



# Review for Specific Course Designation by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

## The Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts Ltd

October 2014

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## Key findings about The Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts Ltd

As a result of its Review for Specific Course Designation carried out in October 2014, the QAA review team (the team) considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the programme it offers on behalf of the University of East London.

The team also considers that there can be **confidence** in how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the quality and enhancement of the learning opportunities it offers on behalf of this awarding body.

The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

### Good practice

The team has identified the following **good practice**:

- staff practice is informed and enhanced through the detailed and comprehensive Programme Quality Manual (PQM) (paragraph 1.4)
- extensive engagement with external stakeholders supports the development of professional skills and enhances student employability (paragraph 2.4)
- the balance between theoretical and practical learning opportunities affords a coherent programme that supports student confidence and learning (paragraph 2.7)
- the thorough and continuous formative assessment feedback process underpins and enhances student learning (paragraph 2.9)
- the strong and proactive alumni network enriches support for students and raises aspirations (paragraph 2.12)
- new students are effectively mentored by existing students throughout their studies (paragraph 2.14).

### Recommendations

The team has also identified a number of **recommendations** for the enhancement of the higher education provision.

The team considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:

- formalise the internal moderation process by recording discussions that take place in arriving at agreed student marks (paragraph 1.8)
- ensure that external examiner reports are formally discussed in team meetings (paragraph 1.13)
- make available external examiner reports in full to all students (paragraph 3.5).

The team considers that it would be **desirable** for the provider to:

- continue the development of the virtual learning environment (VLE) to provide a centralised resource for teaching and learning (paragraph 2.13)
- systematically plan and record staff development activities (paragraph 2.16)
- develop a programme of pedagogical staff development to enhance teaching practice (paragraph 2.19)
- introduce a formal system of version control for all documentation (paragraph 3.9).

## About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Specific Course Designation](#)<sup>1</sup> conducted by [QAA](#) at The Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts (the Academy), which is a privately funded provider of higher education. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students. The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of the University of East London (UEL). The review was carried out by Ms Dorothy McElwee and Ms Jenny Steer (Reviewers) and Dr David Ross (Coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Specific Course Designation: Handbook, May 2014](#).<sup>2</sup> Evidence supplied prior to the visit included a detailed self-evaluation document, an associated evidence folder including a variety of Academy policies, strategies, annual reports for the awarding body, a recent report from Ofsted, course documentation, student and staff handbooks and the PQM. Students supplied a submission prior to the visit consisting of a written statement and a series of student interviews on film. The review team was given access to a range of Academy websites pertinent to the provision. During the visit, the review team met staff and students and viewed a sample of student written work.

The review team also considered the provider's use of the relevant external reference points:

- University of East London Collaborative Agreement
- Drama UK Hallmarks of Conservatoire Training
- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code)
- *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ).

Please note that if you are unfamiliar with any of the terms used in this report you can find them in the [Glossary](#).

The Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts Ltd was founded in 1911. Initially a stage school, its main aim was to train aspiring young actors. The Academy has since grown and developed to meet the needs of the industry. Provision in all areas has been expanded and extended to older age groups and the Academy is currently one of the few UK institutions to embrace secondary, further and higher education. The Academy operates on two campuses in central and south west London.

The BA (Hons) in Acting programme has been submitted for RSCD approval and is based at the Avondale campus in Clapham North. This programme has been in operation since 1994 and is currently validated by the University of East London. The Academy has a total of 268 students enrolled, of which 81 are enrolled on the BA (Hons) in Acting.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programme:

### University of East London

- BA (Hons) Acting

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/RSCD.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/RSCD.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2707](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2707)

## **The provider's stated responsibilities**

The Collaborative Agreement sets out the responsibilities of the Academy, the university and shared areas. The Academy is responsible for marketing, recruitment, teaching and setting and marking of assessments, the provision of learning resources and the development and enhancement of the programme.

There is shared responsibility with the awarding body for programme approval, modifications to the programme, admissions, responding to external examiner reports, annual monitoring, student complaints and student appeals.

## **Recent developments**

Major building work to improve student facilities at the Avondale site is continuing to provide new studio space and recording facilities. Two new members of the senior programme management team were appointed in the academic year 2013-14 and a new external examiner has recently been appointed.

## **Students' contribution to the review**

Students studying on the higher education programme were invited to present a submission to the review team. Students prepared, on their own initiative, both a written submission and an informative film of student views on the programme and campus. A selection of students met reviewers during the review visit and the coordinator at the preparatory meeting.

## Detailed findings about The Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts Ltd

### 1 Academic standards

#### How effectively does the Academy fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards?

1.1 The Academy has an effective approach to fulfilling its responsibilities for the management of academic standards. There is a well-considered and robust system for quality assurance which is overseen by the Academy Quality Review Board (AQB). The Academy Principal is Chair of the AQB and the BA Acting programme is represented by the Head of Programme.

1.2 The BA Acting Programme Quality Board (PQB) reports matters of academic standards to the AQB. This committee meets three times per year to review and report on all aspects of delivery. It has delegated authority from the AQB to act on its behalf on all day-to-day matters of standards management. For example, the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is prepared annually by the PQB and reported to the AQB. The Board also prepares an annual report for the benefit of the University and Drama UK. The PQB is chaired by the Head of Programme and the University Link Tutor attends. The Programme Board (PB), also chaired by the Head of Programme, has student membership and reports to the PQB. The PB meets three times per year. Students are satisfied with their involvement in its proceedings.

1.3 The well-prepared and maintained PQM contains a comprehensive set of policies and processes and is used appropriately to assure the management of academic standards and quality of learning opportunities. For example, the Academy has a policy of forbidding the photographing of young students on some of its courses. The programme team have adapted this policy to allow this for their students as portrait photographs are necessary as publicity material for agencies. Also, the PQM sets out clear aims and objectives for programme design and management and is effectively mapped to the requirements of the relevant external organisations. The PQM is effectively communicated to staff and students through a variety of mechanisms including comprehensive staff and student handbooks.

1.4 The PQM takes comprehensive and detailed cognisance of all appropriate external reference points and makes a significant contribution to the management of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. The way in which it informs and enhances staff practice is **good practice**.

1.5 Quality assurance of assessment practice is robust. For example, there is an appropriate assessment strategy detailed in the PQM. This sets out guidelines for measuring student achievement, and is subject to annual external scrutiny through an external examining process. Appointment of external examiners is carried out in compliance with University regulations. The Academy sends nominations for potential external examiners to the University who are then responsible for the ratification and appointment process.

1.6 The programme team operates a robust process for annual monitoring and review. There is compliance of practice with University requirements. This is evaluated and overseen by the University through the Review and Enhancement Process Report (REP) prepared and approved by the programme team. There is also an appropriate process for periodic programme validation. The relationship with the University is supported through an effective and well respected regular liaison between staff in both institutions, a dedicated University administrator and the Link Tutor.

1.7 Marking for students in Year 1 is moderated through staff meetings at which comparative marking also contributes to assurance and consistency of practice. Sample second marking and joint moderating is introduced in Year 2 and developed further in Year 3, where all performance aspects are double marked by staff not involved in teaching at this stage. The external examiner also receives sample marked and graded written assignments and occasionally samples performance assessments.

1.8 Marking and moderation are systematically reported on mark sheets. However, there are no accompanying explanatory or discussion notes. The Academy is aware of this and plans to make appropriate changes. It is **advisable** for the Academy to formalise the internal moderation process by recording discussions that take place in arriving at agreed student marks.

### **How effectively does the Academy make use of external reference points to manage academic standards?**

1.9 The Academy works in an effective and constructive manner with an appropriate range of external reference points to ensure academic standards. For example, overall design of the programme is aligned with the precepts and exemplars for levels 4-6 of the FHEQ and for the relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. This alignment is subject to periodic validation by the University.

1.10 The precepts and guidelines of the Quality Code are used constructively and effectively by the programme team to support the management of academic standards and quality of learning opportunities. This is manifested through the way in which the comprehensive Programme Quality Manual is designed and mapped to the Quality Code and also in the way this is used in the annual reporting process with the University.

1.11 The Academy supplements its understanding of the Quality Code with a strong working knowledge of the guidance contained in the Drama UK Hallmarks of Conservatoire Training. This sets out standards expected of all conservatoire centres in the UK. Additionally, the programme team maps its documentation and practice to the appropriate academic regulations of the University.

### **How does the Academy use external moderation, verification or examining to assure academic standards?**

1.12 There is effective practice to ensure externality in assessment. For example, there is an appropriate external examining process in place. The external examiner is appointed by the University which provides moderation of assessment assignments and evaluation of student performance through sampling assignment scripts and approval of final marks. The examiner is also responsible for observing and commenting on performance aspects of the programme.

1.13 The examiner produces an annual report which is submitted initially to the University. This is then sent to the Academy for scrutiny by the Head of Programme and Heads of Department. Key points from this report requiring attention are discussed at team meetings and responses denoting action are incorporated in appropriate annual reports and the QIP. However, there is no systematic evaluation or discussion of the overall report at meetings of the programme team or at the PQB. It is **advisable** for the Academy to ensure that external examiner reports are formally discussed in team meetings.

1.14 The BA Acting programme team fulfils its responsibilities with respect to the management of academic standards in an appropriate and effective manner. The prospects for academic standards and quality being maintained at current levels are sound. A

comprehensive set of policies and guidance is contained in a well constructed quality manual, supported by staff and student handbooks. The Academy has rigorous mechanisms for the management of the higher education programme in accordance with the requirements of the awarding body. For example, programme design and delivery is aligned to the appropriate academic regulations for the awarding body.

The review team has **confidence** in the provider's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the programme it offers on behalf of its awarding body.

## 2 Quality of learning opportunities

### **How effectively does the Academy fulfil its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities?**

2.1 The Academy has an effective role in the management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities for the programme. This is achieved in parallel with the management of academic standards and follows a similar process to that outlined in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.4.

### **How effectively does the Academy make use of external reference points to manage and enhance learning opportunities?**

2.2 The programme team has strong engagement with a number of appropriate external reference points including the Quality Code, University of East London Academic Regulations and the Hallmarks of Drama UK as outlined in paragraphs 1.9 to 1.11. The Head of Programme attends the Principal's Forum organised by Drama UK and effectively disseminates information to colleagues.

2.3 There is extensive consultation with employers and other stakeholders with regard to the design and delivery of the programme, particularly in ensuring the curriculum is appropriate for the profession's employability needs. For example, there are regular informal discussions with visiting agents and part-time lecturing staff who are industry practitioners.

2.4 Agents note particular strengths of the programme are that graduates are readily employable in terms of technical and professional skills and that the performance opportunities are diverse and well selected. The way in which extensive engagement with external stakeholders supports the development of professional skills and enhances student employability is **good practice**.

### **How does the Academy assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?**

2.5 A number of effective mechanisms are used to inform the maintenance and enhancement of teaching and learning, for example, staff and student forums, student representation on the PB and extensive feedback from alumni. Students also contribute to the quality of the learning experience through termly module evaluations, end of year meetings, informal reflection sessions and through student representatives.

2.6 There are significant curriculum opportunities for students to work flexibly and independently. For example, projects and competitions, workshops, guest sessions, and the practical dissertation performance week. An effective range of transferable skills is developed throughout the curriculum, including communication, entrepreneurship, business skills, career planning and creative skills.

2.7 Learning opportunities are designed flexibly around cohort size and diversity and integrate into a coherent programme that supports student holistic progression and development. Students express confidence in the range and quality of the learning opportunities and commend the quality of teaching practice. The external examiner has commended elements of best practice and notes that all students appear to be empowered by the opportunities afforded by the curriculum. The very effective balance between theoretical and practical learning opportunities affords a coherent programme that supports student confidence and learning and is **good practice**.

2.8 Assessment practice is robust, fair and demonstrates appropriate variety. The quality manual defines an assessment strategy that effectively measures student achievement, that is subject to external scrutiny annually, that considers questions of externality in its marking practice and that enables student engagement. Key assessment information for students and staff is effectively covered in the student and staff handbooks.

2.9 A thorough formative feedback process underpins the teaching and learning process. This is provided in both oral and written formats, within class and in panel tutorials at the end of each teaching block. The panel tutorial approach allows integrated commentary from teaching staff. Formative feedback is further strengthened through an effective Cause for Concern procedure. This provides a clear statement of necessary improvements and facilitates additional tutorial sessions. Students consider this to be a constructive and developmental process. The panel tutorial and Cause for Concern aspects of the thorough and continuous formative assessment feedback process underpins and enhances student learning and is **good practice**.

### **How does the Academy assure itself that students are supported effectively?**

2.10 Students report that support is highly enabling, easily accessible and multidimensional. They consider staff to be open and encouraging and responsive to any concerns they may have.

2.11 The student voice is supported through a robust student representative process and informal discussions with staff. Students report that the process works well with issues raised tracked thoroughly and effectively communicated.

2.12 Effective support is also available from alumni through the alumni society and regular liaison between former students and undergraduates in all years. This effective process leads to significant confidence building in current students. The strong and proactive alumni network which enriches support for students and raises aspirations is **good practice**.

2.13 A pilot virtual learning environment (VLE) is being developed to support student learning through an online facility for disseminating teaching materials. Students welcome this initiative and it would be **desirable** for the Academy to continue the development of the VLE to provide a centralised resource for teaching and learning.

2.14 There is also a strong peer mentoring process in place involving senior students interacting with less experienced ones in a mutually beneficial mentoring role. This adds considerably to the overall support process. The way in which new students are effectively mentored by experienced students throughout their studies is **good practice**.



### **How effectively does the Academy develop its staff in order to improve student learning opportunities?**

2.15 There is a diverse range of core teaching staff who are largely professional practitioners from within the industry. Freelance practitioners are employed to facilitate the development of wider aspects of skills acquisition. There is shared teaching across modules to ensure a holistic and coherent provision.

2.16 There is an appropriate staff development policy and comprehensive Staff Manual. Staff development is broadly defined within the policy and outlines opportunities for Academy funded, self-initiated and self-funded activities. There are also opportunities for sabbatical appointments to pursue outside engagements. Staff development sessions include informal discussions and an annual staff forum. Records of staff development activities are not kept in a sufficiently detailed way and it would be **desirable** for the Academy to systematically plan and record staff development activities

2.17 New staff are effectively supported through an induction checklist, briefings and the staff handbook. These staff are observed and supported routinely by the Head of Department and mentored closely by experienced staff.

2.18 A teaching-based appraisal system is being implemented which will allow for staff development needs to be further considered. Peer observation forms an important element of this.

2.19 Overall, staff development is very active in the area of professional practice. Guides for good practice in learning, teaching and assessment exist. However, staff engagement with good practice in learning and teaching theory and scholarship is less well developed. It would be **desirable** for the Academy to develop a programme of pedagogical staff development to enhance teaching practice.

### **How effectively does the Academy ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes?**

2.20 Learning resources are sufficient and are accessible to students. They include a small library, computing facilities, and teaching and performance spaces. These are evaluated and kept industry relevant through regular practitioner and alumni feedback, together with teaching staff's own knowledge. This is reviewed regularly by the programme board and enhancement plans are included in the REP and QIP.

2.21 Students are encouraged to develop their own resources as an integral part of their Contextual Studies modules. They also have access to facilities at the University and at Westminster Reference Library with online subscriptions available for their programme. Students can borrow props and costumes free of charge for a refundable deposit.

2.22 The BA Acting programme team effectively fulfils its responsibilities with respect to the management of the quality of learning opportunities. The prospects for the quality of learning opportunities being maintained at current levels are sound. Teaching and learning practice is robust and well received by students. The Academy has rigorous mechanisms for the management of the quality of the learning opportunities in accordance with the requirements of the awarding body. There are strong mentoring processes involving alumni and senior students, an effective formative assessment feedback practice and a curriculum that balances theory with practice.

The review team has **confidence** that the provider is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the intended learning opportunities it provides for students.

### 3 Information about learning opportunities

#### How effectively does the Academy communicate information about learning opportunities to students and other stakeholders?

3.1 The Academy has effective practices in place to ensure communication of information to students and stakeholders. The programme team is responsible for the production, updating and communication of comprehensive information in line with their delegated responsibilities under the collaborative agreement. The information supplied includes starter packs, a student handbook, schedules, study materials, a 'Grad Book' for final year students and a good range of online information through social media, the website and the pilot VLE. This is supplemented by information from Drama UK.

3.2 Students are very positive about their access to information, and are able to absorb rapid changes using social media. The student handbook represents the central source of information about the programme and provides a full description of what students will study. It is reviewed annually by the programme board.

3.3 Students provide feedback on the documentation provided about the programme through the student representatives and note that the Handbook provides a regular and reliable stream of quality information.

#### How effective are the Academy's arrangements for assuring that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy?

3.4 Routine operational information is managed through the administration office, with the physical and virtual noticeboards as the central information source. The media in which information provided is under review as there is currently a significant reliance on print format. Appropriate work is underway to provide better access to students with dyslexia.

3.5 Students may access a range of other documents upon request such as the quality manual, enhancement documents, external examiners' reports and the quality assurance manual. The programme team acknowledge that these items are rarely accessed and intend to supply them more specifically to students through the Programme Board and student representatives. The review team noted that students do not receive open access to external examiner reports as advised by the Quality Code. It is **advisable** for the Academy to make available external examiner reports in full to all students.

3.6 As a collaborative partner, the Academy has responsibility for the inclusion of the provision with appropriate brand logos and specific information about the University relationship in programme documentation. Externally published information requires the approval of the Senior Management Team of the Academy and UEL.

3.7 There is a media team within the programme team with responsibility for information published through digital media. This team is charged with responsibility for social media and the review of online information posted about the programme by third parties. In addition to the web presence on the Academy site there is a separate website for the programme which provides a clear identity for the provision

3.8 Programme documentation is subject to annual review and approval by the Programme Quality Board if significant changes are required. UEL approval is required for structure or design changes. Student representatives are asked to contribute to revisions and to comment on quality assurance processes such as the self-evaluation for Drama UK.

3.9 The administration office controls the flow of information. Version control is maintained through a shared drive overseen by the administration office. However, there is a need for a more defined system and it would be **desirable** for the Academy to introduce a formal system of version control for all documentation.

3.10 The Academy effectively prepares and communicates information about the provision through its hard copy and online information and has mechanisms in place for assuring that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of published information is shared with the University. The programme team manage all information and centralise the information through the programme coordinator in the administration office.

The team concludes that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

## Action plan<sup>3</sup>

The Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts action plan relating to the Review of Specific Course Designation October 2014						
Good practice	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The review team identified the following areas of <b>good practice</b> that are worthy of wider dissemination within the Academy:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>staff practice is informed and enhanced through the detailed and comprehensive Programme Quality Manual (PQM) (paragraph 1.4)</li> </ul>	<p>All staff and students have access to the PQM</p> <p>Sessions exist to demystify and embed the use of the manual in programme management and development processes</p>	<p>Upload the PQM as a resource on the online support website</p> <p>New staff to be directed to the PQM within induction processes</p> <p>Student representatives meeting to consider annually the student perspective on the manual</p> <p>PQM to be reviewed annually through documentary review process</p>	<p>December 2014</p> <p>April 2015</p> <p>August 2015</p> <p>August 2015</p>	<p>Head of Studies (HoS)</p> <p>Heads of Department (HoDs)</p> <p>HoS Student representatives</p> <p>PQB</p>	<p>PB (Programme Board)</p> <p>Programme Quality Board (PQB)</p> <p>PB PQB</p> <p>Academy Quality Board (AQB)</p>	<p>Website content</p> <p>Induction checklist</p> <p>PQB notes</p> <p>Student representatives meeting notes</p> <p>PQB notes</p> <p>PQB notes</p> <p>AQB notes</p>

<sup>3</sup> The Academy has been required to develop this action plan to follow up on good practice and address any recommendations arising from the review. QAA monitors progress against the action plan, in conjunction with the Academy's awarding body.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extensive engagement with external stakeholders supports the development of professional skills and enhances student employability (paragraph 2.4)</li> </ul>	<p>Opportunities for stakeholders and external professional guest lecturers to offer input and feedback are maximised</p>	<p>Develop a system of capturing external feedback that can be formally and regularly reviewed</p> <p>External feedback to be gathered, reported and considered annually</p> <p>Capture student (and graduate from time to time) perspectives to inform enhancement</p>	<p>June 2015</p> <p>August 2015</p> <p>August 2015</p>	<p>HoS</p> <p>Head of Programme (HoP) HoS</p> <p>HoS HoP</p>	<p>PQB</p> <p>PQB AQB</p> <p>PB PQB</p>	<p>Stakeholder feedback samples</p> <p>Annual Report PQB notes AQB notes</p> <p>PB notes PQB notes Student feedback data</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the balance between theoretical and practical learning opportunities affords a coherent programme that supports student confidence and learning (paragraph 2.7)</li> </ul>	<p>Opportunities for integrated learning between theory and practice are fully developed, and allow for students' individual learning and development patterns</p>	<p>Identify further areas in practical projects where theory can augment practice, and vice versa</p> <p>Consider whether optional components might be possible to integrate within the programme structure to support students development into non core (theoretical) areas according to individual learning plans</p>	<p>July 2015</p> <p>December 2015 (nb according to the restructuring timetable and policies set by UEL)</p>	<p>HoS</p> <p>HoP UEL Academic Link</p>	<p>PQB</p> <p>PQB AQB UEL</p>	<p>Student work PQB</p> <p>PQB notes AQB notes Programme documentation</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the thorough and continuous formative assessment feedback process</li> </ul>	<p>Assessment practice is continuously monitored and reviewed for clarity, effectiveness and consistency; and considers the student</p>	<p>Streamline current assessment feedback sheets for concision and clarity</p>	<p>April 2015</p>	<p>HoS</p>	<p>PQB</p>	<p>Sample feedback sheets</p>

underpins and enhances student learning (paragraph 2.9)	experience of it within the process	Student representatives meeting to be convened with the brief to consider the assessment feedback process in specific detail	April 2015	HoS Student representatives	PQB	Student representatives meeting notes PQB notes
		Department assessment meetings to consider staff practice on a termly basis, within revised assessment group mark sheets	April 2015	HoDs	PQB	Assessment group mark sheets comments PQB notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the strong and proactive alumni network enriches support for students and raises aspirations (paragraph 2.12)</li> </ul>	Opportunities for alumni input and feedback are maximised on both a formal and informal student-facing basis	Implement a regular schedule of alumni events for student body	June 2015	Programme Coordinator HoS	PB	Events schedule
		Student representatives to identify areas of particular interest	June 2015	HoS Student representatives	PQB	Student representatives meeting notes PQB notes PQB notes AQB notes
		Identify and recruit an alumni panel to contribute to programme development discussions	August 2015	HoP HoS	PQB AQB	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>new students are effectively mentored by existing students throughout their studies (paragraph 2.14).</li> </ul>	Student mentors within the programme continue to provide an effective support network for new students	Discuss with student representatives where this arrangement might be further developed	July 2015	HoS Student representatives	PB	Student representatives meeting notes PB notes

Advisable	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The team considers that it is <b>advisable</b> for the Academy to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>formalise the internal moderation process by recording discussions that take place in arriving at agreed student marks (paragraph 1.8)</li> </ul>	Assessment meeting discussion is recorded more formally within the meeting practice	<p>Redesign assessment group mark sheets to include commentary on individual student marks, moderation as necessary and staff marking practice within modules</p> <p>Establish a termly mini-assessment board to consider student performance, moderation and marking practice across all modules</p>	<p>April 2015</p> <p>April 2015</p>	<p>HoS HoP</p> <p>HoP</p>	<p>Mini-assessment board PQB</p> <p>Mini-assessment board PQB</p>	<p>Mini-assessment board notes PQB notes Assessment sheets</p> <p>Mini-assessment board notes PQB notes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that external examiners' report is formally discussed in team meetings (paragraph 1.13)</li> </ul>	External examiners' report is formally received and considered by PQB and relevant findings are rolled out as necessary	<p>Schedule an additional PQB session on receipt of the external examiners' report and record discussion and matters arising</p> <p>Schedule a specific student representatives meeting annually to make students formally aware of the report and matters arising from it and gather their perspectives</p>	<p>August 2015</p> <p>September 2015</p>	<p>HoP</p> <p>HoS Student representatives</p>	<p>PQB</p> <p>PB PQB</p>	<p>PQB notes Response to external examiners' report</p> <p>Student representatives meeting notes PB notes PQB notes</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>make available external examiners' report in full to all students (paragraph 3.5).</li> </ul>	<p>External examiners' report is made fully available to all students</p>	<p>Upload external examiners' report to online support website and circulate access route</p> <p>Schedule student meetings (subsequent to the representatives meeting), to confirm availability of report, allow the representatives to formally report to the student body, discuss and feed forward comments to the Programme Board</p>	<p>December 2014</p> <p>January 2015</p>	<p>HoS</p> <p>HoS Student representatives</p>	<p>PQB</p> <p>PB</p>	<p>PQB notes</p> <p>Student representatives meeting notes PB notes</p>
<p><b>Desirable</b></p>	<p><b>Intended outcomes</b></p>	<p><b>Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes</b></p>	<p><b>Target date/s</b></p>	<p><b>Action by</b></p>	<p><b>Reported to</b></p>	<p><b>Evaluation (process or evidence)</b></p>
<p>The team considers that it would be <b>desirable</b> for the Academy to:</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>continue the development of the virtual learning environment to provide a centralised resource for teaching and learning (paragraph 2.13)</li> </ul>	<p>Online support website provides learning support and resources which support the work of all modules within the programme</p>	<p>Consult student representatives as to student priorities for content</p> <p>Discuss with HoDs the development of suitable material</p> <p>Identify additional staff to manage and develop the resource</p>	<p>September 2015</p> <p>September 2015</p> <p>September 2015</p>	<p>HoS</p> <p>HoS</p> <p>HoP HoS</p>	<p>PQB</p> <p>PQB</p> <p>PQB</p>	<p>Student representatives meeting notes PQB notes Website content and material</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>systematically plan and record staff development activities (paragraph 2.16)</li> </ul>	<p>Staff development activities and continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities are identified, planned and recorded effectively</p>	<p>Appropriate opportunities and priorities to be identified with HoDs and staff</p>	August 2015	HoP	PQB	PQB notes
		<p>Consistent record keeping system to be devised and implemented</p>	August 2015	Programme coordinator	PQB	Staff Records
		<p>Appraisal methodology to be reviewed and a schedule to be implemented</p>	August 2015	HoP Programme coordinator	PQB	Sample Appraisals and schedule
		<p>Budget allocation for staff development to be discussed and allocated</p>	August 2015	HoP Principal	AQB PQB	PQB notes AQB notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a programme of pedagogical staff development to enhance teaching practice (paragraph 2.19)</li> </ul>	<p>Staff development allows for a more developed engagement with pedagogical practice</p>	<p>Additional internal staff development events to be identified, scheduled and made available to staff</p>	July 2015	HoP Programme coordinator	PQB	Event materials, notes from events, staff records
		<p>Access to UEL staff development events to be investigated where appropriate</p>	July 2015 (dependent on revalidation processes)	HoP Academic Link	PQB	PQB notes
		<p>Budget allocation for staff development to be discussed and allocated</p>	August 2015	HoP Principal	AQB PQB	PQB notes AQB notes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introduce a formal system of version control for all documentation (paragraph 3.9).</li> </ul>	<p>Documentation and information is reviewed according to a formal schedule and a single digital location is identified as the access point</p>	<p>Document review schedule and responsibilities to be identified, implemented and managed</p>	August 2015	Programme coordinator	PQB	Review schedule Information management meeting notes
		<p>Single shared folder to be established for all staff to access relevant documentation</p>	April 2015	Programme coordinator IT manager	PQB	Folder and contents
		<p>Software protection to be used to ensure read only privilege where necessary</p>	August 2015	IT manager	PQB	Format of content
		<p>Version reference numbers to be established and implemented</p>	August 2015	Programme coordinator	PQB	Documentation

## About QAA

QAA is the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. QAA's mission is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education.

QAA's aims are to:

- meet students' needs and be valued by them
- safeguard standards in an increasingly diverse UK and international context
- drive improvements in UK higher education
- improve public understanding of higher education standards and quality.

QAA conducts reviews of higher education institutions and publishes reports on the findings. QAA also publishes a range of guidance documents to help safeguard standards and improve quality.

More information about the work of QAA is available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk).

More detail about Review for Specific Course Designation can be found at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/RSCD.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/RSCD.aspx).

## Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary). Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [Review for Specific Course Designation: Handbook, May 2014](#).<sup>4</sup>

**academic quality** A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, higher education providers manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed.

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

**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).

**awarding organisation** An organisation authorised to award a particular qualification; an organisation recognised by Ofqual to award Ofqual-regulated qualifications.

**differentiated judgements** In a Review for Specific Course Designation, separate judgements respectively for the provision validated by separate awarding bodies.

**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 QAA's review processes.

**external examiner** An independent expert appointed by an institution to comment on student achievement in relation to established academic standards and to look at approaches to assessment.

**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*.

**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 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.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2707](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2707)

**operational definition** A formal definition of a term, which establishes 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.

**provider(s) (of higher education)** Organisations that deliver higher education. In the UK they may be a degree-awarding body or another organisation that offers programmes of higher education on behalf of degree-awarding bodies or awarding organisations. In the context of Review for Specific Course Designation the term means an independent college.

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

**quality** See **academic quality**.

**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. Internal reference points may be used by providers for purposes of self-regulation; external ones are used and accepted throughout the higher education community for the checking of standards and quality.

**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.

**threshold academic standards** 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 for Higher Education Qualifications** and **Subject Benchmark Statements**. See also **academic standards**.

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

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