards the quality assurance of placement learning enables the Institute to meet Expectation B10 in principle.

2.68   The review team tested whether the Expectation is being met by talking to relevant staff and students and by scrutinising documentary evidence including placement handbooks. The team met representatives from local employers, including theatres and events management companies who had taken students on placement and had previously employed graduates.

2.69   Following establishment of a new agreement with the University, the Institute's responsibility for managing such opportunities and associated policy was confirmed. The Institute has taken deliberate steps to evaluate its operation in relation to Expectation B10. The outcome of this process identified a need for greater institutional oversight and management of work-based and placement learning. This has been addressed by producing a newly approved Placement Handbook for Staff and Students 2015/16 covering the key areas and responsibilities of the student, Institute and placement provider. This replaces local guidance produced at discipline level. The team found evidence that these new requirements are currently being implemented to support students preparing placements for the next academic year.

2.70   The team met a range of representatives from organisations which have long-standing positive working relationships with the Institute. Employers and placement providers are very positive about their interaction with the Institute, reporting that students were well prepared for placements, and made a strong and meaningful contribution to their organisations.

2.71   Overall, the deliberate steps taken recently to review and update documentation and guidance enables senior staff and others involved in the management of placements to understand their responsibilities, and to ensure placements work well in practice. The review team confirms that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B11): Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols.
This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.

Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*

Findings

2.72   The Institute does not offer research degrees.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.73   In reaching its judgement about academic standards the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published Handbook.

2.74   All of the applicable Expectations in this area have been met and the level of risk is low in all areas.

2.75   There is one example of good practice, the comprehensive range of individually tailored and flexible support provided for students.

2.76   The review team identified one recommendation to clarify and implement the policy on assessment to ensure that students receive feedback and marks in a timely manner. There is one affirmation in supporting the steps being taken to embed the process of peer observation of teaching.

2.77   The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

Expectation (C): UK higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

Quality Code, *Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision*

Findings

3.1 The Institute provides a wide range of information for stakeholders, including prospective students, current students, staff and employers. Information about the Institute's provision is provided in a variety of ways and for a variety of audiences. The Institute's values, embedded within the Strategic Plan, are also published on the website. Additionally, the website has information on programmes of study and the Institute Annual Report. Key information on purpose, values and programmes are also published in student handbooks, the prospectus and staff handbook. Information is also made available through Key Information Sets (KIS). The Institute is currently in the process of establishing an annual schedule identifying the dates when key areas of the website need to be updated to ensure that it continues to be up to date and accurate. The processes in place allow the Expectation to be met in principle.

3.2 The review team tested that information is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy by scrutinising a wide range of information published in hard copy and electronically, on the website and the VLE. Additionally, the team held discussions with students and staff, including the marketing staff team and Director of Higher Education.

3.3 Information for prospective students is made available through the prospectus, website and the KIS on each programme. Every programme has its own webpage where dedicated information is available. The Institute acknowledges that, while its website is fit for purpose and functional, it needs to be updated to fall in line with its aspirations to be an industry leader for its respective disciplines. Work is being undertaken by the Digital Marketing Officer to provide richer information at module level for prospective students. The prospectus is carefully updated annually by the Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment in consultation with Heads of Disciplines, the Founding Principal & CEO and the Director of Higher Education. Work is being undertaken to enhance the use and consistency of the Institute's VLE and consideration will be given to how the use of the VLE is communicated and explained to prospective students.

3.4 Information is made available to students about their programme of study through programme handbook and module guides. Programme and module specifications are available to students on the VLE and the University's programme and module catalogue. Programme handbooks are being reviewed this year so that they are brought in line with the University's programme guide template, as necessary, for publication in 2015-16. The Green Book, which provides overarching information to students and programme handbooks and module guides, is updated annually. The Institute's expectations of students, and what they can expect from LIPA is embedded in the Green Book and programme handbooks and articulated in the Student Charter.

3.5 On conclusion of their studies students are issued with an official transcript from the University. The Institute's recently developed framework for managing academic standards and quality assurance is set out in the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook, which is updated annually and is available to staff and students on the Institute's intranet.

3.6   All information relating to courses and modules is available through the Institute's VLE. The Institute also has a document sharing platform. Although the students do not search this directly, links on the VLE direct them to relevant documents. Students find the information available prior to enrolment is accurate and helpful. This includes detailed information as to what was required of them in order to gain a place, including information on interview or audition requirements, prerequisite grades and examples of relevant industry experience. In meetings with students, the review team verified that all information to courses is accurate and gave them clear expectations.

3.7   All documents relating to the Institute's higher education provision require a formal sign-off by the Director of Higher Education at the Institute before being sent to the University for final approval. Quality assurance information, policies and procedures are routinely checked by the quality assurance team and relevant programme leaders.

3.8   Overall, the team concludes that the wide range of information produced for prospective and current students is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. There are clear lines of responsibility for finalising and signing off public information. Students confirm that the information provides an accurate reflection of the Institute. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The quality of the information about learning opportunities: Summary of findings

3.9   In reaching its positive judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published Handbook. The Expectation for this judgement area is met and the associated level of risk is low.

3.10   Information published is fit for purpose and trustworthy. Processes for the development and verification of information are understood by staff. Students confirm that information is comprehensive, accessible and helpful to them, and provides them with sound information to support their learning.

3.11   The review team therefore concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

4   Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

Expectation (Enhancement): Deliberate steps are being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

Findings

4.1   The Institute defines its strategic enhancement approach as the bringing together of strategic aims, staff professional development and the development of physical resources and curriculum. The Institute seeks to take deliberate steps to improve the quality of the students' learning opportunities through the implementation of its Strategic Plan. The Quality Framework serves as a means of determining and acting upon potential areas for enhancement at both discipline and institutional levels. Enhancement is also embedded in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and through the effective committee structure.

4.2   The TLB has responsibility for the enhancement of learning opportunities and reports to Council directors, who receive reports on targets and ongoing developments. Previously, the Institute Quality Report produced by the Director of Higher Education was the formal vehicle for reporting, but this is now through the annual monitoring process. The TLB receives a range of other review reports through the IQC. This process highlights areas for improvement as well as good practice. The arrangements currently in place allow the Institute to meet the Enhancement Expectation in principle.

4.3   The review team examined documentary evidence provided in strategy and planning documents. The team held meetings with staff, students and representatives of the awarding body with a focus on understanding how the various enhancement initiatives are organised in a systematic and planned manner, to inform a strategic approach across the Institute.

4.4   The Institute identified three current strands of its enhancement strategy: sustained work opportunities; the Quality Framework processes and procedures mapping with the University; and the monitoring of these processes through the IQC and linkage with the Institute Strategic Plan.

4.5   There are a number of examples of key strategic initiatives to enhance student learning opportunities including the estates development of 68 Hope Street. This is in response to student feedback from the NSS outlining the issues arising from increased pressure on learning spaces and other resources. The building was acquired in 2013 and will be operational from 2015-16 and provide significant additional accommodation and resources.

4.6   The Institute aims to be world class in terms of its teaching and learning and considers engagement with the HEA as being central in supporting this ambition. A target has been set of 100 per cent of teaching staff gaining HEA Fellowship. Approval of the Professional Recognition Scheme for the Performing Arts accreditation process has further enhanced this area. The Institute points to the size and institutional ethos of collaboration in terms of planning for production as a natural platform for fostering enhancement initiatives.

4.7   Enhancement activities at discipline level relating to teaching and learning approaches or curriculum developments are routinely implemented and monitored through quality assurance frameworks. However, given the collaborative nature of much of the provision, the Institute recognises the importance of a systematic approach. The Professional Development module, which operates across the provision, is a vehicle for

sharing both content, innovative teaching and module leadership styles. This module is taught largely through the VLE and is revisited during the Planning and Development week. The See Me Now graduate conferences delivered by alumni form part of the Professional Development initiative which has been developed over time and integrated into level 5 Professional Development activities. The Strategic Applications Project (SAP), initiated in 2012, was designed to further develop IT systems which are student facing. This has resulted in the MyDay portal, which supports student learning. The Institute points to the restructuring of technical support to streamline and improve the production schedule and to specific enhancements on degree programmes.

4.8   The appointment of a Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) project officer, seconded for two years, resulted from staff development needs raised through the appraisal process, and directly links the Institute's Strategic Plan. Reports on progress have been discussed at the Professional Development Committee. A TEL forum comprising over 25 staff has been established. In 2014 the Professional Development Committee agreed the appointment of a permanent post of Virtual Learning Co-ordinator.

4.9   Deliberate practice, defined by the Institute as 'the engagement in highly structured activity with the specific goal of improving performance', is embedded in the curriculum. This is intended to prepare students for sustained work, and relates to the Strategic Plan. Master classes address the aim of the Learning and Teaching Strategy to deliver teaching excellence aligned to professional work. Master classes are delivered by a range of Institute alumni and high profile external professionals. Employers attest to the variety of long-term highly productive relationships with the Institute. Employers regularly provide placements for students and employ graduates, and are invited to give guest lectures and master classes. Staff are expected to reflect on their own learning, using deliberate practice as part of the appraisal process. The review team considers the strategic approach to the use of deliberate and collaborative interdisciplinary practice, which prepares students for long-term employability, is **good practice**.

4.10   Effective quality processes identify opportunities for enhancement and the identification of good practice. These processes include Annual Monitoring Review; the review of external examiners' reports, consideration of module evaluations and consideration and responses to the NSS. Formal mechanisms provide opportunities for identifying and sharing good practice at Institute level, are embedded within the committee structure, in particular the TLB, the IQC and the Professional Development Committee. A legacy of the Joining up the Dots project is a shared site for disseminating good practice which forms part of the Learning and Teaching Strategy and includes a learning and teaching resource area.

4.11   The annual Staff Development week provides an effective vehicle for identifying enhancement initiatives and heads of discipline are seen as central to this process. Institute staff attend the University's annual learning and teaching conference. Other mechanisms include the staff development newsletter, which highlights opportunities for professional development as well as celebrating staff achievements, and the Principal's termly reports to Council, which include details of achievement.

4.12   The 2009 QAA review indicated that it was desirable that the timeliness of enhancement initiatives be addressed in order to enhance the quality of the student learning opportunities. It is evident that a range of enhancement initiatives is now in place and coming to fruition.

4.13   Overall, the review team concludes that deliberate steps are being taken to improve the quality of learning opportunities. The Institute has systems to disseminate good practice and make use of its review mechanisms to identify improvements. A range of enhancement activities is ongoing and are linked to the Institute's various strategic intentions. The

review team confirms that the Institute is progressing effectively to embed its strategy for enhancement. The review team concludes that the Institute meets the Expectation and that the associated level of risk is low

Expectation: **Met**
Level of risk: **Low**

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.14   In reaching its judgement the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in the published Handbook.

4.15   The team considers the Expectation to have been met with a low level of risk, based on the extent to which the Institute has introduced and integrated a set of initiatives to enhance the quality of students' learning opportunities. Deliberate steps are being taken to improve the quality of learning opportunities. The Institute has systems to disseminate good practice and to identify opportunities for improvement. Enhancement activities are linked to the Institute's various strategic intentions.

4.16   Therefore, the team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

5   Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1   The Institute's learning environment provides a variety of opportunities for students to gain an extensive range of knowledge, skills and understanding of the performing arts. The team focused on two broad aspects of employability during the review. These were innovations in promoting the employability of students and how employers are involved in the delivery and development of the curriculum.

5.2   The Institute aims to get as many graduates as possible into sustained work within the performing arts sector. Employability therefore plays a key and integral role in the curriculum. Central to this is the professional development strand of modules embedded within all programmes. Modules focus on shared generic skills and understanding of professional practice at level 4 with subsequent programme specific modules at level 5. There are increasing opportunities for students to engage with industry through music, dance and acting showcases. The continuing development of provision is being overseen by a new head of Student Employability and Enterprise.

5.3   The Institute also provides practice-based modules and opportunities for students on programmes in BA (Hons) Community Drama, BA (Hons) Music Theatre and Entertainment Management and BA (Hons) Theatre and Performance Design/Technology to undertake work-based placements. An increasing number of Institute graduates are becoming placement providers. Recently revised procedures and a handbook for the organisation and management of placements provides sound guidance to staff and students.

5.4   Employability is also a key co-curricular activity, with extracurricular support provided for student enterprises, including showcases and student-led conferences. Graduates have access to varied funding opportunities provided by the Institute, including the First Year Out Fund, the Graduate Business Development Fund, and the Our Graduate Sponsorship Fund. There are opportunities to interact and maintain links with the Institute and other graduates through online forums and networking events.

5.5   Students, staff and employers spoke positively of the deliberate efforts to promote the students' employability. Eighty-five per cent of respondents to the 2014 Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey said their overall experience had prepared them well, or very well for work and 82 per cent were in work six months after graduation. These figures are in line with the previous year's data and endorse the Institute's approach, particularly given the specific challenges and instability inherent in employment in the performing arts sector. The review team has recognised as good practice, under the Enhancement Expectation, the strategic approach to the use of deliberate and collaborative interdisciplinary practice, which prepares students for long-term employability.

5.6   Practitioners from the performing arts industry are involved in the delivery of the curriculum. Visiting professionals hold contracts with the Institute and a network of established visiting practitioners from industry also contribute to modules, deliver master classes and provide first-hand professional knowledge to students.

5.7   Institute staff routinely engage with employers in a range of different ways. The University has praised engagement of programme teams with industry and the general preparation provided for careers in the performing arts industry. However, employers consider there is scope for their expertise to be further used in a more formalised way and the Institute acknowledges there is a gap in terms of the consistent collection and monitoring of contributions from industry links. To address this a plan to introduce biennial formal

consultation events with employers, industry practitioners and alumni is included in the new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. This will further enhance the role of employers in delivery and development of the curriculum. The review team was impressed by the varied efforts to promote the employability of students and by how employers are engaged, particularly in the delivery of the curriculum and through support for placements.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 29-32 of the Higher Education Review handbook

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer **Glossary** on the QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx

Academic standards
The standards set by **degree-awarding bodies** for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

Award
A qualification, or academic credit, conferred in formal recognition that a student has achieved the intended **learning outcomes** and passed the assessments required to meet the academic standards set for a **programme** or unit of study.

Blended learning
Learning delivered by a number of different methods, usually including face-to-face and e-learning (see **technology enhanced or enabled learning**).

Credit(s)
A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education **programmes of study**, expressed as numbers of credits at a specific level.

Degree-awarding body
A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award degrees, conferred by Royal Charter, or under Section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, or under Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, or by Papal Bull, or, since 1999, granted by the Privy Council on advice from QAA (in response to applications for taught degree awarding powers, research degree awarding powers or university title).

Distance learning
A course of study that does not involve face-to-face contact between students and tutors but instead uses technology such as the internet, intranets, broadcast media, CD-ROM and video, or traditional methods of correspondence - learning 'at a distance'.
See also **blended learning**.

Dual award or double award
The granting of separate awards (and certificates) for the same **programme** by two **degree-awarding bodies** who have jointly delivered the programme of study leading to them. See also **multiple award**.

e-learning
See technology enhanced or enabled learning

Enhancement
The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in our review processes.

Expectations
Statements in the **Quality Code** that set out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

Flexible and distributed learning
A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations.
See also **distance learning**.

Framework
A published formal structure. See also **framework for higher education qualifications**.

Framework for higher education qualifications
A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (FHEQIS).

Good practice
A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

Learning opportunities
The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

Learning outcomes
What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

Multiple awards
An arrangement where three or more **degree-awarding bodies** together provide a single jointly delivered **programme** (or programmes) leading to a separate **award** (and separate certification) of each awarding body. The arrangement is the same as for **dual/double awards**, but with three or more awarding bodies being involved.

Operational definition
A formal definition of a term, establishing exactly what QAA means when using it in reviews and reports.

Programme (of study)
An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

Programme specifications
Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of programmes of study, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

Public information
Information that is freely available to the public (sometimes referred to as being 'in the public domain').

Quality Code
Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of **reference points** for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the **Expectations** that all providers are required to meet.

Reference points
Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured.

Subject Benchmark Statement
A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or **e-learning**)
Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

Threshold academic standard
The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic **award**. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks** and **Subject Benchmark Statements**.

Virtual learning environment (VLE)
An intranet or password-only interactive website (also referred to as a platform or user interface) giving access to **learning opportunities** electronically. These might include such resources as course handbooks, information and reading lists; blogs, message boards and forums; recorded lectures; and/or facilities for online seminars (webinars).

Widening participation
Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.