



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

Creative Academy Slough Borough Council

April 2014

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Key findings about Creative Academy Slough Borough Council

As a result of its Review for Specific Course Designation carried out in April 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 programmes it offers on behalf of the University of West 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 the 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**:

- provision of cultural activities to support the local community (paragraph 1.4)
- the range of additional professional programmes that enhance learning opportunities and support students' progression (paragraph 1.5)
- the positive collaboration with the University's Disability Team in the development of individual support plans (paragraph 2.10)
- the allocation of industry mentors and partners ensure students' learning is informed by current practice (paragraph 2.11).

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:

- provide more explicit and consistent formative feedback across all modules of the foundation degree (paragraph 2.12).

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

- continue to develop a more structured and sustainable communication system with students (paragraph 3.3)
- consider the provision of a virtual learning environment (paragraph 3.4).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the [Review for Specific Course Designation](#)¹ conducted by [QAA](#) at Creative Academy Slough Borough Council (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 West London (the University). The review was carried out by Mrs Angela Maguire and Mr Nabeel Zaidi (reviewers) and Dr Margaret Johnson (Coordinator).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the [Review for Educational Oversight \(and for specific course designation\): Handbook, April 2013](#).² Evidence in support of the review included documentation supplied by the provider and awarding body, meetings with staff and students, reports of reviews by the University, membership documentation for the Council for Dance Education and Training, and examples of written and practical student work. During the visit the College also provided access to the student portal of the website.

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

- *The framework for higher education in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)*
- programme specifications
- subject benchmark statements
- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code)
- *Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark (FDQB)*.

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

The Creative Academy is a not-for-profit monotechnic organisation which is managed through Slough Borough Council and is unique in that it is the only Council in England to offer a degree programme. The Academy began in 2003 and is situated on the outskirts of Slough in a former school building called The West Wing Arts Centre. Slough is the most ethnically diverse area outside London with a young population that has lower than average skills and academic qualifications. The Council recognised an opportunity to develop dance programmes which aim to be an affordable alternative to university and vocational school dance training with a strong industry focus.

There are 80 students across the two programmes and the Academy is proud of its 100 per cent graduate employment in the dance industry. Staff are almost all part-time and are employed by Slough Borough Council but work closely with the awarding University and professional industry partners.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their awarding body:

University of West London

- FdA Dance
- BA (Hons) Dance

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/designated-providers/Pages/default.aspx

² www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

The provider's stated responsibilities

Overall quality of the provision is the responsibility of the University who carry out annual monitoring and periodic review of the programmes. The Academy interviews and selects appropriate students, sets assessments and moderates first and second marking of assignments. It is also responsible for curriculum development, induction, tutorials and the collection and analysis of student feedback.

There is a shared responsibility for the monitoring of student retention and completion rates together with the review and response to annual monitoring reviews and module evaluations. Shared responsibility is also undertaken for programme specifications and intended learning outcomes, assessment of teaching skills, staff development and the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning

Recent developments

The current partnership validation agreement with the University is due to end in August 2014 and the Academy has explored the options of Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College and Pearson to validate the dance provision as a risk mechanism. Discussions with the new university are not progressing but an agreement with Pearson is in its final stages and higher national diplomas (HNDs) will be offered in September 2014, if needed. Any students still registered with the University will be supported by the University to complete their studies.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on higher education programmes at the Academy were invited to present a submission to the review team. One student acted as the conduit to produce a video presentation with voiceover. In preparation he interviewed the majority of the students at the Academy and posed several questions about their experience during their studies. The responses were recorded and added to a video of the students performing dance sequences. A group of 10 students met with the team and one student representative met with the coordinator at the preparatory meeting. The students were articulate and open during the discussion and their views were helpful to the team.

Detailed findings about Creative Academy Slough Borough Council

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 The Academy understands its responsibilities for the management of academic standards and fulfils them effectively. It adopts all University quality policies, which are embedded into its own quality cycle, and ensures that annual monitoring reports are considered in the University system. The University undertakes annual and periodic review, and appoints a collaborative link tutor to work with the Academy on a day-to-day basis. It is clear that the support and guidance of the link tutor is appreciated by the staff and ensures that issues are effectively identified, discussed and acted upon. Proposals for new modules are submitted to the University Academic and Quality Standards Committee for approval.

1.2 The Academy is owned and managed by Slough Borough Council and the Programme Leader reports to the Head of Culture and Sport at the Council, who in turn reports to the Director of Community and Skills. Programmes are delivered through a University Collaborative Agreement (validation only), which is managed by the London College of Music, a school within the University. The agreement clearly identifies the standards and expectations from both the Council and the University. The University Academic Registry oversees the quality assurance arrangements, and provides advice on preparing reports for the University. These arrangements meet the requirements of *Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality* of the Quality Code. The Academy recognises and appreciates the high level of support it receives from the University.

1.3 The Programme Leader has delegated authority from the University for the management of academic standards and quality of the student educational experience, and provides effective academic and practical leadership. He oversees the use of resources, such as the deployment of teaching staff and the allocation of teaching and timetabling. Most modules are delivered by part-time industry partners and stakeholders, which is well coordinated by the Programme Leader and ensures the efficient and effective running of a coherent programme.

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

1.4 The Academy contributes significantly to the Council's key priorities in health, economy and skills. It has successfully gained affiliate membership with the Council for Dance Education and Training who are the dance industry quality assurance provider. Together with Slough Borough Council the Academy offers a good range of resources and support, including five dance studios, a 250 seat theatre, gym, library and pilates studio. The Academy has a growing reputation in its partnership and links with industry, together with the work it carries out with a variety of stakeholders. In conjunction with its work with disadvantaged groups, this provides cultural activities to support the local community and is considered to be **good practice**.

1.5 The Academy provides a range of additional professional programmes that enhance learning opportunities to support students' progression, which is considered to be **good practice**. Additional programmes include the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing Grades, Active IQ Pilates; Matwork 1, Stage Combat, Diploma in Dance Instruction, the Diploma in Dance Education and Professional Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector.

Students identified, and staff endorsed, that these programmes added value to their main qualification and that they would be viewed positively by potential employers in the dance sector. First destination data collected by the Academy confirms the high progression rates into employment of graduates. Progression data for the FdA Dance indicates strong internal progression rates onto the BA (Hons) Dance programme.

1.6 The University is completing its mapping of the Quality Code, which the Academy will adopt, once completed. Full use has been made of the FHEQ, relevant subject benchmark statements in dance and performing arts subjects, and FDQB.

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

1.7 The Academy is effective in implementing a formalised approach to the consideration of external examiners reports and the monitoring of subsequent action plans. It has responsibility for the design of all assessments, which are subject to formal internal verification and subsequent external verification. Assessment schedules are provided at the beginning of the programme, with stipulated dates for submission and return of the assessed work. Written feedback is provided, followed by regular meetings with tutors to discuss the feedback. The students testify to consistent adherence to the assessment schedules and the benefits this brings to the management of their studies.

1.8 In compliance with University guidelines, an external examiner is appointed to each award and trained by the University. The annual external examiner reports are submitted to the University and are then passed to the Academy for consideration. Each report is discussed at the annual away-day and the action plan to address issues is reported to the University Academic Standards and Quality Committee. Issues and action plans are also included in the annual monitoring reports.

1.9 The Academy understands its responsibilities for the management of academic standards and effectively fulfils them. It adopts all University quality policies, which are embedded into its own quality cycle. The University oversees the quality assurance arrangements, and provides advice on preparing reports. The Programme Leader provides effective academic and practical leadership and ensures the efficient and effective running of a coherent programme. The Academy is effective in its use of external moderation, verification and examining to assure academic standards. Specialist and highly qualified professionals ensure that the programmes reflect the diverse dance industry. The addition of professional programmes that enhance learning opportunities to support students' progression is considered to be good practice. In conjunction with its work with disadvantaged groups, the Academy provides cultural activities to support the local community, which is considered to be good practice.

The review team has **confidence** in the provider's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the programmes 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 effectively fulfils its responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities as described in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.3.

2.2 Admissions policies and criteria are inclusive and flexible, and seek to widen participation. They are based on the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy and the University's Widening Participation mission. This is supported by the University's Accreditation of Prior Certified Learning (APCL) and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) processes. APEL is used where students do not hold relevant prior formal qualifications. Students with equivalent modules can join at various points in the programme.

2.3 All students undertake a one week induction, which includes an initial assessment. The University Disability Team provides the Academy with support for disabled students, including guidance on completion of their Individual Support Plans. Student induction includes instruction on the effective use of the Harvard system of referencing. This, together with the continual reinforcement of correct referencing in assessments reduces the likelihood of plagiarism. Students are also allocated a personal tutor with whom they meet three times a semester and who assists them in tracking their progress. Students agreed that this contact enhanced their learning opportunities.

2.4 The teaching, learning and assessment of the FdA Dance is managed over two academic years and the BA (Hons) Dance is managed over three academic terms. Both programmes use assessment methods that promote the production of authentic work in different formats. Most include a high degree of supervision, and a personal academic tutor is allocated for each student on the BA (Hons) Dance to encourage students to discover their individual practice as a performer. Annual standardisation and double marking are undertaken to maintain consistency of assessment. Mitigation and extension arrangements follow University guidelines.

2.5 The practice-based degree programmes are enhanced with a variety of industry-specific professional practice qualifications. A variety of additional courses are embedded in the programme, that give considerable added value to the overall qualification and enhances the students portfolio of work. The foundation degree is used to enhance the honours degree by encouraging students to work together on practice and production techniques.

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

2.6 The Academy makes effective use of the University and the Council as its main external reference points. These are clearly defined and embedded in Academy structures and policies. All Academy staff are employed by the Council and are inducted into its policies and procedures, and into the University's quality policies and procedures. The Programme Leader reports to the University on the quality of learning opportunities which are also reviewed annually and periodically by both the Academy and the University. Academy personnel attend staff development and annual away days organised by the University and the Council.

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

2.7 The University Academic Standards and Quality Committee and the Programme Leader have effective oversight of all matters relating to the quality and enhancement of learning and teaching. The Academy implements the Teaching and Learning Strategy of the University and monitors the effectiveness of its procedures through scrutiny of the annual monitoring reports, student feedback, external examiner comments and analysis of student data on achievement and progression.

2.8 Effective recruitment and selection procedures ensure that the Academy appoints and retains high calibre tutors. Teaching performance is evaluated by the Academy through peer review, and uses the Council's detailed observation of teaching and learning procedure. Those falling below Council expectations are not re-engaged.

2.9 Student opinion is actively welcomed at the Academy. Student representatives chair formal meetings, meet external examiners, are involved in the periodic review panel and in the recruitment of new staff. End of module student surveys are systematically analysed and inform programme annual reports and the Collaborative Annual Report.

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

2.10 The Academy provides a highly supportive environment for all its students with a staff to student ratio of 1:7. Individual support plans are effective in supporting learners with disabilities or learning difficulties. A student with dyslexia commented favourably on the range of support that is provided to her and programme tutors noted the positive collaboration with the University's Disability Team in the development of individual support plans. This is considered to be **good practice**.

2.11 All students complete personal development plans and are allocated a personal tutor. The small size of the provision enables close and regular interaction between tutors and students, who find staff approachable and helpful. Students are also allocated industry mentors and industry partners to ensure their learning is informed by current and relevant industry practice, which is considered to be **good practice**.

2.12 The Academy effectively supports students in the assessment process through written and verbal summative feedback. Written summative feedback is clear, detailed and timely. Students also confirmed the quality, clarity and timeliness of verbal summative and formative feedback. Students confirm their preference for verbal feedback that allows them to identify immediately the improvements that need to be made, and compliments the practical and non-written nature of most of the assessments. However, written formative feedback across modules of the FdA Dance is variable and does not always clearly identify the improvements that students need to make. It is **advisable** that the Academy provide more explicit and consistent formative feedback across all modules of the foundation degree.

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

2.13 Staff development is responsive to the needs of tutors who are supported financially by the Council to undertake continuing professional development that aligns with the objectives of the Academy. Tutors spoke highly of the support they receive and confirmed that development activities contribute to the enhancement of particular modules and programmes.

2.14 Peer review identifies action points, which in turn inform development needs. Sharing of good practice is embedded in the provision. Examples include the focus on planning and preparation of productions that requires cross-module cooperation and collaboration with the University and some of its students; and away-days organised by the Academy which provide an additional opportunity to discuss and share good 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?

2.15 Learning resources are systematically planned and carefully aligned to programme delivery schedules. The Council ensures that there are sufficient premises available for the Academy programmes, in particular, performance areas, which are fully appreciated by the students. Appropriate textbooks are made available to students in the Academy's library and arrangements exist for a private Academy collection at the local municipal library that students can borrow. The Council allocates a modest annual budget to replenish and purchase additional texts.

2.16 The review team has confidence in the Academy fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the intended learning outcomes. This is particularly evident in the way that it has planned and implemented additional complementary vocational programmes as an adjunct to the main programmes. This supports progression opportunities for students. The team recognises that the Academy provides structured and sustained support to students with disabilities and learning difficulties, and that the effective use of industry mentors and industry partners inform student learning and motivate them to succeed. The team considers these to be good practice. The team noted some areas that the Academy should address. These include the provision of more consistent and explicit formative feedback and the development and implementation of a virtual learning environment.

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 effectively communicates information about learning opportunities to potential and current students through its website. The comprehensive information includes the Student Handbook, module study guides, the Quality Assurance Manual and a range of policies for both staff and students. The website is the repository for the main programme information. It is accessible and easy to navigate, and showcases the work of the Academy over the past 10 years. However, the team identified that the title of the degree programme differs in different contexts, particularly on the University website. The University and Academy response was that the BA (Hons) Dance programme has two streams; education and performance that both lead to the same qualification and that the University refers to these as pathways.

3.2 The Academy prides itself on being a student-focused organisation. It has overt and informal communication routes that encourage continuous dialogue with its students. The student voice is strongly evident with varied engagement across the programmes. The students themselves communicate through social media, which is regularly monitored, but not controlled by the Academy.

3.3 Social media is actively encouraged, and well utilised, to enhance the student learning experience. Access to videos and live performances complement the practical and visual nature of most module content and assessments. Students have also implemented

subject-based discussion groups that can be used as evidence in their portfolios. The Academy presently uses the media of email to communicate with students, which is sustainable with small numbers. However, it would be **desirable** for the Academy to continue to develop a more structured and sustainable communication system with students.

3.4 The Academy does not yet have a virtual learning environment, although it is described in the programme specification of 2011, and in the current module study guides. In addition, the 2013 Collaborative Partnership Periodic Review recommended that the Academy should 'further explore the opportunities for a blended learning approach across the courses, eg a virtual learning environment'. While a dedicated electronic repository of module guides exists in a student portal of the website, students cannot interact virtually and continue to rely on email communication with tutors. It would be **desirable** for the Academy to consider the provision of a virtual learning environment to enhance the opportunities for blended learning.

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

3.5 The Academy produces information about learning opportunities that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. Responsibility for the management and quality of the information is clear and well understood by the academic and management staff. The Programme Leader, in liaison with the Council and the University, is responsible for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of information. The students expressed satisfaction with the range of published information that is made available to them.

3.6 The partnership agreement with the University and the employment requirements of Slough Borough Council, described in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.3, requires all advertising and publicity materials to be approved in advance by the University and Council, and this is executed robustly.

3.7 Comprehensive information is communicated effectively to potential and current students through the Academy's website which is accessible and easy to navigate. Information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy, and responsibility for the management and quality of the information is clear and well understood by the academic and management staff. There are overt and informal communication routes, that encourage continuous dialogue with students but the team recommends that the Academy continue to develop a more structured and sustainable communication system with students. The team considers it would be desirable for the Academy consider the development of a virtual leaning environment to improve the communication system and enhance the opportunities for blended learning for students.

<p>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.</p>

Action plan³

Creative Academy Slough Borough Council action plan relating to the Review of Specific Course Designation April 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 good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the Academy:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of cultural activities to support the local community (paragraph 1.4) 	<p>Increase community cohesion</p> <p>Encourage young people in the wider community to see dance as a physical activity as an integral part of a healthy lifestyle as per Slough Borough Council's priorities</p>	<p>Develop and deliver workshops in both primary and secondary schools</p> <p>Create performances based on these workshops demonstrating to the wider community the activities in which the Creative Academy and schools engage</p>	June 2015; yearly after	Creative Academy Manager/ Business Manager	Council Senior Management Team	Correspondence with Slough Schools Sports Network and feedback from students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the range of additional professional programmes that enhance learning opportunities 	<p>Continue to ensure that students are working to industry standards</p> <p>Provide students with the greatest opportunity to showcase talents, skills,</p>	<p>Continue to offer Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing</p> <p>Deliver and develop new qualifications with leading industry professional</p>	June 2015; yearly after	Creative Academy Manager	Council Senior Management Team	Continuous monitoring of the pass rate for the additional qualifications and the degree

³ 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.

and support students' progression (paragraph 1.5)	and knowledge through excellent CVs and resumes increasing the opportunity to gain meaningful employment in the creative industries sector	companies				Continuous monitoring of employment for graduates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the positive collaboration with the University's Disability Team in developing individual support plans (paragraph 2.10) 	Good practice to continue and actively develop a streamlined personal development plan while continuing to respond to individual needs and aspirations	<p>The development of a fit- for-purpose personal development plan</p> <p>Continue to support student individual needs in partnership with the University's Disability Team</p> <p>Staff to undertake specific dyslexia training</p>	Sept 2014; yearly after	Student support	<p>Council Senior Management Team</p> <p>University Disability Team</p>	<p>Completion of staff qualifications</p> <p>Students with specific educational needs participate actively in completing the personal development plan</p> <p>Staff development records</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the allocation of industry mentors and partners ensure students' learning is informed by current practice (paragraph 2.11). 	<p>Maintain current relationships with industry partners and develop new opportunities for working</p> <p>Develop new opportunities to work with external industry in the dance sector</p>	<p>Actively engage industry partners on timetable through master classes and workshops</p> <p>Engagement of new industry mentors and partners</p>	June 2015; yearly after	Creative Academy Manager/ Business Manager	Council Senior Management Team	<p>Statistics showing industry engagement and increase of partner participation</p> <p>Feedback from students and industry mentors</p>

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 advisable for the Academy to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide more explicit and consistent formative feedback across all modules of the foundation degree (paragraph 2.12). 	Develop a formative feedback strategy and tools for the foundation degree that are functional across all modules and thus able to be owned and adopted by all Academy staff	<p>Identify best practice in London College of Music, and work closely with the University Head of Subject and Collaborative Link Tutor to provide any additional guidance at University level</p> <p>Creative Academy Manager and Lead Tutors to work together to explore how this evidence can be used to develop the formative feedback strategy and identify tools to be used at the start of the academic year</p> <p>Explore use of proposed tools with students and sessional tutors and refine strategy where necessary</p> <p>Present Strategy and tools at London College of</p>	<p>June 2014</p> <p>July-Oct 2014</p> <p>Nov 2014</p> <p>Sept-Nov 2014</p>	<p>Creative Academy Manager/ University Head of Subject and Collaborative Link Tutor</p> <p>Creative Academy Manager/ Lead Tutors</p> <p>Creative Academy Manager/ Lead Tutor</p> <p>Creative Academy</p>	<p>University Head of Subject and Collaborative Link Tutor</p> <p>University Head of Subject/ Collaborative Link Tutor</p> <p>University Head of Subject/ Collaborative Link Tutor</p> <p>University Head of</p>	<p>Monitor progress in formal meetings between the University and the Academy</p> <p>Notes of team meetings</p> <p>Notes of student experience and tutor meetings</p> <p>Academic Quality and Standards</p>

		Music Academic Quality and Standards Committee		Manager/ Collaborative Link Tutor	Subject/ Collaborative Link Tutor Director London College of Music/ University Deputy Head of Quality	Committee minutes
Desirable	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 would be desirable for the academy to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to develop a more structured and sustainable communication system with students (paragraph 3.3) 	<p>Ensure data compliance and accuracy of database with email addresses for student information</p> <p>Design and develop opportunities for an electronic short messaging system for group texting</p>	<p>Data check of email addresses and number communications to ensure consistency in compliance with data protection regulations</p> <p>Look into development of an electronic service, its costs and functionality and if suitable implement for student communication</p>	<p>Feb 2015</p> <p>Feb 2015</p>	<p>Business Manager</p> <p>Business Manager</p>	<p>Creative Academy Manager</p> <p>Creative Academy Manager</p>	<p>Monitor success of receipt of communications by email</p> <p>Minutes of meetings/student feedback</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider the provision of a virtual learning environment (paragraph 3.4). 	Develop online access ensuring students have access to specific module handouts	Create new secure capacity on the Creative Academy website for handouts available to students through unique	Feb 2015	Business Manager	Creative Academy Manager	Filmed elements of Contemporary Techniques 1 and 2 examination

	<p>Development and use of a virtual learning environment and some blended learning undertaken in pilates (anatomy and physiology elements of the qualification)</p>	<p>log-on facilities</p> <p>Contemporary Techniques 1 and 2 to be adjusted to feed neatly into each other with a practical exam, which will be filmed and placed on the secure website after students have learned the syllabus to ensure health and safety as a dancer</p>				<p>Virtual learning environment created; Academy to monitor frequency of use</p> <p>Handouts uploaded and used on website</p> <p>Student feedback on virtual learning environment</p>
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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.

More detail about Review of Courses Specifically Designated for Student Support can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/designated-providers/Pages/default.aspx.

Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary. Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [*Review for Educational Oversight \(and for specific course designation\): Handbook, April 2013*](#).⁴

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 Courses 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.

⁴ www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

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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