



Higher Education Review of Rose Bruford College

November 2014

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About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Rose Bruford College. The review took place from 25 November to 27 November 2014 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Professor Kristyan Spelman Miller
- Dr Clare Milsom
- Mr Laurence McNaughton.

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by Rose Bruford College 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 7.

In reviewing Rose Bruford College 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.

¹ The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-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/aboutus.

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 Rose Bruford College

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Rose Bruford College.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies **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 Rose Bruford College.

- The excellent arrangements for students to engage in professional practice (Expectation B3).
- The support given to staff in developing reflection and scholarship in their academic practice (Expectation B3).
- The development and integration of learning technologies within the curriculum (Expectation B4).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendation** to Rose Bruford College.

By July 2015:

- implement revised grading criteria in the School of Design, Management and Technical Arts (Expectation B6).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions that Rose Bruford College is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students.

- The introduction of the post of Student Participation Coordinator (Expectation B5).
- The piloting of individual anonymous feedback from students on modules (Expectation B8).

Theme: Student Employability

The College's commitment to provide its learners with the best preparation for their chosen career lies at the centre of the College's mission. In order to do this, the College engages with professional practice through programme content, career development planning, the use of industry relevant visiting practitioners, and work-based learning which is a core element of all programmes. The contribution of visiting practitioners is valued and their expertise is widely used throughout the delivery of provision, and employer's views feed into the design and delivery of programmes. The Graduate Exhibition and Showcase, as well as

the annual Symposium, provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their professionalism to industry contacts and employers. Professional development for academic staff is encouraged through project funding, which in turn feeds into the student learning experience.

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

About Rose Bruford College

Rose Bruford College (the College) is a drama conservatoire based in Sidcup Kent, delivering undergraduate and postgraduate provision validated by the University of Manchester (the University). The provision is delivered collaboratively between two schools, the School of Performance and the School of Design, Management and Technical Arts. The College's Strategic Plan for 2013-2016 entitled 'A sustainable future' details the mission and aims for the College. The Strategic Plan includes placing students at the centre of the College's work, contributing to the theatre and performance industries through education and research, and equipping students with the relevant attitudes and skills necessary for employment. As part of the curriculum and the student experience, the College produces around 75 theatrical productions performed mainly before live audiences in the College's performance venues in Sidcup and in locations around central London. At the time of the review the College had 765 higher education students.

The College underwent QAA Institutional Audit in 2009. Since the Institutional Audit, major changes to the College have included strengthening its leadership and strategic direction by appointing a new Principal, and revising managerial and operational aspects of the provision to support and enhance learning and teaching. Since the last Institutional Audit there has been an increase in National Student Survey (NSS) scores with overall satisfaction levels increasing from 71 per cent to 90 per cent from 2009 to 2014. The Governing Body completed a self-evaluation exercise in 2013 which resulted in the appointment of seven new governors, bringing with them a range of additional expertise from across relevant professions and the higher education sector.

The College's Strategic Plan for 2014-2016 details an application for taught degree awarding powers following the QAA Higher Education Review. The decision for the application was the result of an internal benchmarking audit of the College's readiness against taught degree awarding powers criteria in 2013. In 2010, the College underwent an external Option Review supported by HEFCE. The result of the review was to address the issues created by the introduction of the new student fee regime and the future removal of the student number cap in developing a strategy around provision and financial sustainability.

Changes to the College's provision since the 2009 audit include closing four undergraduate programmes and two postgraduate programmes. The College ceased delivering its research degrees with the joint partnership with Goldsmiths College although it is actively seeking a new partner to deliver research degrees in the future. Two pathways with the BA (Hons) Digital Live Arts programme have been developed and validated as individual programmes: BA (Hons) Creative Lighting Control and BA (Hons) Performance Sound. At postgraduate level there are three new programmes: MA Ensemble Theatre, MA Theatre for Young Audiences and a Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Theatre and Performing Arts (PGCLTHE). The College has also developed two non-credit bearing foundation programmes.

Students have responded positively to the structural changes within the College. The decrease from three schools to two has created a more streamlined approach to the development of productions, increased positive collaboration between the two areas and

created stronger and more beneficial working relationships between staff and students. These relationships allow for a unique student experience tailored to students' needs and expectations which is reflected in the overall NSS student satisfaction scores of 90 per cent. Students were also positive about the recruitment of a Student Services Manager which has allowed for increased student support on practical issues.

The College acknowledges that recent key challenges include financial sustainability which is managed through the Strategic Plan 2013-2016 and supported by HEFCE institution-specific funding until 2015. Estates and facilities restrictions due to the College campus comprising heritage listed buildings are addressed through the Senior Management Committee (SMC) and the Governor's Finance and General Purposes Committee. The College confirms that it is limited in its ability to recruit more students when the student number cap is lifted for the reasons given above, but a plan for expansion due to land purchase and the development of partnerships outside the local area is, in part, hoping to address the issue. The College is also working on increasing the number of international students and those from underrepresented groups through the development of a new outreach strategy.

The College's taught undergraduate and postgraduate degrees are validated by the University of Manchester. There is a formal signed agreement between the University and the College, which was renewed in August 2013 following the Institutional Review of the College in July 2013. The agreement sets out the rights and obligations of both institutions. The partnership has been in place since 1995.

All five recommendations from the QAA Institutional Audit in 2009 were addressed. Developments included significant new appointments including an Academic Enhancement Manager and full engagement with the student community introducing an effective system of student representation throughout its deliberative structures. Online learning is now an integral part of the Learning and Teaching Strategy and effective use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) occurs throughout all areas of the College's academic provision. Management of professional service teams to support the student learning experience is effective.

The College has built on the features of good practice and there is a more holistic and systemic review of institutional data to inform College quality assurance processes. An Academic Development Committee has been established to oversee academic development, datasets are used through a bi-annual programme monitoring process and procedures around student evaluation has increased through joint Vice Principal and Students' Union meetings and student surveys.

Current Rose Bruford College higher education provision

School of Performance
BA (Hons) Acting
BA (Hons) Actor Musicianship
BA (Hons) American Theatre Arts
BA (Hons) European Theatre Arts
BA (Hons) Theatre Studies
BA (Hons) Opera Studies
MA Ensemble Theatre
MA in Theatre for Young Audiences
School of Design Management and Technical Arts
BA (Hons) Costume Production
BA (Hons) Creative Lighting Control
BA (Hons) Lighting Design

BA (Hons) Performance Sound

BA (Hons) Scenic Arts

BA (Hons) Stage Management

BA (Hons) Theatre Design

Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Theatre and Performing Arts

Explanation of the findings about Rose Bruford College

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

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 College offers programmes which are validated by the University. The responsibility to ensure that the qualifications delivered are appropriately aligned to the national qualifications and credit frameworks and Subject Benchmark Statements rests with the University. The College sets out in its overview of academic standards and quality assurance its structures, policies and procedures through which it assures itself that students are achieving at the correct level. The College is accredited by Drama UK, although this accreditation is of the institution rather than of individual courses.

1.2 The programme approval process, as defined by the University, comprises two stages. The first stage (approval in principle, NPP1) outlines, among other things, alignment with the national qualifications framework (and where relevant any professional body accreditation requirements). The second stage (NPP2) considers programme content, design and delivery in relation to Subject Benchmark Statements, and compliance with the credit framework and University regulations. Prior to submission of the initial proposal to the University, the College has its own internal validation process which ensures that the provision is mapped against national standards as defined by the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and as contextualised in the Subject Benchmark Statements.

1.3 Through the periodic review and annual monitoring process for taught programmes and the use of external examining, the College is required to confirm that its programmes are appropriately mapped against these UK and European reference points. This ensures that the achievement of students is consistent with these academic standards.

1.4 Processes are in place through which the College considers its provision in relation to the FHEQ, national credit frameworks and Subject Benchmark Statements. The review team determined that these would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.5 The review team tested the Expectation through scrutiny of the documentation for the approval, validation and monitoring of programmes and through discussion with staff. The documentation put forward for the approval of new programmes indicated attention to the alignment of programmes with the FHEQ, credit frameworks and Subject Benchmark Statements. Evidence from meetings with staff, and minutes from the Learning Quality and Standards Committee (LQSC) at which new programme development was discussed, confirm that the College uses these frameworks as important external reference points for the design of its programmes. Through the periodic review of programmes the alignment with external reference points is also ensured. The minutes from the approval event for the major revision to the credit arrangements of validated programmes in June 2011 provides further evidence of engagement with external frameworks in the review and approval of programmes.

1.6 Programme specifications, which are available for all programmes within programme pages on the VLE, make explicit reference to the relevant Subject Benchmark Statement, credit allocation and positioning of the qualification at the appropriate level of the FHEQ. Subject Benchmark Statements are not available for the master's provision. Programme learning outcomes are articulated in the programme specifications in relation to the relevant qualification descriptor. Evidence from external examiner reports provide confirmation that outcomes are suitably matched to the FHEQ qualification descriptors and that the definition of achievement is consistent with the UK and European reference points for academic standards.

1.7 The analysis of documentary evidence, supported by responses by staff in meetings, indicates that external reference points are systematically used to determine the academic standards of the awards. The approval, validation and monitoring processes in place work effectively and programmes are designed appropriately in relation to UK and European reference points. External examiner reports in respect of existing provision confirm that the programmes are set and assessed at the right level of the FHEQ.

1.8 Overall, the review team finds that the application of the external reference points is effective through the use of College processes such as internal validation review, consideration of programme specifications and external examiner reports. Therefore, the review team concludes that Expectation A1 is met 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

1.9 Awards at the College are determined in accordance with the regulations and academic framework of the University. The University has the authority and responsibility for setting and maintaining academic standards and does so through an overarching set of regulations for undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes of study supported by faculty annotated regulations.

1.10 The College makes available definitive information concerning academic regulations for undergraduate and taught postgraduate awards. This information is available through the student handbook via a hyperlink to the Handbook of Academic Policies and Procedures on the Document Resource and Information System on the VLE. Through this site, current and past regulations are available to staff and students. In addition, programme specifications detail the credit allocation and assessment strategy for each programme, and these are made available through the VLE. The College also has an Assessment Strategy which sets out the College's Policy in regard to assessment and associated procedures including feedback. It also refers to relevant policy documents which are available on the VLE.

1.11 The processes for approving new programmes and reviewing existing provision, which include external input, provide an opportunity to assess the College's compliance with the awarding body's frameworks and regulation.

1.12 In line with the partnership agreement, the College appears to have in place appropriate mechanisms and processes to ensure that the Expectation is met.

1.13 The team reviewed the documentation available to staff and students concerning the regulatory framework governing the award of academic credit and qualifications, and met with staff and students. A range of evidence including programme specifications, the student handbook, annual monitoring reports and external examiner reports was examined. The review team also explored the processes of programme approval and review which the College, with the University, has in place to ensure compliance with the regulations.

1.14 The process for the approval and review of programmes is set out in the academic standards and quality assurance overview. This document indicates that the design of the programme, the use of credit, and the assessment processes used to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes are tested in relation to the awarding body's regulatory framework. The major review of programmes in 2011 illustrates the College's engagement with the requirement by the awarding body to change the credit weighting of its programmes. Staff demonstrate understanding of the process of approval and re-approval of programmes and of programme amendment confirming that there appear to be clear lines of accountability and clarity within the College with respect to the College and partner responsibilities.

1.15 The implementation of the University's new regulations was rolled out from 2012-13 to encompass all levels in 2014-15. The action plan following Institutional Review of the College (July 2013) indicates ongoing monitoring of the application of the new regulations

which is enabled through twice yearly meetings between the College and the University's Collaborative academic advisers.

1.16 The standard programme review processes into which external examiners' reports feed provide a means of verifying that the aims, intended learning outcomes and expected learner achievements for each programme of study are appropriately set and maintained. The examining process, as evidenced through the examination board minutes and external examiners' reports, confirm the appropriate implementation of regulations to determine the award of qualifications. Oversight by the degree-awarding body is also ensured through involvement in the examination boards. The review team ascertained from teaching staff and students that they were familiar with the documentation specifying academic frameworks and regulations, including the assignment of academic credit and the intended learning outcomes. Programme specifications are updated annually and distributed electronically.

1.17 The review team note from documentary evidence supported by responses in meetings that appropriate measures are in place to ensure transparent and comprehensive frameworks and regulations for the award of academic credit and qualifications. Through the approval processes, consideration is given to the design of the programme and through standard review process the College has oversight of the standards in force. External examiners' reports contribute to this oversight. Therefore, the review team concludes that Expectation A2.1 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

1.18 Specifications for each programme at the College are prepared to a standard template as required by the University. Specifications are made available to students through the VLE and the College website. These specifications detail the awards' title and intermediate exit awards. Included within these are reference points to relevant Subject Benchmark Statements and the FHEQ.

1.19 The memorandum of understanding between the College and the University stipulate that a standard template must be followed. There is limited flexibility for the College to alter these templates. Each programme is thoroughly reviewed on an annual and periodic basis by the Programme Teams in addition to any external requirements.

1.20 The team met with senior staff of the College to discuss the way in which they oversee the application of programme specifications. They also met with academic staff to seek confirmation that successful oversight was resulting in an understanding of what is required in terms of adherence to academic frameworks.

1.21 The College demonstrated that it had various systems and methods in place to ensure that it adheres to the stipulations of the University. The team saw evidence of module evaluations where students were given the opportunity to feedback on the module including assessment, course content and delivery. These evaluations then form part of overarching documents that collate shared evaluation from a variety of different programmes. External examiner reports also feed into these reports. The team also saw evidence showing that the College assesses its evaluative processes. Furthermore, students who the team met were aware of the specifications and how they related to their respective courses. Internal evaluation of programmes also demonstrates the rigour that the College implements in its own review of its programmes. Minutes from College committee meetings demonstrate a regular review of process so that the College can assure itself of alignment with their awarding body's protocols. This management of evaluation falls in line with what is required by the degree-awarding body.

1.22 The College articulates its responsibilities effectively and has developed its own internal quality procedures which it rigorously evaluates using thorough recording and review mechanisms. Staff were aware of the College's responsibilities in relation to the University's agreement and demonstrated a willingness to take ownership and develop further its own evaluative procedures where possible. Therefore, the team concludes that Expectation A2.2 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

1.23 College Awards are developed and designed in accordance with the academic framework and regulations of the University. The University approves all new programmes and programme/module modifications. The College staff are part of the formal membership of the University's validation panels. The programme approval process is set out in the Academic Assurance Overview and New Programme Approval Flowchart. All programmes are designed with reference to the FHEQ, Subject Benchmark Statements and professional statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRB). Drama UK accredits the College. New programmes are approved in the College by the Academic Development Committee (ADC) which took over the role from LQSC in November 2013. No new programmes have been through ADC.

1.24 Programme specifications make direct reference to FHEQ; programme accreditation and relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. Module proformas identify aims, intended learning outcomes and assessment tasks. External examiner reports confirm the comparability of the academic standards achieved and that the aims and intended learning outcomes are consistent with the expectations of the appropriate national Subject Benchmark Statement and/or professional body requirements.

1.25 The process for new programme approval requires that the University confirms the programme relationship to the national frameworks for higher education qualifications and that the relevant Subject Benchmark Statements and/or PSRB benchmarks are identified. External examiners report on the academic standards of the programme.

1.26 The team discussed the process for new programme approval with staff to identify how staff ensured that academic standards were at the appropriate level. Documentation was also evaluated to determine that academic standards were considered in programme design and delivery.

1.27 In meetings, staff were clear that they understood the qualifications frameworks within which programmes at the College operated. They were aware that all programmes delivered at the College were required to operate in accordance with the academic framework and regulations of the awarding body. Staff confirmed that there was no variance to this across the College's academic provision. The Head of College maintains institutional oversight for the academic standards of programmes delivered at the College as Chair of Academic Board and works closely with College senior staff to ensure the academic standards of the College provision. External examiners have signed off the academic standards of all programmes at the College.

1.28 Following thorough discussion with staff and evaluation of the evidence, the team found that the College was consistent in the implementation of the processes for the approval of taught programmes, their academic standards, academic frameworks and regulations. Therefore, the review team concludes that Expectation A3.1 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 A curriculum map is provided in the programme specification that demonstrates which specific module learning outcomes are assessed. External examiners are appointed by the University and asked to confirm the achievement of the relevant learning outcomes through appropriate assessment methods. External examiners are also required to approve changes to assessment and this is evidenced on programme modifications forms. Names of external examiners are also included on the front page of programme specifications. The College Assessment Policy and Procedures document sets out the College's assessment practices including feedback, methods and grading criteria. Periodic review of Schools' online and taught postgraduate provision indicates systematic monitoring of programme outcomes.

1.30 The specification of intended learning outcomes at the module level and the mapping to assessment at the programme level enables the Expectation to be met. Academic standards are assured by external examiners who not only confirm standards at validation and review but also approve all changes to the assessment as a consequence of a minor or major programme modification. Assessment policy and procedures are clearly articulated in the document and grading criteria ensure that academic standards are met.

1.31 The Expectation was tested through evaluation of the evidence and discussion with staff and students at the College. Students confirmed that they were aware of the intended learning outcomes for each module and the grading criteria. All students reported referring to the criteria when completing assessments. Academic staff were aware of the formal processes through which any change to a module must be taken. Staff explained the external examiner sign-off process for changes to assessment and were aware of the requirement for alignment between the intended learning outcomes and assessment task in the award of academic credit. Staff also explained that all module/programme modifications were considered in relation to the Subject Benchmark Statements. Programme specifications were signed off by the Head of Quality and all students were sent an up to date specification through the programme handbook.

1.32 Processes to ensure that the achievement of relevant learning outcomes has been demonstrated through assessment are effective. Curriculum maps with programme specifications aligned with Subject Benchmark Statements provide direct evidence for this. Staff are aware of the approval processes for module/programme modifications, and external examiners approve all changes to assessment methods to enable students to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes. Students are aware of the link with learning outcomes and summative assessment and grading criteria ensure academic standards are met.

1.33 Following thorough discussion with staff and evaluation of the evidence, the College showed that the achievement of relevant learning outcomes has been demonstrated through

assessment and relevant standards. Therefore, the team concludes that Expectation 3.2 has been 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

1.34 The academic standards and quality assurance overview describes the College's structures, policies and procedures for managing academic standards and quality. The authority for conferring awards rests with the University. The College is regularly reviewed as a partner institution of the University. The review ensures that the quality and standards of the programmes meet the expectations of the validating institution. Regular review of programmes takes place through periodic and annual monitoring. Periodic review process is determined by the University and set out in the validation handbook. Every five years there is a formal review of programmes in agreement with the University. Detailed action plans from Schools are reported on six months later. Programme annual monitoring is a shared process.

1.35 Annual Monitoring reports and School Annual Monitoring Reports are considered at LQSC. The degree-awarding body produces Collaborative Academic Adviser (CAA) Annual Reports and the CAA visits the College to address issues arising from the annual monitoring process.

1.36 The processes in place at the University and the College enable this Expectation to be met. The Institutional Review carried out by the University in 2013 confirmed that the College has the necessary quality structures in place and that they are effective. External examiners are appointed by the University according to their code of practice. External examiner reports confirm that threshold standards have been achieved. In addition to the regular cycle of reviews, there is provision to hold additional reviews either in response to a major change at the University, for example the move to 20 credit modules, and review of shared module provision in the School of Design, Management and Technical Arts.

1.37 The review team met with senior staff involved in institutional review and with programme directors. The team also evaluated evidence to support the processes described in the self-evaluation document including outcomes and actions from institutional review; School and programme annual monitoring reports; external examiners' reports and LQSC minutes.

1.38 Meetings with staff confirmed that the responsibilities of the University and the College with respect to processes for the monitoring and review of programmes were well understood. Staff confirmed that the academic standards required of the degree-awarding body were maintained through quinquennial institutional review, annual programme and school monitoring reports, and external examiner reports. Collaborative advisors at the University communicate through the Head of Quality and there are regular meetings with the CAA, Heads of School, Vice Principal and Head of Quality. The complete dataset of School and Programme Annual Monitoring Reports (including updates); external examiner reports; and action plan monitoring through LQSC evidences full engagement with the processes. Senior staff described the interaction between the operational and academic strands of the committees that enabled efficient and effective programme review.

1.39 Following thorough discussion with staff and evaluation of the evidence, the team found that the College ensured that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented. It was also found that academic standards required by the University are being maintained. Therefore, the review team concludes that Expectation A3.3 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

1.40 Externality in the management of threshold academic standards is met through the use of external examiners and the participation of external panel members in the approval and review of programmes. As outlined in the College's External Examiners Policy and Procedures, which is available in the Handbook of Academic Policies and Procedures, external examiners are appointed by the University for all separate awards at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The College also draws on external subject expertise, both academic and professional, in assuring standards through their involvement in programme design and approval.

1.41 The approach taken by the College to ensure appropriate externality would enable this expectation to be met.

1.42 The review team tested the College's approach by looking at documentary evidence and through discussion with staff and students. Evidence was provided of external examiner reports, which are presented on a standard template determined by the University. External examiners are asked to comment on the standards and attainment in relation to the awarding criteria, Subject Benchmark Statements, the FHEQ and the programme specifications. Reports are received by the College Vice Principal, and are considered at the relevant programme committee, which are attended by students. Through the process of programme annual monitoring, the programme teams reflect on the external input. Programme committee minutes indicate receipt of the external examiner's report and discussion of actions which are articulated within the annual monitoring report. The review team received confirmation from students that the role of the external examiner was understood, and that the external examiners' reports were available through the VLE. Responses by the programme team are made to the points raised by the external examiner through an action plan appended to the programme annual monitoring report, which is sent to the external examiner. A digest of external examiner comments and any resulting actions is received by LQSC, and subsequently updated later in the academic year. Through this mechanism, the College has oversight of issues and actions arising from the external examiners' comments.

1.43 External input at the point of design and approval of programmes is another means by which the College ensures appropriate use of external and independent expertise at a key stage in setting and maintaining academic standards. In the rationale for the development of the MA Theatre for Young Audiences, for example, reference is made to endorsement of the proposal by a relevant theatre. The subsequent approval of the programme includes comments from academic advisers outside of the programme team, although not from an external professional. The use of external academic advisers is also evidenced in other reviews, including the approval event for the revision of programmes in 2011 and the shared module review in 2014. With respect to periodic review panels, the review team saw evidence of external experts, both academic and professional, taking part. The awarding body provides external advice and guidance through the role of the

Collaborative Academic Adviser, with an annual report summarising engagements between the degree-awarding body and the College.

1.44 The importance of professional links, for example, through the involvement of professional experts from theatre, related industries and professional organisations, is highlighted. Informal opportunities for the programme team to benefit from professional expertise were identified in the meeting with employers, who mentioned involvement in placements, as visiting lecturers and attendance at showcase events and performances. An example was also given of an Industry Advisory Panel meeting and an event organised by the Scenic Arts team in February 2014 to consult the profession. Within placements, employers support the learning processes of the students but do not have a role in summative assessment.

1.45 From documentary evidence, supported by responses in meetings, the team determines that the College takes account of external input in the setting and maintaining of standards. This is evident with respect to programme design, approval and review and in the input of external examiners at programme level. The College makes appropriate use of this input in relation to the standards of the programme. Therefore, the team concludes that Expectation A3.4 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: Summary of findings

1.46 In reaching its judgement about the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.47 All of the applicable Expectations in this area have been met and risk is judged low in each case, with no recommendations arising.

1.48 The review team concludes that the maintenance of the threshold academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the College's degree-awarding body **meets** 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 and approval of programmes.

Quality Code, Chapter B1: Programme Design and Approval

Findings

2.1 Programme development and approval is a shared responsibility between the University and the College. The design and approval process is set out in the Academic Assurance Overview and links to the Handbook of Academic Policies and Procedures available via the VLE. The College New Programme Approval Procedure Handbook provides guidance on the process. The handbook outlines two stages: stage one, NPP1 (approved in principle) and stage two, NPP2 (validation documentation). These two stages reflect the arrangements of the University. Approval in principle for a new taught programme proposal (NPP1) requires a rationale, academic case, assessment of resources and explanation of market demand. The NPP1 is considered by the Academic Development Committee and then sent to the University for approval to proceed with the programme. The College Academic Board is notified of the outcome. An external adviser reviews the NPP1. Stage two is contingent on stage one approval. A validation panel is appointed for stage two which includes College internal and external advisers. A validation report is submitted to LQSC which is forwarded to the University for approval.

2.2 Minor and major modifications to programmes all require approval from the University. Major modifications are received by ADC and forwarded to LQSC; minor modifications are sent directly to LQSC. All modifications are sent to the University for approval.

2.3 The processes for the design, development and approval of programmes are effective and meet the Expectation. These are mature processes and the two-stage approach ensures partner college autonomy with University oversight. Since the academic year 2012-13, the College has instated its own internal validation process prior to submission of documentation to the University. The validation report is very comprehensive. It confirms that in the programme design, consideration has been given to a wide range of internal and external reference points including relevant Subject Benchmark Statements and/or PSRB benchmarks. Exceptions to the degree-awarding body's regulatory framework, for example module size, are identified as well as the potential for programme outcomes to meet the career aspirations of the students. Internal validation outcomes, including recommendations, are identified and the College reports back on progress to the relevant School Board and at LQSC. The minor and major modification process ensures that programme developments are discussed and approved at College level prior to degree-awarding body approval. Deadlines for documentation are set by the University and adhered to by the College.

2.4 During the review process, the team met with academic staff involved with programme design and approval. This included programme directors and Heads of School. Validation documentation was scrutinised; in particular, the stage one documentation completed at the College. The team reviewed documentation confirming panel membership and external engagement with the validation process. Documentation relating to the dispensation to operate outside the University's regulations was requested and this was

followed up in meetings with senior staff. Minutes of LQSC evidence College oversight of stage one of the validation process.

2.5 Meetings with staff confirmed that the processes for validation and review are effective and well understood. As well as validation and review processes, staff were able to describe in detail the processes for minor and major programme modification. The February 2015 deadline for submitting changes to programmes to the University was known by all groups of staff. Staff confirmed that all programme changes were approved by the University, and that if, for any reason, approval was not given that the change would not be made. Programme directors are advised by Heads of School of confirmation of change from the University. Senior staff also verified that all programmes were operating within the University's regulatory framework. The University does not currently permit variances to operate outside the regulations therefore all College provision is delivered within this framework. Flowcharts for programme approval and programme/module modification describe each stage of the process and identify opportunities for revision and review of documentation. Staff could articulate the sequence of activity and the work flow. Staff were also aware that approval for new programmes and programme modification lay with the University.

2.6 Following thorough discussion with staff and evaluation of the evidence it was established that the processes for validation and review are clear and effective. College staff were aware and articulated the responsibilities and requirements of the College in relation to the University's agreement. Therefore the team concludes that Expectation B1 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

2.7 The College has its own admissions policy and procedure. Students are selected based on a variety of criteria including eligibility, suitability and whether or not they will benefit from any course undertaken. The College also offers part-time study in three courses where the majority of the delivery is online. Depending on the nature of the discipline, all applicants are either invited for an interview or an audition. The specifics of the process are different depending on the course being applied for but this reflects the nature of the respective disciplines. Auditions and interviews are undertaken by qualified members of staff who receive additional training to support their role in the process. Applicants for the two online courses discuss their application directly with the relevant Programme director. Information for applicants is available through a variety of forums. All applications for undergraduate programmes are conducted through UCAS. Applications for non-EU students and postgraduate programmes are administered by the College with the applicants directly. There is a complaints procedure for applicants which is managed by the College's Registrar. Feedback for unsuccessful applicants is available upon request. A review of the admissions policy was conducted in summer 2014. For 2013-14, the College received 2,795 applications for 196 places on full-time programmes.

2.8 The team saw that there was clear oversight of the admissions process and that there are sufficient systems in place to evaluate and improve the process as necessary. At the time of the review, the College was moving towards a paperless admissions system through a review of admissions practice and processes, due to be completed in autumn 2014. The team found that the existing Admissions Policy document is comprehensive and fit for purpose.

2.9 The team looked at all available documents relating to admissions. This included information sent in advance of the audition and interview process as well as information received by students at induction. The team also met students to confirm that the information provided was fit for task and was as expected. This included analysis of all promotional materials. Furthermore, the team heard that the College had systems in place that allowed for an adequate evaluation of the process.

2.10 Students confirmed their satisfaction with the process. From meetings with students, the team learned that while no formal feedback is offered once the students have been through the admissions process, there was evidence to show the College made sure that each student is the best fit for their particular course.

2.11 A control of student numbers with regards to the impact across the College was well considered, ensuring that sufficient College facilities and resources meet student needs and contribute to a positive learning experience.

2.12 Staff roles and responsibilities within the admissions process are clearly understood, and there is clear documentation available to staff in order to support the process.

2.13 Admission processes and responsibilities are transparent and explicit in documentation which is understood by staff. Students were satisfied with the process and were aware of what was expected of them by the College. Therefore, the team concludes that Expectation B2 was met and the level of associated 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

2.14 The College has a Learning and Teaching Strategy 2014-17, entitled Enhancing Learning and Teaching, which is aligned with the College's Strategic Plan 2013-16 and sets out milestones for the enhancement of its learning and teaching. The strategy was launched in July 2014 following broad consultation. This is an overarching strategy, connected to the Student Employability Strategy, Admissions Policy and Assessment Policy. The strategy is organised around a set of themes: student support and engagement; assessment and feedback; use of technology; professional engagement and employability; embedding scholarship and applied research; internationalism and diversity; and staff development. The milestones are reviewed at College level through LQSC, and although the annual monitoring process at both school and programme level is not organised to address explicitly the College's themes, through this mechanism the College monitors the quality of learning and teaching in relation to the milestones in the College strategy. School annual monitoring reports, which are received at LQSC, include the analysis of data, including NSS performance, and commentary on student feedback, learning, teaching, and enhancement, which relate to the strategy themes.

2.15 The College's educational mission is to 'contribute to and shape the theatre and performance arts and industries through education, training, research and industry engagement'. Contemporary industry practice and partnership with the profession is at the heart of the work of the College, and informs the approach to learning and teaching. Through its active involvement in and relationships with the industry, arts organisations and educational establishments, the College identifies research, scholarship and professional practice as key to its institutional identity, and promotes and develops this through a culture of reflection and subject-based scholarship.

2.16 The College's strategically led approach to learning and teaching indicates that this Expectation would be met.

2.17 The review team evaluated the effectiveness of the College's approach to learning and teaching by considering College documents, including strategy and policy, annual monitoring reports, committee minutes, programme specifications, staff development documentation and web pages. Discussions with staff, students and employers assisted the team in understanding the impact of the College's provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices on the students' learning experiences.

2.18 The College has well established links with the theatre industry, which directly impacts on the opportunities students have to gain knowledge and experience of the professional world. Programmes embed professional practice through a variety of means, including placements, internships, practice-based learning with specialist practitioners, research within professional practice, involvement in productions, and professional preparation and development modules. As the meeting with employers confirmed, practitioners and experts are invited to programmes to deliver master classes, lectures and workshops. They may act as professional directors and production supervisors working with students across the institution on productions. As the meeting with teaching staff highlighted,

some teaching staff are engaged as practitioners in theatre and related industries. External industry contacts, including agents and other professionals, are invited to College showcasing events and productions such as the Graduate Exhibition and New Writing Season at the Bargehouse in London.

2.19 To support the enhancement of professional practice in the curriculum the College has operated the Key Practitioner Project since 2006-07. This project offers staff the opportunity to bid for up to £1,000 to employ a key practitioner to work with students to enhance practice. Staff are actively involved in research, scholarship and professional practice which makes a positive contribution to the students' learning experiences. Staff and students come together for the annual Symposium which showcases research and collaborative and creative work across the disciplines over the period of a week each year. In view of the range and pervasiveness of opportunities offered by the College, the team identified as **good practice** the excellent arrangements for students to engage in professional practice.

2.20 Through its research website, the College details the work of its five research centres, which support the development of staff research and scholarly activity through projects and collaborations, lectures, seminars and continuing professional development workshops, many of which involve external bodies and external partners. The review team heard from staff that the culture of practice-based research and scholarship is actively supported and promoted within the College. The Staff Development Policy sets out clear information concerning support for staff through internal events and external opportunities for development. The College makes funding available to support staff development training or continuing professional development needs, and to fund activities. The College sets the requirement in staff posts for staff to hold a Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy or Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Theatre and Performing Arts (PGCLTHE) or to be working towards this. Staff may wish to gain Higher Education Academy fellowship through the College's involvement as partner in the Professional Recognition Scheme for the Performing Arts, which provides a performing arts oriented scheme of accreditation.

2.21 The review team noted the availability of funding for projects to advance pedagogic practice through Teaching Fellowships. The team also found evidence that staff were involved in a range of internal and externally funded projects which further enhance the opportunities for reflection and scholarship.

2.22 All staff are expected to attend cross-College staff development events and an annual assessment parity event which enable the sharing and enhancement of academic practices. The review team heard that visiting and part-time staff were invited to attend these development events, and that visiting tutors felt well supported and informed about the College. A tutor's handbook presents information about the College and its approach to quality, learning and teaching. Staff also engage in annual Performance and Development Review and the College has oversight of engagement with peer observation of teaching, through reports to LQSC. The review team was impressed by the support given to staff in developing reflection and scholarship in their academic practice, which it considered **good practice**.

2.23 The College has systems in place to regularly review and enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Data relating to the student experience from surveys and module evaluation, in addition to performance data and external examiner reports, feed in to the annual and periodic reviews of programmes which are considered at programme, school and College level. The College gathers other student feedback concerning their learning experience which is also used to inform policy and practice. Through the role of the Academic Enhancement Manager working with staff, the College seeks to manage the

enhancement of learning and teaching practice to have a positive effect on the student learning experience.

2.24 The College has a strategic approach to learning and teaching which supports a positive student learning experience through the use of industry practitioners, effective systems for the monitoring and review of teaching and learning, and student feedback. There is a significant feature of good practice in this area offering opportunities for students in professional practice. Therefore, the 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

2.25 The College makes use of student surveys, including the First Impressions Survey and the NSS, as a means of monitoring and evaluating arrangements and resources impacting on student learning. The outcomes of these surveys are reviewed and analysed at LQSC, and are considered within annual monitoring reports. Module evaluations also feed in to consideration of arrangements and resources at LQSC, and the survey of the Learning Resources Centre is considered by the College at LQSC.

2.26 It is the responsibility of the College's senior management committee to oversee the allocation of resources to enable students to develop their potential. The College has a Learning Resource Centre providing hard copy books and periodicals as well as online journals. The College has stated in its Learning and Teaching Strategy that it seeks to provide a high quality learning environment, including the provision of and support for new technologies for learning and professional development. The College has introduced a 0.5 full time equivalent Virtual Learning Environment Development Manager to support this process and has set a number of strategic milestones for the coming years.

2.27 Programmes offer a range of opportunities and arrangements for students to engage in professional practice through industry links. All students have personal tutors and access to the range of student support provided through the student services team.

2.28 The College appears to have in place arrangements and resources to enable this Expectation to be met.

2.29 The review team tested the effectiveness of the College's approach to the provision and monitoring of resources in discussion with students, teaching and support staff, by scrutinising documents and through accessing the VLE.

2.30 The College has set a number of aims in the use of technology to enhance learning including embedding core digital literacy in all programmes, maximising the use of the VLE and encouraging innovation in learning and teaching methodologies to enhance online and blended provision. In response to issues raised in periodic review and external examiner comments the College extended the remit of the VLE working party to incorporate digital technology and was renamed the Technologies in Learning and Teaching Working Group. In meetings with teaching and support staff and students the review team heard that there is a strategic commitment to using the VLE to support students. The VLE Operational Plan synthesises areas of activity for enhancement and development in support of the strategic aims of the College. Agreed minimum standards for all undergraduate and postgraduate modules are in place. Programme teams reported engaging with technology beyond the VLE, including an e-portfolio tool, webinars and online interaction. Students reported increased use of learning technology, and improved satisfaction. Staff development sessions focused on technology and participation in a number of funded projects related to the role of technology in learning. The review team viewed the steps taken by the College in the development and integration of learning technologies within the curriculum as **good practice**.

2.31 Students have access to a range of services, both academic and non-academic, including the Learning Resources Centre and Student Services. Processes are in place

through programme monitoring, surveys and committees to monitor the support students have access to. Through the introduction of the Student Experience Committee, which reports to Academic Board, the College has oversight of the student experience beyond the immediate academic environment. Students have access to information concerning resources and support through the student handbook, which includes key documentation, also available electronically concerning assessment policy and regulations. International students receive a separate handbook document. Students demonstrated awareness of the role of Personal Academic Tutor.

2.32 In line with the College's Learning and Teaching Strategy and Student Employability Strategy, the College places emphasis on placements and work-related learning and the use of professionals providing expert instruction in key areas. The management of placement learning is supported by the placement policy, tripartite agreement and placement handbook. Professionals contributing to teaching as production supervisor or director are provided with guidance in the form of role descriptors, as are visiting tutors through a handbook.

2.33 The College has a systematic and comprehensive approach to ensuring that students have access to the resources they require to develop their potential. This includes a strong focus on the effectiveness of technologies to support student learning, access to academic and non-academic resources and services and work-related and industry relevant opportunities. Therefore, the team concludes that the College meets Expectation B4 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

2.34 Student engagement forms part of the College's Learning and Teaching Strategy. Students are represented at all levels on College committees with the role of student representative selected after induction. There is a guide that forms part of a substantial pack for student representatives. The College also holds an induction meeting for all student representatives which includes online courses' representatives at the beginning of the academic year. There are a variety of meetings held between students and staff including regular meetings between Students' Union personnel and the Vice Principal. There is also the opportunity for students to give feedback online.

2.35 The College uses a number of surveys and questionnaires, both external and internal that provides feedback on courses and the College. Information gathered forms part of a data set that is delivered by the Quality Office to programme teams. Students play a significant collaborative and partner role in the running and design of the College's Annual symposium. With particular regard for the School of Design, Management and Technical Arts programmes, the College actively promotes students' engagement with their learning by allowing them to tailor their course to their own choices for specific areas of study. The College also engages students as Student Ambassadors. Student Ambassadors play a role at recruitment events and other external activities. The Quality Office at the College compiles an annual report on student engagement for receipt by the LQSC. In light of this, a working party has been established to take recommendations forward from the report. The student submission alludes to positive changes being made and improvements undertaken in light of feedback given. Recent developments include the creation of the Student Experience Committee and the establishment of a new post of Student Participation Coordinator.

2.36 There are significant feedback mechanisms including module and course feedback forms, the National Student Survey and responses from course representatives. Currently there is no mechanism for students to feed back about their modules anonymously. Evaluative reports are created which reflect overarching student opinion. External examiner reports and the NSS also feed into these evaluative reports. The team learned that there is effort by the College to bolster the representative structure on committees. There are more representatives than is required to allow for performing commitments to ensure that there is always a student voice.

2.37 The team reviewed all documentation relating to student engagement. This included details of how a student might become a student representative; the committee structure; end of module and programme feedback opportunities; and the Student Charter which details the expectations in terms of what the students can expect from the College and what the College can expect from the students. The team met both staff and students of the College to see how these policies and procedures work in practice. Meetings with the Principal and the support staff also gave the team a clear sense of how student engagement is realised throughout the College.

2.38 The team found that there was continuous and positive dialogue between students and staff through the formal mechanisms of student representation at College meetings, and feedback. Students were satisfied and clear about the opportunities and activities in place for them to input into the improvement of the programmes and study opportunities, and documentation related to feedback methods was found to be fit for purpose. The College

continues to develop its student engagement activities and the team **affirms** the forthcoming appointment of a Student Participation Coordinator. This new role within the College is intended to further develop and embed student representational structures and training, and continue to build relationships between all students and the College, as well as helping to enhance the day-to-day running of the Students' Union and its place within College life.

2.39 While there could be improvements made to some of the ways in which students are able to feedback, the College demonstrated effective and significant structures in place to ensure student participation in the improvement of their studies. The team affirms the appointment of a Student Participation Coordinator in order to enhance student engagement mechanisms. Therefore, the team concluded that Expectation B5 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

2.40 The College's assessment policy and procedures are clearly set out in the College document Assessment Including Feedback to Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students Policy. The document includes arrangements for extensions, penalties for late work, inclusive assessment and marking procedures. Assessment criteria are also provided in this handbook, however, grading criteria for the School of Design, Management and Technical Arts are missing from the policy. There is also a link to this document directly from the VLE. Information on assessment is provided for students in the Student Handbook Section 11: Academic Matters. Programme and module specifications specify the intended learning outcomes. Programme specifications include a curriculum map of modules against intended learning outcomes of the programme and refer to assessment.

2.41 Policies and procedures for Recognition of Prior Learning and the application form are clear. Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning is also referred to in the admissions policy and procedures.

2.42 The assessment document makes explicit reference to the Expectation. Policies and procedures ensure that assessment processes are equitable, valid and reliable and enable every student to achieve and demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes. Arrangements for feedback are clearly stated in the assessment document, where it is stated that feedback on all assessed work will normally be provided within 20 working days after the final submission deadline. External examiners approve all changes to assessments. There is a clear policy and procedures for mitigating circumstances and extensions. All applications for mitigating circumstances are considered by the Mitigating Circumstances Committee which meets twice a year in advance of assessment boards. A student academic appeals policy and guidance is provided. A report on student appeals is presented to Academic Board. Recognition of Prior Learning arrangements ensure that students have met the intended learning outcomes of the modules for which the prior learning is to be recognised. Award of prior credit is up to a maximum of 120 credits at levels 4 and 5. Although advanced students may be permitted to level 5, entry to level 6 is only permitted in exceptional circumstances.

2.43 During the review the team met staff involved in the assessment process and students. Assessment practice was discussed with academic staff, including sessional staff, and senior staff with a responsibility for the assessment process, Heads of School, the Vice Principal and the Academic Registrar. A complete set of module proformas for a programme was reviewed and completed applications for Recognition of Prior Learning were made available during the visit. Access was also provided to the VLE. External examiners' reports were also reviewed in the context of assessment practice.

2.44 The meeting with students confirmed that the marking arrangements were clear and that they were provided with feedback on their work. They stated grading criteria were provided and that they used these criteria when completing the assessment. Students explained that grading criteria were uploaded onto the VLE and that they were able to submit work through the VLE. Sessional staff confirmed that they had full access to the VLE and

were able to mark online. Students were aware of the assessment regulations and had explained that they were also on the VLE and were aware of the appeals process. Students were also clear about how to make an extenuating circumstances claim and stated that they had received an e-mail from the Academic Registrar explaining the process. In answering questions about feedback, students explained that while feedback on practical work was usually given very quickly, feedback on written work could be delayed, in some cases until after the module had been completed. They were aware of the feedback policy of 20 days but confirmed that for written work this turnaround was not always met.

2.45 In the meeting with senior staff, assessment issues raised in external examiner reports were explored and it was confirmed that matters had been addressed. Issues relating to the complexities of administration systems for mark recording that were raised by external examiners have also been addressed. The development of a new student record system with more efficient and effective assessment board reporting functionality was confirmed. The College acknowledged that a set of the grading descriptors was being piloted in one programme which was, in part, in response to low NSS scores and as part of the review of grading descriptors in the School of Design, Management and Technical Arts. Although the team recognised that some work was being undertaken regarding revised grading criteria it **recommended** that the College implement revised grading criteria in the School of Design, Management and Technical Arts. Revised grading criteria are in part a response to low NSS scores for assessment and feedback.

2.46 Students were aware of the arrangements for the recognition of prior learning; one international student had been accepted onto a College programme through this process.

2.47 The team found that the College had appropriate processes and procedures in place to enable students to achieve their awards. The College had effective mechanisms in place to carry out the process of Recognition of Prior Learning and Accreditation of Prior Learning. Staff were clear in their responsibilities throughout the assessment process and students were satisfied where to find information relating to the assessment of their programmes and understood what was expected of them in order to meet the learning outcomes. The team identified that there was an issue regarding the current effectiveness of the grading criteria in the School of Design, Management and Technical Arts but as the College acknowledged and were in the process of addressing the issue, the risk is seen to be low. Therefore, the team concluded that Expectation B6 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

2.48 The University is responsible for the appointment and management of external examiners. In accordance with the College's External Examiner Policy and Procedure, external examiners are nominated by the College using the awarding body nomination form, and the nomination agreed through the College committee structure. The nomination is then sent to the University for approval and a letter of appointment issued from the University. Guidance on the role of external examiners is available through the degree-awarding body's website, and in addition the College encourages external examiners to attend an annual event for external examiners at the College to provide more specific induction to the programme assessment strategies and marking criteria. According to the academic standards and quality assurance overview, the role involves observing performances and viewing artefacts; reviewing a sample of scripts and coursework; observing oral examinations where necessary; attending examination boards at which the final assessments of candidates are considered; and providing an annual report to the validating institution on standards and attainment in relation to its own awarding criteria, Subject Benchmark Statements, the FHEQ and the College's programme specifications.

2.49 External examiner reports, which use a standard template, are received by the College Vice Principal, and then considered at programme committee meetings. External examiners are asked to comment on the standards and attainment in relation to the awarding criteria, Subject Benchmark Statements, the FHEQ and the programme specifications. External examiner reports are discussed in detail at programme committees and are also made available to all students via the VLE. Comments from the external examiners feed into the annual programme review process and the resulting action plan indicates responses to issues which have been raised. A digest of external examiner comments is received by LQSC, and subsequently updated later in the academic year. Through this mechanism, the College has oversight of issues and actions arising from the external examiners' comments.

2.50 The approach the College takes in relation to external examiner input would enable this Expectation to be met.

2.51 The review team investigated the use made of external examiner input by considering external examiner reports, programme committee minutes, programme annual monitoring reports and their associated action plans, and LQSC minutes documenting receipt and discussion of external examiner input. Meetings with students and senior staff and teaching staff demonstrated familiarity and engagement with the external examining process.

2.52 The review team determined that there is a robust system which allows for reflection on, and analysis and discussion of, issues raised in reports at appropriate levels of the College. The review team found that the College makes appropriate use of external examiner input to inform the quality of its provision.

2.53 The College has a robust external examining system which is used effectively in the improvement and management of programmes. Therefore, the team concludes that Expectation B7 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 Responsibility for programme annual monitoring and periodic review is shared between the provider and the University. The School Annual Monitoring Reports which summarise issues and draw themes from Programme Annual Monitoring reports are received by LQSC and the University. Annual monitoring reports are discussed in programme teams and at programme committees. Student representatives discuss Annual Monitoring Reporting at programme committees. Student feedback is received through discussion, NSS feedback and internal surveys. Annual Monitoring Reporting clearly identifies a range of sources of student feedback to be discussed in order to describe the student perspective of the programme. External examiners' reports and NSS and internal survey outcomes are considered as part of the process. Periodic programme review is determined by the degree-awarding body through a shared process. The provider underwent a full periodic review of its programmes in 2013. Periodic review outcomes identify commendations, conditions and recommendations. These are addressed through action plans which are reviewed and updated by LQSC.

2.55 Processes for monitoring and review are effective, regular and systematic. The annual monitoring process is documented in a flow chart which schedules an opportunity for a review of the process outcomes at Spring School Boards and programme committees. Each level of the process is clearly defined with opportunities for inter and intra academic review incorporated into the review cycle. The Annual Monitoring Report template lists each step in the process and identifies evidence to be discussed/evaluated. It also includes a summary of programme action plan and actions taken in the previous year. Any modifications to the programme are also formally recorded in the Annual Monitoring Template. Periodic programme and institutional review are managed by the University. Action plans that address the review recommendations are monitored by LQSC and progress is reported to the University. The Expectation is met in theory.

2.56 During the review process the team met senior staff and academic staff involved in annual monitoring and review. Staff were able to articulate the process. A complete set of Annual Monitoring Reports and action plan updates were submitted as evidence.

2.57 Students confirmed their involvement with the monitoring and review processes through their representation on programme committees and through the module evaluation process. The team also tested the Expectation through evidence provided for periodic review; NSS action plans; external examiner reports; programme committee minutes; and LQSC minutes.

2.58 From meetings with staff and students it was clear to the team that programme monitoring and review was a well understood and managed procedure. The deliberative process relating to Annual Monitoring Reporting was known and students were able to identify how their feedback was used to inform programme development. Annual Monitoring Reporting is an agenda item on programme committees and the external examiner's report, NSS actions and an evaluation of internal data is evidenced in programme committee minutes. Programme committees also discuss module evaluation outcomes. Staff and students were very clear about how student feedback is used to improve and develop programmes. Students reported feeling confident to express their views and could identify

improvements made as a result of their feedback. Opportunities for fully anonymous feedback are limited to the NSS and the First Impressions survey. Module evaluation is anonymous to academic staff but students complete the report collaboratively; for example in a meeting led by the student representative or via a social media site. During the discussion, the team **affirmed** that the College is piloting an anonymous approach next year to ensure that students have the opportunity to provide individual anonymous feedback at all levels. School Annual Monitoring reports summarise issues and are discussed at School Boards. LQSC receives the final School Annual Monitoring report and following their consideration this is forwarded to the degree-awarding body. Staff were able to describe this process at meetings and the relationship between programme/school/College and University was understood. Staff were also able to explain how action plans arising from Annual Monitoring Reporting were monitored.

2.59 A full programme and institutional review was completed in 2013 and action plans arising from these reviews are monitored. Postgraduate and online programmes are managed separately, which is appropriate. Heads of Schools were able to articulate the process for programme modifications. Deadlines for documentation required by the degree-awarding body are known by academic and senior staff.

2.60 The College adheres to the processes set out for Annual Monitoring Reporting and programme review and this is evidenced through the complete set of Annual Monitoring Reports and School Annual Monitoring Reports. Formal action plan updates demonstrate that outcomes are monitored.

2.61 The College follows a robust system of annual and periodic review of programmes using its own internal systems of annual monitoring reporting and the University's process of periodic review. Students' input was used effectively and while there is an opportunity to strengthen the collation of this feedback through the introduction of an anonymised pilot, the team concludes that Expectation B8 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 College presented the team with detailed documentation relating to its complaints and appeals processes. There is a Policy and Procedure for Academic Appeals and Complaints with responsibilities clearly outlined. In addition, with regard to appeals, there is a flowchart that sets out the process, and forms and guidance for students. Equivalent documentation and information is available for complaints.

2.63 In the first instance, the College will endeavour to offer the student support and guidance, as outlined in the policy. If a formal complaint or appeal is still waiting to be pursued then the College follows its own processes to help the student. If students remain dissatisfied they are made aware of their right to contact the University and, ultimately, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. Students are made aware of these policies and procedures at induction. They are also available on the VLE. An annual report about complaints and appeals is considered by Academic Board, and includes findings from the annual letter from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

2.64 The documentation for complaints and appeals is very clear and is fit for purpose. The policies are regularly reviewed with an annual report being received by the Academic Board and areas for improvement identified.

2.65 The team reviewed the College's documentation relating to academic appeals and complaints. This included, but was not limited to, looking at the memorandum of understanding between the College and the University, information available to students, and processes in place to ensure that College staff are kept up to date should changes be made. The team also met with College staff to see how effectively the process is managed further to any stipulations given in documentation. In addition to this, the team met with students to confirm that they were aware of the respective processes and how they might go about finding out.

2.66 The students confirmed that the guidance for academic appeals and complaints is discussed at induction. Furthermore, the students were all clear on where they would find the relevant information on the VLE. There have been four 'completion of procedures' letters received in 2013 and no complaints to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator which the team felt was indicative of effective procedures. This understanding of process was also confirmed by staff in meetings.

2.67 The College has an established complaints and appeals process and meetings with staff and students confirmed that the information reviewed was accurate and current. Therefore, the team concluded that Expectation B9 is met and the associated level of 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

2.68 The College has responsibilities delegated by the degree-awarding body for the provision of learning opportunities with respect to taught programmes of study, and this was renewed following the Institutional Review of the College in 2013. There is no extant arrangement in place for research degree provision since the expiry of an agreement with Goldsmiths, University of London, in 2013.

2.69 The College Strategic Plan and Learning and Teaching Strategy indicate the strategic importance of collaboration with others nationally and internationally, and especially the development of professional networks in relation to their input into teaching. The College has formal partnerships with a number of international institutions in the USA enabling outgoing and incoming student mobility, and through Erasmus, in a number of European institutions, including Brno, Czech Republic. Staff exchanges through Erasmus to the University of Malta are also enabled. A working group was established to review arrangements for study abroad for outgoing and incoming students.

2.70 The contribution of external professionals from theatre, related industries and arts organisations is central to the educational mission of the College as a leading drama conservatoire. Programmes benefit from the links with the performance industry through a variety of opportunities across all programmes to engage in work-related learning with professionals. Arrangements include visiting professionals leading master classes and workshops, giving lectures, acting as production supervisors and directors and providing work placement opportunities for programmes in one school, supported by the relevant policy and handbook.

2.71 The centrality of professional practice to the mission of the College puts an emphasis on collaboration with professional and industry experts. The arrangements in place to establish and manage the involvement of external partners indicate that this Expectation is met.

2.72 The review team considered the evidence presented through College documentation, including policy documents and handbooks, and through meetings with senior, teaching and support staff, students, employers and industry contacts. Meetings with students and employers reported a high level of interaction between the College and the programmes. Relationships with external professionals were established and maintained at programme level and enabled the programme team, staff and students to benefit from current, relevant professional expertise. Employer involvement with the College included offering student placements in the School of Design, Management and Technical Arts, acting as visiting lecturers, production supervisors and directors, and attendance at showcase events and performances. The views of employers and wider industry regularly feed in to programme developments through informal contact with the programme team. A formal event to consult the profession was recently arranged in one area of provision following an earlier Industry Advisory Panel meeting. The review team heard that liaison with external professionals was often informal and student focused.

2.73 External industry experts also contribute formally to the design and approval of programmes through attendance on panels, such as for the approval event for the revision of programmes in 2011. With respect to periodic review panels, the review team saw evidence of external experts, both academic and professional, taking part.

2.74 A placement policy and placement handbook clarifying expectations and processes are in place and understood. Work-based and placement learning processes and responsibilities are summarised in a flowchart and there is a template for establishing the tripartite agreement. Within placements, employers support the learning processes of the students but do not have a role in summative assessment. In response to issues raised in a programme annual monitoring report concerning the operation of placements, a review of placement procedures across the School of Design, Management and Technical Arts was conducted resulting in the Engaging the Industry report. This was considered by LQSC, with a recommendation for further support for industry liaison.

2.75 Study abroad opportunities are available within programmes, and the review team heard that the process was well supported by the College. Support included the provision of language preparation for those going to non-English speaking contexts. The review team heard that ideas for new partnerships are generated at all levels, within schools and by senior management, depending on the local, national and international nature of the partnership. However, it is Senior Management Committee which has responsibility for oversight of arrangements with respect to strategic planning.

2.76 Overall, the team found that the College undertakes its responsibilities effectively with respect to working with others and noted the positive contribution to student engagement in professional practice through collaboration with employers. Study abroad arrangements were also effectively managed. The team therefore concludes that Expectation B10 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

2.77 The College does not currently deliver research degrees.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.78 In reaching its judgement about the quality of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.79 Of the 10 applicable expectations, all are met with a low level of risk.

2.80 There are three features of good practice in this area: the excellent arrangements for staff to engage in professional practice (Expectation B3); the support given to staff in developing reflection and scholarship in their academic practice (Expectation B3); and the development and integration of learning technologies within the curriculum (Expectation B4). There is one recommendation in this area, to implement revised grading criteria in the School of Design Management and Technical Arts (Expectation B6). The team found the College was starting to focus on the inconsistencies of the grading descriptors between the two Schools and in response to low NSS scores in this area relating to the School of Design, Management and Technical Arts but identified the need for an implementation of revised grading criteria to be considered to address this issue. The actions recommended will not require or result in major change to structures, processes or practices as the current system of assessment and moderation is currently effective and understood.

2.81 In addition, the review team can affirm that the College is already taking appropriate action in two areas where it was recognised further work would enhance practice and contribute positively to the student experience: the introduction of the post of Student Participation Coordinator (Expectation B5), and the piloting of individual anonymous feedback from students on modules (Expectation B8).

2.82 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 College produces a wide range of information made available through various mediums to all stakeholders. Published information is available in hard copy or on the College website. More specific course information is available on the VLE. Information is agreed and approved by programme directors, Heads of School and the Head of Quality. There are also policies and procedures to ensure the accuracy of information. All publicity materials bearing the logo of the validating partner require official sign off by the University. The Marketing, Communications and Student Recruitment Committee has responsibility to ensure that all marketing materials fall in line with the expectations of the Quality Code. All students receive a transcript of their studies from the College and the University issues degree certificates where applicable. There is a section in the student charter that clearly sets out what the students can expect from the College and, in turn, what the College can expect from the students in terms of student representation and opinion.

3.2 The team found that the information available to stakeholders was clearly laid out and comprehensive. The website had staff profiles which the team felt were effective in communicating an academic community to balance with the prolific sense of performing arts training that is evident throughout. Staff confirmed the processes that must be adhered to with published material.

3.3 College students and staff confirmed the appropriateness of information available. The team reviewed the hard copy of the College prospectus as well as other information that is made available to students at a wide variety of outlets across the College premises. The team found that in the main all information reviewed was accurate with the exception of information related to provision which was no longer running. Documents were made available via the College's VLE which contained course handbooks including all information pertaining to programmes undertaken by current students. The College also gave the team access to all parts of the VLE so as to view the information available to students.

3.4 Students were satisfied with the information available as prospective students; they confirmed that the information was complete and fit for purpose. As current students of the College, they acknowledged satisfaction with the information available for their courses. They drew particular attention to and praised the College's VLE which, in addition to its function as a repository for information, serves as an effective support for their studies.

3.5 There is clear understanding by the College with regards to what is required in terms of information for all stakeholders. The information provided on most media platforms was found to be trustworthy, complete, accessible and in the main, accurate. Therefore the team conclude 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

3.6 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. There were no recommendations, affirmations, or features of good practice. The review team therefore concludes that the quality of information produced about its higher education provision **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 College's Enhancing Learning and Teaching: Learning and Teaching Strategy 2014-17 identifies seven institutional enhancement themes in relation to the strategic enhancement of student learning opportunities. For each theme annual milestones, with performance indicators, are identified. There is systematic integration of enhancement initiatives through oversight by the LQSC with the stated purpose to 'enhance the quality of the student learning opportunities'. The academic standards and quality assurance overview document describes how quality assurance procedures are used to identify opportunities for enhancement. The College strategy for the application of learning technology makes clear the institutional enhancement approach to the VLE. Milestones in the learning and teaching strategy reflect the ambitions of this strategy.

4.2 Good practice is identified through four main institutional approaches: peer observation of teaching, Annual Monitoring Reporting, external examiners' reports, and internal and external surveys. Summaries and digests of good practice are provided for peer observation in a report for LQSC, Annual Monitoring Reports at the School level in a report for LQSC, external examiners and surveys. Staff development bi-annual sessions provide an opportunity for good practice to be disseminated and to develop practice across the College. In addition to this activity, a strategic approach has been taken to the enhancement of assessment practice across the College.

4.3 The Learning and Teaching Strategy provides a focus for the enhancement of the student learning opportunities across the College. Milestones in the documents describe the deliberate steps to be taken to enable institutional improvement. The strategy principles have been mapped to the aims of the College Strategic Plan to ensure institutional oversight of the enhancement process. The Learning and Teaching Strategy is also informed by the Student Employability Strategy, Admissions Policy and the Assessment Policy. While some milestones set targets that will be ambitious for particular Schools, for example, satisfaction scores for assessment and feedback, School action plans and updates demonstrate a commitment to the delivery of these indicators reported through LQSC. Agendas for staff development sessions also indicate development and support provided at an institutional level to deliver the identified enhancements and staff are supported through attendance on the PGCLTHE and in the achievement of Higher Education Academy recognition. The Learning and Teaching Strategy sets the enhancement agenda and the ethos is developed through the deliberative structures that support and monitor progress against specified targets.

4.4 The review team conducted a comprehensive review of evidence that identified a strategic approach to enhancement. This included strategic documents, survey action plans, terms of reference of strategic committees, LQSC minutes, Technologies in Learning and Teaching minutes, and agendas for staff development events. Meetings were also conducted with staff to determine the College ethos and evidence the strategic and systematic approach to enhancement.

4.5 All staff were able to articulate the strategic approach that the College took to enhancement. The Principal identified the approaches the College had taken including the appointment of an Academic Enhancement Manager. Senior staff were able to describe the

deliberate steps taken to improve the quality of the learning opportunities. The Learning and Teaching Strategy was seen by all as the central tenet of the enhancement process. Staff were aware of the enhancement themes and could identify specific actions that were being taken to improve the student experience, for example changes to assessment practice involving the VLE. Technologies in Learning and Teaching minutes evidence of the strategic approach taken by the College to the development of the VLE. Staff and student working parties had been developed to support themes. A systematic approach to enhancement is guaranteed through the committee structure. Staff described how membership and reporting lines ensure that College enhancement initiatives are actioned at the appropriate level. LQSC takes strategic oversight of enhancement activities at the school and programme level. LQSC reports to Academic Board. programme committees report to School Boards and School Boards to LQSC. In meetings with academic staff, staff development days were seen as crucial to the understanding and actioning of the strategic priorities of the College with regard to enhancement. All staff confirmed that they were involved in the development of the College Learning and Teaching Strategy and the identification of the institutional enhancement themes. Students were able to identify strategic enhancement initiatives such as the deliberate steps that have been taken at the College level to improve the virtual learning environment. While practice was not consistent across all programmes, an effective pedagogic approach was taken for all academic provision at the College.

4.6 The College takes a strategic approach to enhancement using deliberative committee and meeting structures, established policies and opportunities to share good practice and through use of student feedback. The team were assured that deliberate steps are being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities and therefore concludes that the Expectation of Enhancement is met and the associated level of risk low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.7 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. There were no recommendations, affirmations, or features of good practice. The review team therefore concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1 At the heart of the College's Learning and Teaching Strategy and the College Strategic Plan is the commitment to 'offer [our] graduates the best possible preparation for successful and satisfying careers as innovative and enterprising practitioners'. The emphasis placed on professional practice and industry awareness is reflected in the Student Employability Strategy. This sets out aims with respect to programme content (including personal and career development planning and professional preparation modules), access to information about gaining employment, involvement of visiting practitioners in the support and delivery of programmes, engagement with the industry through work-based learning or placement, and the development of relevant transferable skills.

5.2 Employability is built into programmes in various ways. Following the revalidation of programmes in 2011, all full-time programmes have a professional development module or equivalent tailored to support students as they enter what is a highly competitive industry. Students have access to a range of opportunities for industry contact which support the development of their professional practice. Work-based learning is also a core element of all full-time programmes through the inclusion of a placement module and/or through simulated professional practice. Placements are managed within programmes following a College policy, procedure and handbook.

5.3 The College supports and values the contribution of active practitioners to the student learning experience. Such professionals contribute to the curriculum as visiting tutors, and in expert roles directing or supervising productions, or providing master class or workshop input. In this way, students and staff benefit from current industry expertise. The key practitioner's scheme provides an opportunity to support the engagement of industry experts who bring up-to-date experience of professional practice into the programme.

5.4 The annual symposium provides an opportunity for staff and students to showcase their professional skills and scholarship in a collaborative professional context. Students also participate in productions at the College and at external venues, including the London Showcase and Graduate Exhibition. The College demonstrates a firm commitment to supporting the professional development of its staff through project funding, staff development opportunities and fellowships, which feed back in to the learning experiences of the students. A specific project focused on Employability as a Development Theme explores ways in which students within the School of Design, Management and Technical Arts can be supported in their personal and academic development. More generally, the College encourages students to gain part-time employment experience, for example as student ambassadors.

5.5 Employers' views on priorities and needs of the industry feed into the design and delivery of programmes through both informal and formal channels. Informal liaison with practitioners and their attendance or participation in College events allows feedback on the students' achievements and the content of the programme to be regularly reviewed. Regular liaison with employers takes place to ensure that programme content and delivery reflect changes in the industry. Programme teams have good relationships with a broad network of employers, at local and national level. More formally, professional expertise is invited at key stages of the design approval and periodic review of programmes, and through advisory meetings with employers, such as the recent consultative meeting organised by the Scenic Arts team.

5.6 The varied and dynamic involvement of industry experts, employers and professionals in the work of the College helps to secure the College's identity as an

institution defined by its industry focus. Practitioners' involvement in the work of the College ensures currency and relevance of content and delivery, and supports students' transition to the professional world. The College monitors the employment statistics of its graduates and actively draws on its alumni to further enhance the College's industry contacts. The School of Design, Management and Technical Arts has recently produced a report entitled Engaging the Industry which illustrates the range of placement opportunities relevant to its programmes.

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 27-29 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.

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