



Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of Court Theatre Training Company Ltd

November 2017

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About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Court Theatre Training Company Ltd. The review took place from 28 to 30 November 2017 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Mrs Amanda Greason
- Mr Paul Taylor.

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provision and to make judgements as to whether or not 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 (Alternative Providers) 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
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#)² and explains the method for [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).³ 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/quality-code.

² QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk.

³ Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers): www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education.

Key findings

Judgements

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the degree-awarding body **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**.

- The 'buddy system' promotes effective student induction and provides continuing support and development for both participants over the duration of the programme (Expectation B4).
- The range of professional experience and currency of staff which helps students develop essential industry competencies (Expectation B4).
- The mission-led immersion in a working theatre environment and the programme of enhancement activities which together promote employability (Enhancement).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations**.

By May 2018:

- articulate and make available the process by which students can initiate a complaint at CTTC (Expectation B9).

By July 2018:

- clarify and publish for students, the role and status of the non-assessed modules in the context of the validated programme (Expectations B1 and C)
- strengthen the approach to module and course evaluation to enable effective and systematic monitoring of CTTC provision (Expectation B8).

About the provider

The Court Theatre Training Company Ltd (CTTC) is a drama school based at the Courtyard Theatre in the Shoreditch area of London. Its mission statement is 'train for a life in the theatre by working in the theatre' and it aims to offer vocational training through an undergraduate degree which has a performance bias and is located in a professional working environment. The Courtyard has a 130-seat theatre, a studio, and rehearsal space. It offers a full programme of productions and musical events by visiting professional companies and musical artists.

CTTC offers only one programme, a two-year accelerated BA (Hons) in Acting. Since 2014 the programme has been validated by Buckinghamshire New University (the University). Recruitment has been between 16 and 20 students per cohort though for 2017 entry 29 students were enrolled. A new Principal was appointed in July 2017 following the retirement of his predecessor. The Principal is also the Artistic Director of The Courtyard Theatre and now the owner of the CTTC business. As well as the Principal, CTTC has four full-time staff in managerial and administrative roles. Most teaching staff are part-time and employed to deliver specific elements of the programme. CTTC has an Advisory Board composed of external appointees to provide strategic advice.

CTTC underwent a QAA Review for Specific Course Designation (RSCD) in March 2014 and an annual monitoring visit in March 2016. The 2014 report identified three features of good practice and made four desirable recommendations. The 2016 review found acceptable progress had been made in continuing to monitor, evaluate and enhance higher education provision in relation to the 2014 Action Plan. CTTC reports that progress in building on the good practice features identified and working further on the recommendations and comments in both reports is captured in its action plan.

CTTC notes key challenges around levels of staffing and staff development, increasing recruitment, ensuring adequate student support, and student concerns about marking of, and feedback on, assessments.

A Lead Student Representative, supported by Company Managers (the term used at CTTC for student representatives) provided a student submission.

Explanation of findings

This section explains the review findings in greater detail.

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

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

a) ensure that the requirements of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)* 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 Buckingham New University approved CTTC as a partner in 2014 when it was also validated to deliver the BA (Hons) Acting programme in accelerated mode over two years. The first cohort commenced the programme in 2014 and the first students graduated in 2016.

CTTC's delivery of the programme is governed by the University's policies and procedures as set out in the Operations Manual and the University's Academic Regulations. The University's validation process requires that approved programmes must address relevant external reference points including Subject Benchmark Statements, Section A of the Quality Code and University regulations. The Subject Benchmark Statements for Dance, Drama and Performance 2015 were used in the approval of the BA (Hons) Acting.

1.2 Because CTTC does not have degree awarding powers it is not responsible for the setting of standards. However, alignment with the University requirement to maintain standards would allow it to meet the Expectation.

1.3 The team tested the Expectation by examining documentation including the partnership agreement, the University's programme approval procedures, the validation report for BA (Hons) Acting, the Operations Manual and a range of committee minutes. It also met with CCTC staff and University representatives.

1.4 The programme learning outcomes, as set out in the programme specification, demonstrate alignment with the FHEQ. Module learning outcomes require students to meet the relevant academic standard at each level. The University's validation report confirms that the programme is aligned with external reference points including the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Statements. University assessment boards make awards to students who have demonstrated that they have met the learning outcomes.

1.5 CTTC's recently revised committee structure enables oversight of academic standards. Academic and Quality Committee (AQC), one of three key committees reporting to the CTTC Management Committee (the others are Staff Committee and the Student-Staff Committee) has overall responsibility for academic standards. Assessment boards are convened and chaired by the University.

1.6 The review team concludes that CTTC's academic awards are positioned at the appropriate level of the FHEQ. On this basis, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the 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

1.7 Academic standards on the BA (Hons) Acting are maintained through the application of the University's academic frameworks and regulations. Students have access to the University's regulations via links in the programme handbook.

1.8 The University exercises oversight of CTTC's application of its Academic Assessment Regulations through various means including assessment boards and the role of the Lead Partnership Tutor who produces regular reports. The external examiner is asked to confirm that there is adherence to the regulations and that academic standards are being maintained.

1.9 The use of the University's Academic Assessment Regulations would enable CTTC to meet the Expectation.

1.10 The team tested the Expectation by examining documentation including the University's Academic Assessment Regulations, the programme handbook, Partnership Tutor reports, external examiner reports and minutes of assessment boards. The team also met with staff from CTTC and University representatives.

1.11 CTTC effectively applies the University's Academic Assessment Regulations in the delivery and assessment of the programme. The University exercises oversight of academic standards through regular meetings between the University Lead Partnership Tutor and the CTTC Head of Acting, through the moderation of assessed work by the Partnership Tutor, and at assessment boards. CTTC committees are attentive to the requirement of meeting the University's academic frameworks and regulations. Students are well informed about the regulations governing their programme and staff apply the regulations competently.

1.12 CTTC use the Academic Assessment Regulations of the University which are well understood by staff and students. Oversight is maintained through the committee system. The review team concludes that CTTC exercises its responsibilities for the implementation of the University's academic regulations. Accordingly, the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.13 CTTC maintains definitive records for the BA (Hons) Acting programme, which consist of the programme specification, module descriptors, the programme handbook and the course prospectus. These provide students with relevant information including programme and module learning outcomes, assessment requirements and links to the University's Academic Assessment Regulations. Students are provided with the handbook at induction and have access to the programme specification on the University's website.

1.14 The College follows the University's process to produce the programme specification, which clearly outlines the required information for students. The programme information is regularly reviewed and can be updated annually by CTTC using the University's formal procedures. This would enable this Expectation to be met

1.15 The team tested this Expectation through the examination of a wide range of documentation including the programme handbook, the programme specification, module descriptors and the prospectus. It also met with CTTC and University staff and CTTC students.

1.16 The College uses the University's template for programme specifications in line with published guidance. Students may access the programme specification via the University website. The programme specification is subject to annual review and revisions can be suggested by both the University and CTTC. The University's Course Amendment Procedures require a submission to the University Course Amendment Committee to seek approval for revisions to the programme specification. Since initial validation, the only change has involved the addition of an exit award.

1.17 CTTC follows University procedures for the production and amendment of programme specifications. Therefore, the Expectation is met and the 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

1.18 Responsibilities for the approval of the CCTC programme reside with the University as the awarding body. Any changes to the programme are subject to consideration and approval by the University. Design and approval of the programme is overseen by the University's Academic Planning Committee and follows University approval processes. CCTC works to the Operations Manual provided by the University, which provides clear descriptions of responsibilities within the partnership. As noted in Section A2.2, the University's Partnership Tutor works with CCTC to discuss any proposed changes.

1.19 Given that the sole responsibility for the approval of programmes lies with the University, the Expectation can be met.

1.20 The team tested the Expectation through the examination of a range of documentation including the University's approval processes and the report of the approval and validation of CCTC's programme. It also met with staff from CCTC, the University and students.

1.21 There is a close working relationship between CCTC and the University that is framed by the Operations Manual and is considered effective by staff from both institutions. This enables a clear understanding of how CCTC should work with the University, both informally and formally, to ensure that the academic standards of the programme are maintained. A Partnership Manager, previously employed at the University, has recently been appointed at CCTC to further build on the working relationship.

1.22 The team concludes that the Expectation is met and the risk level is low because the sole responsibility for approval of the programme lies with the University and CCTC staff have a clear understanding of the processes involved to approve and develop the programme.

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

1.23 The programme is designed with learning outcomes at programme and module level. Assessments are designed to enable students to meet these learning outcomes. Design of learning outcomes, assessment and approval of modules are all overseen by the University. Assessments are subject to internal CTTC moderation, further moderation by the University and oversight by a University appointed external examiner. The external examiner's report confirms the rigour of the assessments in comparison to other similar programmes in the sector. A University assessment board, attended by the CTTC Director of Studies, ratifies final marks. Any reassessments for failed work are decided by the University assessment board, following University regulations.

1.24 The University's sole responsibility for the award of credit enables the Expectation to be met.

1.25 The team tested the Expectation through the examination of a range of documentation including the University's Academic Assessment Regulations, samples of assessment briefs and minutes of the assessment board. It also met with staff from CCTC and the University, and students.

1.26 The programme's assessment strategy was explored and approved through the University validation process to ensure that assessment enables appropriate award of credit for achievement of learning outcomes. Module descriptors include information on the assessment strategy (formative and summative) for each module and are approved by the University. Assessments for modules include theory and practical elements to address the philosophy of the course.

1.27 Assessment briefs are used to provide additional detail about individual assessments. These are checked by the University and seen by the external examiner if they have been amended since the previous delivery. They are also used to help students understand the expectations of the assessment and to help tutors with consistency of marking.

1.28 Assessments are subject to moderation internally at CTTC and are subject to the University's moderation process. Moderation is recorded on the University's Assessment Approval Form, which also records the external examiner's verification of the assessment meeting the standards required to award credit.

1.29 The team considers the Expectation to be met with a low level of risk because overall responsibility for ensuring qualifications are awarded appropriately lies with the University and because CTTC staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the University's assessment processes.

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

1.30 The programme was approved by the University for six years and is due for re-approval in 2019-20. It is subject to the University's process of monitoring and review and oversight by a University appointed external examiner. An annual evaluation of the programme, including a developmental action plan is undertaken. CTTC is also subject to annual monitoring by QAA. CTTC introduced an Annual Monitoring and Review Meeting in October 2017. This involves all programme staff and seeks to review all aspects of the programme, including a review of minutes from assessment boards. These various review processes involve input from a range of stakeholders and enable confirmation that academic standards are being maintained.

1.31 CTTC's required use of the University's annual monitoring and periodic review processes would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.32 The team tested this Expectation through scrutiny of a wide range of documentation including the University's processes for Annual Monitoring and Approval of Academic Provision, and CTTC Programme Review and Enhancement Reports. It also met with University and CTTC staff, and students.

1.33 An annual Programme Review and Enhancement Report is completed using a University template. This requires evaluation of data on student progression, completion and achievement and reflection on external examiner reports. The Programme Review and Enhancement Report is considered at CTTC's Annual Monitoring and Review Meeting. The team heard that more regular review of the programme was now being undertaken by the recently established Academic and Quality Committee (AQC) which had been formed to separate oversight of quality and academic development and more operational staff meetings, held under the aegis of the Staff Committee. Under the revised arrangements, AQC, which reports to CTTC's Management Committee, meets three times an academic year and receives minutes from the Student-Staff Committee (SSC) as well as relevant issues from the Staff Committee. It also oversees receipt of, and response to, external examiner reports.

1.34 During 2017, CTTC introduced a Quality Improvement Plan, a live document that will be regularly revisited to monitor and review the programme to ensure continuing improvements. The team was also told that the Principal has instigated an ongoing audit to ensure that processes for the management of academic standards and quality are fit for purpose. Revisions to the committee structure comprise an initial outcome. Module evaluation is also due for review (see Section B8).

1.35 Overall responsibility for programme monitoring and review lies with the University and CTTC operates internal processes that align with University requirements. The Expectation is accordingly met and the 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

1.36 The University's processes for programme design and approval, monitoring and review, which CTTC is obliged to follow, have been designed to provide for external expertise in the maintenance of academic standards. The University is responsible for the appointment of external examiners, who are nominated by CTTC. The external examiner provides an annual report confirming that the academic standards are appropriately set and maintained. AQC oversees CTTC's response.

1.37 CTTC is required to implement University processes, which have been designed to ensure relevant levels of externality in the maintenance of academic standards. This would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.38 The team tested this Expectation through the examination of a range of documentation including the University policies for programme design, development and approval, monitoring and review, and external examiners' reports, and the validation report for the BA (Hons) Acting. It also met with University and CCTC staff and students.

1.39 The University is responsible for appointing the external examiner. The external examiner sees assessment briefs prior to release to students to ensure they are set at the appropriate level, sees a sample of all assessed work and may visit CTTC to observe student performances. All practical assessments are filmed and the examiner receives a sample.

1.40 The external examiner report, completed on a University template, confirms that academic standards are appropriately maintained across set assessments and students' work. The programme team's response to the report and any emerging actions, is overseen by AQC, which is also responsible for disseminating the report.

1.41 Overall responsibility for ensuring externality in setting and maintaining academic standards lies with the University and CTTC aligns with University requirements. The Expectation is therefore met and the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

1.42 In reaching its judgement about the maintenance of academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.43 CTTC effectively uses the processes of its awarding body, Buckinghamshire New University, in ensuring that academic standards are maintained in line with the relevant level of the FHEQ and external reference points. CTTC's developing internal processes, including monitoring procedures, also contribute to the maintenance of standards. There are appropriate opportunities for the use of external expertise within these processes.

1.44 Of the seven Expectations in this judgement area, all are met, with the associated level of risk for each identified as low. There are no examples of good practice, recommendations or affirmations associated with this judgement area.

1.45 As all Expectations in this area are met and the associated risks are low, the review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies at the provider **meets** UK expectations.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

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

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

Findings

2.1 CTTC used the University's programme approval process for the validation of BA (Hons) Acting. It does not have its own approval process. The programme was designed jointly with University staff, following University procedures. Any amendments to the existing programme would be discussed internally at CTTC and with the Advisory Board, made up of external members drawn from the professions and academia. The proposal would then be discussed informally with University staff prior to entering formal processes. CTTC has no current plans for further programmes but is exploring the possibility of providing postgraduate provision in the future.

2.2 CTTC's adherence to the University's procedures for the design, development and approval of programmes would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.3 The team tested this Expectation by scrutinising documentation regarding the University's programme approval processes and the validation report of the BA (Hons) Acting. CTTC's student-facing documentation was also considered and the team met with University and CCTC staff and students.

2.4 CTTC and University subject staff collaborated closely on the development and design of the BA (Hons) Acting. The programme is clearly articulated in the programme specification and in the programme handbook provided to students. The review team was told that CTTC aspires to develop new programmes over the next two years and that any new initiatives would follow University procedures.

2.5 CTTC's Advisory Board with its membership drawn from relevant professions and academia, meets twice a year and liaises with the Management Committee. The team heard that it brings independent and external expertise, which can help guide programme development.

2.6 CTTC staff have a clear understanding how to make amendments to the programme although no major changes are currently planned. The review team heard that any significant amendment would be discussed with staff at key committees and with the Advisory Board, prior to discussion with University subject staff.

2.7 The review team learned that, in addition to the approved programme and modules, CTTC delivers what are badged as 'non-assessed' modules in areas such as 'Improvisation', 'Singing' and 'Movement'. The non-assessed modules are not mentioned in either the programme specification or the programme handbook. There is reference to them on the CTTC website but without mention of their number, relevance and coverage. University staff stated that they were aware of the non-assessed modules at the time of approval, but the validation report made no mention of them because they were understood to be additional to and separable from the validated programme. However, the modules are all timetabled and students are made aware of them at induction when they receive their timetable.

2.8 CTTC staff offered various descriptions of the non-assessed modules stating that they covered key material for acting courses, and that they provided key learning skills to assist with students' employability. Teaching staff reported that they consider the non-assessed modules to have a positive impact on students' performance on assessed modules and students emphasised the value of their content in relation to their overall professional development. The review team heard different accounts as to whether the non-assessed modules are compulsory or non-compulsory.

2.9 The review team came to the view that the status of the modules is unclear in terms of their significance for the curriculum, whether or not students are required to undertake them, and how engagement with the modules is monitored. The situation is exacerbated by a lack of relevant published information (see Section C) and some staff uncertainty about the modules' relationship to the validated programme. It was evident that the modules have the capacity to enrich students' academic experience and develop their employability (see Section B4). However, given the lack of clarity among staff and potentially for students, the review team **recommends** that CTTC clarify and publish for students, the role and status of the non-assessed modules in the context of the validated programme.

2.10 CTTC use the University's procedures for programme design, development and approval. There is evidence of a close working relationship on the partnership enabling potential developments and amendments to be informally developed prior to formal approval or amendment. There is a lack of clarity around the non-assessed modules in the context of the validated programme. However, students would appear to benefit from the enrichment opportunities on offer. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the 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 to Higher Education

Findings

2.11 CTTC is responsible for recruitment activities in the context of the partnership with the University. It follows the University's Admissions Policy and Procedure, which is mapped against the relevant Expectation of the Quality Code. CTTC's admissions process, which aims to ensure transparency and inclusivity, is summarised for students in a flow chart. The approach includes a requirement for all students to undergo an audition to gauge their motivation and ability. Applicants must also attend an interview and produce an essay, designed to assess writing abilities. The University delegates responsibility for admissions decisions to CTTC but implements a quality check on all offers.

2.12 CTTC's implementation of the University's Admissions Policy and Procedure and its own delegated approach, as represented in the flow chart, would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.13 The team tested this Expectation by scrutinising documentation including the University's Admissions Policy and Procedure, the CTTC Admissions flow chart, samples of completed CTTC audition and interview pro formas, samples of completed student offer letters and consulted admissions records in student files. It also met with staff from CTTC and the University, and with students.

2.14 The University's Admissions Policy and Procedure is implemented carefully by CTTC whose website includes information on the admissions process, academic and English language qualifications, and fees.

2.15 The auditions, which are conducted by a panel of at least two CTTC academic and support staff, are conducted consistently using a pro forma to record outcomes. CTTC is confident that the audition enables it to effectively assess students' suitability for performance, their study intentions and their understanding of the demands of the programme. Current students participate by helping applicants to 'warm up' for their audition. Successful applicants are approved jointly by the Director of Studies and the Principal and, following a check on academic and English language qualifications, an offer letter is sent.

2.16 All applicants receive a comprehensive Student Welcome Pack which is updated annually. On arrival, they undergo an intensive student induction that aims to introduce them to a theatre environment, group collaborative work and stagecraft skills, as well as preparing them for academic work.

2.17 CTTC annually reviews its recruitment and admissions processes at its Annual Monitoring and Review Meeting where it also considers student feedback. Students stated that they find the admissions process to be wholly satisfactory.

2.18 CTTC effectively implements the University's Admissions Policy and Procedure and conducts its delegated responsibilities effectively. The audition and interview enable CTTC to ensure that students are clear about the nature and demands of the programme and suitable for the acting profession. CTTC takes care to admit students who are capable of

benefiting from the course of study on which they are embarking. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the 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

2.19 CTTC's learning and teaching strategy is articulated primarily within the programme specification and the programme handbook. There is an emphasis on self-knowledge, self-awareness and personal development. Learning is facilitated through a curriculum aimed at the provision of key skills at levels 4 and 5, with the addition of production process at level 6. The primary aim is to enable students to develop the advanced skills appropriate to being a professional actor, thus preparing them for employment in a range of roles across the profession. As noted in Section B1, a number of non-assessed modules are delivered alongside the validated programme.

2.20 CTTC's academic staff are drawn from the acting profession. The quality of teaching is monitored and assessed through a teaching observation process. The outcomes of this process feed into staff appraisal and provide for the identification of staff development needs.

2.21 The aims of the learning and teaching strategy, the professional background of academic staff, and the approach to developing the quality of teaching staff would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.22 The team tested this Expectation by considering documentation including the programme specification, the programme handbook, samples of students' individual learning plans (ILPs), staff CVs, and examples of completed teaching observation pro formas. It was also provided with a demonstration of the University's virtual learning environment (VLE) and CTTC's intranet. The team met with CTTC staff and students.

2.23 The learning and teaching strategy has been designed to help students develop skills they will need to demonstrate in performance-related employment settings. As well as lectures and seminars, students experience skills classes, workshops, rehearsals and actual performances. Group working is emphasised as is the ability for students to reflect on the development of their own abilities and their peers. All students are required to produce a reflective journal throughout the programme and this effectively underpins the reflective nature of learning. ILPs are jointly created by students and relevant staff to identify individual learning needs and targets. Learning delivered in whole classes is augmented with individual tutorials and there is a 'buddy' system whereby second-year students mentor first years (see Section B4). Students were very appreciative of approaches to teaching and learning and the tutors who facilitate this.

2.24 Learning and teaching is overseen by the Director of Studies who leads a team of well-qualified academic staff, the majority of whom are employed on a part-time basis. All CTTC staff delivering the programme are subject to University approval through the provision of a Partnership Approval Form submitted with a CV. Academic staff have extensive professional experience in various sectors of the industry and academic engagement, with many teaching at other higher education institutions. This helps provide students with the skills required of professional actors and related professional roles.

2.25 CTTC has recently revised its approach to peer observation in an attempt to more systematically identify potential enhancements and development needs, and to provide for the dissemination of good practice. All tutors now undergo annual observation undertaken by the Quality Manager using a newly-designed pro forma that identifies an agreed focus for the observation. Good practice is shared in Management Committee, at the Staff Committee, in the new monthly newsletter and at an annual staff development event. Outcomes from teaching observations are recorded in annual appraisals, which also capture individual development needs.

2.26 Student learning is enriched by study in a working theatre giving them access to a 130-seat capacity auditorium, a studio and a rehearsal space. Occasionally, CTTC is required to use external learning spaces when the theatre or rehearsal space is required for Courtyard Theatre's programme of productions and musical events. All external spaces are assessed for suitability. Students reported that the quality of external spaces varies but can enhance their overall experience. Students have access to a very small on-site library with hard copy texts. These augment the texts which students are required to purchase at the commencement of their programme and online resources at the University.

2.27 As noted in Section B1, the review team heard that non-assessed modules, covering areas such as ballet, singing and stage combat, enhance students' industry-related skills by developing their employability. CTTC staff stated that the modules enrich students' learning and certainly students were very appreciative of the additional opportunities. While the review team concluded that the modules' role and status could be more clearly explained to students and other stakeholders (see Sections B1 and C), their function in enriching students' learning experience is evident.

2.28 CTTC has an effective strategy for learning and teaching that meets stated aims of providing students with training required of performing actors. Students benefit from the professional experience of teaching staff and from learning in a working theatre environment. Peer observation feeds into staff appraisal and both enable the identification of staff development needs. The review team concludes therefore that the Expectation is met and the 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

2.29 CTTC's strategy for supporting its students centres on assuring their general welfare, providing an induction both to CTTC and to academic learning, providing a range of published information and by offering a system of academic and pastoral support. This is all supported by students developing ILPs. A 'buddy' system, which partners first and second-year students, aims to help orientate students to CTTC and the learning environment, as well as provide ongoing mentoring. Employability is a key aim of the support strategy.

2.30 CTTC's stated aims and approach with regard to student support and achievement would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.31 The review team tested this Expectation by scrutinising documentation including the CTTC website, the induction programme, examples of ILPs, the University Learning Partnership Agreement, and student progression and achievement data. It also met with CTTC staff and students.

2.32 There is an intensive induction process that focuses on orientation to CTTC, the academic demands of the programme and the learning and teaching strategy. Students also meet the University Partnership Tutor and a representative of the University Students' Union. During induction, students are acquainted with the buddy system that partners individual first years with second-year students. A compatibility questionnaire to support the process has been introduced in 2017. Students were very appreciative of the buddy system in acquainting them with CTTC's ethos and the programme's professional requirements. The review team concludes that the buddy system which promotes effective student induction and provides continuing support and development for both participants over the duration of the programme is **good practice**.

2.33 Academic and pastoral support is delivered through the formal personal tutor system and through an open-door policy whereby students are able to directly approach the Principal and the Director of Studies. The latter acts as personal tutor for all students, with the first tutorial taking place during induction. This enables the identification of any specific learning needs and strategies for addressing them. The ILP is used throughout a student's time at CTTC, and specifically in termly tutorials, to monitor and assess student progress.

2.34 Student progression and achievement is reviewed on a termly basis at Management Committee and Staff Committee. Retention is consistently high at 90 per cent in 2014-15, 96 per cent in 2015-16 and 92 per cent in 2016-17. All students achieved the award in 2015-16 with 10 per cent (1 student) achieving first class honours and the rest achieving a 2:1 classification. In 2016-17, 31 per cent (5 students) achieved first class honours with 56 per cent being awarded a 2:1 and 12.5 per cent achieving a 2:2. Employment levels are high with between 60 and 70 per cent of students being in full employment after completing the programme. Students routinely gain employment in settings that the programme has prepared them for, such as acting and theatre direction.

2.35 As noted in Section B3, students benefit both from the programme's situation in a working theatre, where various parties use the premises for rehearsals and performances, and from the majority of CTTC staff having extensive, and often current, professional

experience, including as theatre directors. This ensures that the curriculum reflects contemporary industry practice and that students acquire relevant skills that assist them in securing employment at the end of the programme. The review team considers the professional experience and currency of staff, which help students develop essential industry competencies, to be **good practice**.

2.36 CTTC has developed and is implementing an effective approach to supporting its students, which enables them to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. Induction is comprehensive and the buddy system ensures the continuing development of both participants. CTTC routinely monitors student progression and achievement. Data on post-programme employment indicates that CTTC's aims of promoting employability are being achieved. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the 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

2.37 CTTC provides for student engagement through its student representative system and processes for eliciting student feedback. Each cohort elects two representatives styled as Company managers', reflecting the professional ethos of working in a theatre. One of the Company Managers is then appointed as Lead Student Representative (LSR) and they now coordinate and chair the newly-established SSC. Student feedback is collected via a module evaluation questionnaire completed at the end of each module.

2.38 CTTC's approach to student engagement, including the student representative system, procedures for eliciting student feedback and committee representation, would allow it to meet the Expectation.

2.39 To test the Expectation the team scrutinised documentation including module evaluation questionnaires, minutes of the SSC and AQC meetings, and guidance for student representatives. It also met with CTTC staff and students, including Company Managers and the LSR.

2.40 Company Managers meet regularly with their cohort to discuss issues arising and, in conjunction with the LSR organise the termly SSC by compiling the agenda, taking minutes and feeding back outcomes to the wider student body. As preparation for their role, Company Managers can access information on the University website and information in CCTC's programme handbook and they receive some training from CTTC staff. A representative from the University Students' Union maintains contact with the Company Managers.

2.41 The review team had noted that CTTC student representation on institutional committees appeared to be confined to the SSC. At the visit, the team was informed that the constitution of AQC had been revised to add a student to the membership. The terms of reference initially provided to the team did not refer to a student member although the inaugural set of AQC minutes, also provided at the visit, did suggest that a student representative had attended.

2.42 Student feedback is sought formally and informally. The small size of the institution and the low student numbers mean that issues raised by students can be addressed informally and quickly. More formally, students complete a module evaluation questionnaire at the end of each module. This seeks basic quantitative feedback on the module's organisation, content, the delivery of knowledge and skills, the balance between theory and practice, approachability of the tutor, and the quality of assessment feedback, and provides space for qualitative feedback. While the module evaluation questionnaire provides CTTC staff with some basic information, managers acknowledged that it could be strengthened to allow easier interpretation by students (see Section B8). Nevertheless, students provided examples of how CTTC responds to feedback and how they are kept informed of responses.

2.43 Student engagement is valued by the College and its effective student representative system with its Company Managers is a successful component of its approach.

2.44 CTTC implements processes that operate to engage students collectively and individually in the assurance and enhancement of their experience. The use of Company

Managers and the LSR is effective and the SSC provides a useful focus for engagement. Systems for gathering student feedback are satisfactory and students are kept informed of outcomes. The review team concludes accordingly that the Expectation is met and the 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

2.45 CTTC abides by the University's Academic Assessment Regulations. The programme's assessment strategy, which provides for a mix of practical and written assignments, is set out in the approved programme specification. Assessments are devised jointly with the University Partnership Tutor and reviewed annually to ensure that they are pitched at the required academic level and enable students to meet the learning outcomes. Students are provided with details of assessment in the programme handbook, module descriptors and assignment briefs, which are discussed with students. The briefs include a reminder about referencing, and assessment submission forms require students to sign a declaration that the work is their own.

2.46 Assessments are subjected to internal moderation, moderated by the University Partnership Tutor and viewed by the external examiner. Students are provided with feedback on an Assessment Feedback Form within three weeks of the published submission date.

2.47 The use of the University's Academic Assessment Regulations, the documented approach to assessment, the guidance provided to students, and the moderation processes would enable this Expectation to be met.

2.48 To test the Expectation, the team scrutinised documentation including the programme handbook, module descriptors, assignment briefs, the outcomes of the moderation process and examples of feedback to students. It also met with staff from the University and CCTC, as well as students.

2.49 Assessments, which aim to cover both theory and practice to appropriately assess achievement of professional and academic learning outcomes, are clearly laid out for staff and students in key documentation. Staff have evident understanding of the overall approach to assessment and the specific role of assessment briefs in helping clarify module requirements and supporting student achievement. They also noted their value in defining assessment criteria and promoting consistency of marking. Students reported that the briefs help them to understand assessment requirements.

2.50 There is regular and systematic review to ensure the suitability of assessments. This involves discussion with the University Partnership Tutor. Examples recorded in programme reports relate to revisions to assessment briefs to promote industry relevance.

2.51 Assessment feedback is both formative and summative. The practical and creative nature of the programme, with tutors giving regular feedback to students during classes, makes formative feedback a continuing process. Summative feedback is provided on Assessment Feedback Forms and includes developmental points. Staff adhere to the three-week deadline for provision of feedback but, according to students, may provide it sooner to inform students' approach to forthcoming assessments. Any students with specific learning needs are supported following the appropriate identification of issues in ILPs.

2.52 CTTC operates rigorous processes of internal moderation, which are then subject to moderation by the University and then external examiner scrutiny. Staff have a clear understanding of University and CTTC requirements. Assessment boards are operated by the University.

2.53 The programme team provides written responses to the external examiner's report and these include improvements to assignments and CTTC's approach to assessment. Responses are approved by AQC and forwarded on to the University. Consequent actions have included the provision of a marking and assessment workshop, and revisions to the staff induction process. Assessment outcomes are considered annually by AQC.

2.54 CTTC managers explained that recognition of prior learning (RPL) is unlikely to be considered within the programme's assessment. However, were an RPL case to arise, it would be considered using University policy and process. To date, CTTC has not considered any RPL applications.

2.55 The review team was informed that the non-assessed modules are not part of the validated programme and students do not need to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes (see Sections B1 and C).

2.56 CTTC operates under the University's Academic Assessment Regulations and works with the University in developing assignments. Staff and students are clear about what is required in measuring achievement of learning outcomes. Students benefit from formative and summative feedback. Effective moderation processes are in place and assessment practices are kept under review. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the 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

2.57 CTTC, via AQC, nominates external examiners for approval by the University in line with its policy and procedures on external examining. AQC also reviews the external examiner report, oversees the programme team's response, and disseminates the report and responses to students. Outcomes from external examining are addressed in the Programme Review and Enhancement Report as well as CTTC's Annual Monitoring and Review Meeting. The external examiner, as well as receiving examples of all assessments, is invited to attend student assessed performances and CTTC's 'showcase event', which theatrical scouts and agents attend.

2.58 CTTC's adherence to University policy and procedures for external examining and the existence of internal processes for receiving, responding to and disseminating the outcomes from external examiner reports, would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.59 The team tested the Expectation by examining documentation including the University's external examiner processes, external examiner reports, minutes of assessment boards and Programme Review and Enhancement Reports. It also met staff from CTTC and the University, as well as students.

2.60 The external examiner is consulted about assessment briefs and any changes. All practical assessments are filmed and sent to the external who may attend in person. The external meets with the Director of Studies who sits on the University managed assessment boards.

2.61 The external examiner's report and the team's response are recorded on the University's External Examiner Report Form. The programme team's response is considered by AQC at the Annual Monitoring and Review Meeting prior to the response being sent to the University, as part of the Annual Programme Review and Enhancement Report.

2.62 The review team was told that CTTC informs students of the name, position and institution of the external examiner in the CTTC Welcome Pack. However, the team could find no mention of external examiner arrangements in the Pack. The programme handbook states that students will be informed of the external examiner details via the University's VLE but the team was told that CTTC students do not often make use of the VLE. Students may meet the external examiner at practical assessments. They are individually emailed a copy of the external examiner report, which is also uploaded to CTTC's student intranet. Company Managers and the LSR are able to discuss the external examiner's report and CTTC's response at SSC.

2.63 CTTC adheres to the University's policy and procedures for external examining. Its own processes enable externals to fulfil their role effectively in terms of confirming assignments, marking and moderation, and reporting. The programme team responds to the external examiner's report and CTTC monitors and shares outcomes from the process. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the 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

2.64 CTTC abides by the University's annual monitoring process, which requires that a Programme Review and Enhancement Report is submitted to the University. Within CTTC, the report is considered by the recently instigated Annual Monitoring and Review Meeting of AQC. Additional monitoring and review takes place at the annual Staff Meeting and Development Day where tutor feedback is considered and good practice shared.

2.65 Students complete evaluation forms at the end of each module and these are evaluated by the Director of Studies and discussed at Management Committee, AQC and SSC.

2.66 The existence of CTTC's monitoring and review arrangements, which are aligned with University requirements, would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.67 The team tested the Expectation by considering evidence including the University's annual monitoring process, CTTC's Programme Review and Enhancements Reports and minutes of the Annual Monitoring and Review Meeting. It also met with staff from CCTC and the University, and with students.

2.68 In line with University requirements, CTTC produces annual Programme Review and Enhancement Reports, which collate feedback from students, staff and external examiners, as well as providing an overview of good practice, an update on the previous year's actions and a detailed action plan in response to the various evaluations. The constituent parts of the Programme Review and Enhancement Reports are initially discussed at AQC. AQC also considers the live Quality Improvement Plan that identifies areas for action based on monitoring and review. CTTC emphasises that, given the size of the institution and the daily and close contact between staff and students, student feedback and response to that feedback is often informal.

2.69 CTTC processes for monitoring and review include the use of a module evaluation questionnaire distributed to students at the end of each module. The management team acknowledged some weaknesses in the questionnaire particularly with regard to headings, which could be open to different interpretation by students, and agreed with the review team that its design warranted improvement. The evaluations are collated by the Director of Studies and shared with module tutors, with a view to the identification of any necessary actions. The review team was of the view that while data on individual modules was clearly collected and actions taken, it was less evident as to how this data was used to identify issues across modules, years or cohorts. CTTC has also undertaken one instance of a student survey at programme level (in March 2017). However, it was unclear as to whether the survey would be conducted on a regular basis. Given the need to revise module evaluation, acknowledged by CTTC managers, and limited formal mechanisms for identifying and responding to programme-level issues, the review team **recommends** that CTTC strengthen the approach to module and course evaluation to enable effective and systematic monitoring of CTTC provision.

2.70 Despite this recommendation, the review team noted that students feel that their voice is heard and that CTTC responds. Company Managers play a key role in liaising

between staff and students, letting students know what actions are being taken. Responses to module evaluations are discussed at SSC and through the CTTC Newsletter, introduced in November 2017.

2.71 CTTC aligns with the University's annual monitoring process and has internal mechanisms that enable the identification of, and response to, emerging issues. While there is scope to strengthen the approach to module and course evaluation, the review team was assured that CTTC operates an effective annual monitoring process. Accordingly, the Expectation is met and the 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

2.72 CTTC follows University policies and procedures, designed to reflect the Office of the Independent Adjudicator Good Practice Framework, in managing academic appeals and complaints. The Operations Manual states that appeals and complaints should be handled informally by CTTC in the first instance. Students may access relevant information via the University website, by following a link in the programme handbook, or through contacting a CTTC administrator. Academic appeals and complaints are also covered in the student induction programme. The review team was informed that there have been no academic appeals or complaints to date.

2.73 CTTC's use of University policies and procedures, which are designed to be fair, accessible and timely, would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.74 The team tested the Expectation by considering documentation including the University's Academic Appeals Process, its Student Complaints Procedure, the Operations Manual and the programme handbook. It also met with staff from the University and CTTC, and students.

2.75 CTTC aims to ensure that students are provided with a clear, equitable, confidential and transparent framework for any academic appeal or complaint. It refers students to the University policy and processes through the programme handbook. The review team noted that there is no documented, local procedure for students to complain at CTTC. The team was told that in the first instance, the Principal or Director of Studies would handle any complaints on an informal basis. Students stated that they were aware of the University complaints procedures but tended to raise matters informally.

2.76 While there was no evidence that students are dissatisfied with CTTC's approach to student complaints, the review team was of the view that the absence of a codified, local CTTC procedure and the reliance on informal resolution does not provide students with a fair and accessible means of making a formal complaint. Therefore, the team **recommends** that CTTC articulates and makes available the process by which students can initiate a complaint prior to engagement with University procedures.

2.77 CTTC uses the University's Academic Appeals Process and Student Complaints Procedure. Students are directed to formal guidance via the programme handbook. While students report that they have informal means of raising everyday issues, CTTC does not currently indicate how students can initiate complaints locally. While it is recommended that this is addressed, the review team concludes that this Expectation is met and the 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

2.78 CTTC does not currently deliver learning opportunities with other organisations. It does encourage students to gain experience in the acting industry using opportunities available through Court Theatre activities, performances and with visiting theatre companies. These are not mandatory experiences or credit-bearing parts of the programme.

Expectation: Not applicable

Level of risk: Not applicable

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

2.79 CTTC does not offer research degrees so this Expectation is not applicable.

Expectation: Not applicable

Level of risk: Not applicable

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.80 In reaching its judgement the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.81 There are two areas of good practice, three recommendations and no affirmations in this section. Both features of good practice relate to Expectation B4. The first identifies the 'buddy system' and its role in promoting effective student induction and providing support and development for both participants over the duration of the programme. The second notes the range of professional experience and currency of staff, which helps students develop essential industry competencies.

2.82 The review team has made three recommendations where, in each case, the Expectation is met and judged to be a low risk. These specify that CTTC should articulate and make available the process by which students can initiate a complaint (Expectation B9); clarify and publish for students the role and status of the non-assessed modules in the context of the validated programme (Expectation B1); and strengthen the approach to module and course evaluation to enable effective and systematic monitoring of CTTC provision (Expectation B8).

2.83 Of the nine applicable Expectations in Part B, the review team judges that all are met. The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at CTTC **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 CTTC has two policies which govern the management of published information. The Policy and Process for Approval of Published Information aims to ensure that all public information is clear, timely, accurate, appropriate and transparent, while supporting the aims of the organisation and the needs of intended audiences. The Social Media Policy aims to advise staff and students using social media in their professional role. CTTC's formal agreement with the University requires that publicity and other information should be approved prior to publication. CTTC has recently introduced a monthly newsletter that aims to keep students and staff up to date with current developments.

3.2 CTTC's own policies, and those of the University oriented to monitoring CTTC's public information, would enable the Expectation to be met.

3.3 The review team tested the Expectation by examining documentation including the CTTC Policy and Process for Approval of Public Information, the Social Media Policy, evidence demonstrating University approval of information, the programme handbook, published information sign off, the prospectus and the CTTC website. It was provided with a demonstration of the University's VLE and the early development of CTTC's intranet. The team also met staff from CTTC and the University and students.

3.4 The information provided by CTTC for current and prospective students is comprehensive and accessible. Some is provided in hard copy but is also available on the CTTC website and the University's VLE. The prospectus, the programme handbook, the programme specification, the Student Welcome Pack, module descriptors and assignment briefs all provide clear and relevant information. Currently, online access to information is provided mainly through the University's website although a local intranet intended to provide a repository of information for current students is under development.

3.5 Students stated that the website is the primary source of information for prospective students and that they found it to be comprehensive, providing an accurate picture of the validated programme and the learning environment.

3.6 As mentioned in Section B1, the review team had learnt of the existence of the non-assessed modules. The review team noted that the information provided for current and prospective students does not make specific reference to this feature of students' academic experience. Given the significance attached to the non-assessed modules by CTTC, and the benefit to employability recognised by students, the team concludes that CTTC should publish clear information about the role and status of these activities. This supports the recommendation in Section B1.

3.7 CTTC's arrangements for ensuring the accuracy and fitness for purpose of published information are comprehensive and effective. All programme-related information is updated annually and approved at relevant committee meetings. The Marketing Manager is responsible for signing-off public information initially, with the Principal conferring final approval, for oversight of CTTC's website and its links to the University website, and for

annual review of the prospectus. Information is also subject to University approval as set out in the Operations Manual.

3.8 CTTC's information policies and practice confirm that its arrangements for the quality of information to prospective and current students and other stakeholders is accurate, fit for purpose and accessible. There is scope to provide clearer information about the non-assessed modules. Nevertheless, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

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

3.9 In reaching its judgement the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

3.10 The Expectation in this section is met and the associated risk level is low. There are no areas of good practice or affirmations recorded in this judgement area. There is reference to the one recommendation in Section B1 which relates to the need to clarify and publish for students, the role and status of the non-assessed modules.

3.11 Given that the applicable Expectation is met with a low level of risk, the review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at CTTC **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 In its 2014 QAA Review for Specific Course Designation report it was recommended that CTTC should capture and embed enhancement in a more systematic way. As a response, CTTC has sought to develop the student experience to include an increasing range of additional experiences and opportunities including sessions on physical fitness and movement, period dance and stage combat. To note, CTTC sometimes refers to these as non-assessed modules. An Enhancement Officer has been in post since November 2016 and sought to extend a range of additional enrichment activities designed to enhance learning opportunities and employability. These include watching and getting involved with performances at Courtyard Theatre and interacting with other professionals using the theatre spaces. A new pro forma has been introduced that makes enhancement a standing item on all CTTC academic committee meetings. It is designed to promote sharing of good practice.

4.2 Actions taken to enrich the student experience, enhance employability and embed enhancement within the committee structure would allow the Expectation to be met.

4.3 The team tested the Expectation by considering documentation including the prospectus, committee minutes and information on student enhancement and enrichment activities. It also met with staff from CTTC and the University, and with students.

4.4 The recent revision to committee structures and a continuing audit of processes are oriented to identifying and acting upon potential enhancements. Committee minutes reveal that the new pro forma has enabled good practice and enhancement to be considered at each meeting. As illustrated in Section B8, CTTC's approach to quality assurance, and particularly annual monitoring, enables areas to be identified that could benefit from enhancement.

4.5 CTTC's published mission is to 'train for a life in the theatre by working in the theatre'. The review team noted the various initiatives that have been introduced over the last two years. The enrichment activities currently include physical fitness and movement, period dance, stage combat and an outreach performance. Students are informed about access to low cost tickets for West End shows, can join additional workshops by visiting professional companies, and can join a 'Courtyard Collective' event that allows students to try out experimental or new performances before an audience. CTTC also organises a showcase for second-year students to which theatrical scouts and agents are invited. Induction has also been enhanced to include an academic writing skills workshop and a peer production to begin the process of fostering collaboration and team working skills.

4.6 Staff and students are of the view that the enrichment opportunities, instigated by the Enhancement Officer, have had a positive impact on student confidence, professional skills and academic performance. Staff were able to demonstrate how the various activities, their professional setting, and opportunities for networking not only promote general employability but in a number of cases have led to specific employment. Students were enthusiastic about the advantages that learning in a working theatre brought to their overall experience and development. The review team therefore concludes that CTTC is taking deliberate steps to develop a curriculum and student experience that prepares students for

their chosen careers. The team identified as **good practice** the mission-led immersion in a working theatre environment and the programme of enhancement activities which together promote employability.

4.7 The review team identified a clear mission-led drive to ensure the student experience, as a whole, prepares the students for their chosen career path and makes them employable. A range of initiatives and activities have been integrated into the wider student experience and they contribute to students' development. In this context, the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.8 In reaching its judgement the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

4.9 The review team noted CTTC's approach to quality assurance and a range of enhancement initiatives which together provide a framework for enhancement. The team identified a feature of good practice relating to the mission-led immersion in a working theatre environment and the programme of enhancement activities which together promote employability.

4.10 The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at CTTC **meets** UK expectations.

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 21-24 of the [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\) 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.

Awarding organisation

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

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* (FQHEIS).

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.

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.

Self-evaluation document

A report submitted by a higher education provider, assessing its own performance, to be used as evidence in a QAA review.

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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