

Specific Course Designation: report of the monitoring visit of Kogan Academy of Dramatic Arts, February 2018

1 Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that Kogan Academy of Dramatic Arts (the Academy) has made acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, evaluate and enhance its higher education provision since the [April 2014 Review for Specific Course Designation](#).

2 Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 There was no annual monitoring visit to the Academy in 2017. Since the Academy's April 2016 annual monitoring visit the number of students has decreased from 35 to 15, all enrolled on the BA (Hons) Acting awarded by Kingston University London (the University). Of these, 10 are scheduled to complete in July 2018. The Academy's agreement with the University will terminate when the last cohort of five students completes its studies in August 2019.

3 Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The Academy produced an updated Action Plan following the 2016 annual monitoring visit, which also includes some recommendations from a January 2016 Internal Subject Review conducted by the University. From its scrutiny of the evidence, and meetings with staff and students during the review, the team concluded that the Academy is making acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, evaluate and enhance its higher education provision. All actions in the Action Plan are at varying, yet satisfactory, levels of completion. The Academy's current situation means that implementation of actions has not been possible in some cases. Actions completed with, and under the supervision of, the University include the joint preparation of a new Staff and Student Manual (paragraph 4) and Internal Subject Reviews (paragraph 5). The move to new premises has resolved the identified weaknesses in the support for students with disabilities (paragraph 6) while addressing concerns raised by the external examiner regarding the availability of performance venues (paragraph 8). The small number of teaching staff does not allow for standard teaching observations to take place (paragraph 7), and although the admissions procedures were revised, the changes have not been implemented (paragraph 8), both as a result of the Academy no longer admitting students onto its programme.

4 The Academy and the University have jointly prepared a revised Staff and Student Manual, which provides extensive information related to Boards of Study and external examining, while providing staff and students with access to University policies and regulations. However, students still do not have access to external examiner reports or the responses to them prepared by the Academy.

5 The Academy's current position has rendered the recommendation that, given the projected growth in student numbers, it should introduce its own annual monitoring process, no longer applicable. The Academy continues to participate in the University's annual monitoring and review processes. Recommendations from the University's periodic Internal Subject Review are included in the updated action plan.

6 The recommendation related to support for students with a range of disabilities was addressed by the Academy's move to the current premises, which provides a much improved environment. The Academy has also revised enrolment forms to encourage students to declare any disabilities or additional support needs.

7 Although teaching observations and staff development procedures are in place, the current reduced number of teaching staff does not allow their implementation. Joint teaching and collaboration in assessment effectively replaced formal observations. The smaller core of teaching staff who have remained bring a wealth of experience, to which students attest, through high standards of teaching and support, and commitment shown by the increased number of contact hours students now experience. Although the review team confirmed that there are appropriate processes for the admission of students, no admissions have been conducted in the latest academic year due to the programme coming to an end. In the admissions process, all applicants are now required to undertake an audition.

8 In addition to the Internal Subject Review carried out on behalf of the University, (paragraph 5) individual Module Enhancement Plans (MEPs) and Course Enhancement Plans are completed by the module leader, and these include student data and feedback. The Academy conducts an Internal Monitoring Review for the University. The Academy acts on any actions arising from the MEPs; for example, the comment by the external examiner in the MEPs concerning the availability of performance venues has been partially addressed by the move to new premises and by an intention to use external performance venues. The external examiner's concern about marking criteria, including recognition of students' improvement throughout the module, has been resolved, with approval of all grades at assessment boards and of all assessment briefs by the examiner. Students provide feedback on the course through Staff and Student Consultative Committee meetings.

9 Student data provided indicates declining retention rates (53 per cent for the 2015-16 Cohort and 33 per cent for the 2016-17 cohort) but high levels of achievement of those students who completed the programme (100 per cent). Most withdrawals took place in the first year of the programme when students realised that the programme did not meet their needs. To address the low retention rates, the Academy has strengthened working relationships between staff and students in order to give students more confidence to discuss their problems.

4 Progress in working with the external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education

10 The provider has produced a mapping document outlining its engagement with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and how it meets each Expectation. Reference to the Subject Benchmark Statement for Dance, Drama and Performance and to *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* is included in the programme specification, which was approved by the University at validation.

5 Background to the monitoring visit

11 The monitoring visit serves as a short check on the provider's continuing management of academic standards and quality of provision. It focuses on progress since the previous review. In addition, it provides an opportunity for QAA to advise the provider of any matters that have the potential to be of particular interest in the next monitoring visit or review.

12 The monitoring visit was carried out by Millard Parkinson, Reviewer, and Christopher Mabika, Coordinator, on 27 February 2018.

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