Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of London Studio Centre Ltd

May 2017

Contents

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 London Studio Centre Ltd. The review took place from 23 to 25 May and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Professor Anne Holmes
- Dr Neil Lucas
- Ms Sarah Mullins (student reviewer).

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.

A check is also made on the provider's financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG) with the aim of giving students reasonable confidence that they should not be at risk of being unable to complete their course as a result of financial failure.

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.

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[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 is **commended**.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities is **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities is **meets** UK expectations.

Good practice

- The systematic approach to the professional development of all staff, including part-time and self-employed faculty staff, which enhances learning and teaching, and support for students (Expectation B3).
- The embedding of professional practice throughout the curriculum and the extra-curricular activities, including engagement with professional networks, enable students to enhance their employment opportunities (Expectation B4).
- The extent and accessibility of student support that reflects the particular needs of its students (Expectation B4).

The QAA review team did not make any recommendations or affirmations.

Financial sustainability, management and governance

The financial sustainability, management and governance check has been satisfactorily completed.

About the provider

London Studio Centre Ltd (LSC) is an independent conservatoire dance and music theatre higher education provider founded in 1978. Until 2012 it was located in central London. It is now located in North Finchley in a building called 'artsdepot'. A successful partnership has been forged and developed with the 'artsdepot' in North Finchley, enabling LSC to benefit from two contrasting theatre spaces, purpose built dance studios and associated professional resources.

Its mission is to provide education in dance and related subjects for the professional theatre, in an environment where individual creative talents of each student are nurtured. Middlesex University validates its programme, BA (Hons) Theatre Dance. There are 323 students on the programme and there are 48.52 FTE teaching staff.

The key challenges for LSC since the last review, include staff enhancement and development and ensuring LSC is able to attract the best possible and diverse range of students in the current funding climate for Alternative Providers.

Since the Review of Educational Oversight (REO) in 2013, LSC has undergone a re-accreditation by the Council for Dance Education and Training (CDET) with the panel concluding that 'LSC is providing an excellent standard of training and fully deserves accreditation'.

The REO identified two areas of good practice concerning student support and the website. LSC has continued to develop these areas. There were four advisable recommendations concerning the senior committee structure, engagement with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and updating the Quality Assurance Manual, and increasing the scope of the Staff Handbook. In all cases the recommendations have been implemented.

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 London Studio Centre Ltd (LSC) works with one higher education degree-awarding body Middlesex University (the University). LSC and the University continue to benefit from a long standing partnership that was initially established in 1995 and re-established in 2011. Under this partnership LSC offers a single higher education programme, which is a 3 year BA (Hons) programme in Theatre Dance.

1.2 LSC has in place policies and procedures for the design, validation and revalidation of its programme that ensure alignment with the FHEQ. These procedures are required to work within the parameters for programme approval as laid out by the University in its Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook. The processes require full consideration of external reference points, national frameworks and the Quality Code and Subject Benchmark Statements.

1.3 The process is initiated when an outline submission is approved by the Senior Management Group. The proposal is then reviewed at Academic Board, which delegates the

programme design to a dedicated working group who in turn is responsible for creating a detailed proposal that is referred back to Senior Management Group. At this point LSC would engage with an awarding body and prepare the full documentation for initial approval at Academic Board and validation through a panel review.

1.4   The programme handbook and associated policy documents for the BA (Hons) in Theatre Dance, delivered in collaboration with the University, outline the learning outcomes, qualification and Subject Benchmark Statements. The Handbook also signposts students to the University's Academic Regulations, which provide information on the award of credit and qualifications as well as compensation. The programme specification, which is contained within the programme and module handbooks provide additional details of learning outcomes, assessment briefs and assessment criteria and grade descriptors used across all modules.

1.5   The framework operated by LSC and the University would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.6   The review team looked at a range of documents, including LSC's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manual, programme handbook, module handbooks and University validation and revalidation reports. The team also held meetings with senior and academic staff, administrators, students and professional theatre dance practitioners.

1.7   The validation and revalidation processes are working effectively. At the initial validation due consideration was given to the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Statements. Following validation the University and LSC signed a Memorandum of Cooperation that articulated clearly the responsibilities and processes that define the collaborative relationship. At this revalidation of the programme in 2016 due consideration was given to the alignment of programme learning outcomes, the FHEQ, the Qualification and Credit Framework, and the recently updated Subject Benchmark Statements. For the latter, staff at LSC contributed to the Statement for Dance, Drama and Performance.

1.8   While operational delivery of the programme primarily rests with LSC it is still required to partially follow University policies as listed in the Memorandum of Cooperation. Meetings held with staff in the College confirmed they understood their responsibilities towards their awarding body.

1.9   The Programme Handbook shows that LSC is committed to ensuring its students are clearly aware of the nature of its partnership with University and how this impacts on their learning experience. This and other curriculum documentation, including the programme specification and module handbooks, outline clearly the learning outcomes, assessments and the criteria that leads to the award of credit. The clarity of these documents ensures that the students understand what is required of them through their learning journey.

1.10   LSC's approach to taking account of the FHEQ and other reference points and their continuous review and mapping of processes to the Quality Code confirm that the Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.1): In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.

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

Findings

1.11   LSC has a defined committee structure, which provides oversight of academic standards. This structure is required to adhere to the academic governance arrangements and regulations of the University as set out in the partnership agreement and memorandum of cooperation. The daily management of quality assurance at LSC is overseen by its Senior Management Group and the Academic Board, the latter of which is responsible for the academic strategies and monitoring activities associated with the validated provision using the University's framework. This includes the initial approval of programmes, programme delivery, annual monitoring and review, assessment regulations and external examination arrangements.

1.12   The Academic Board has overall responsibility for ensuring adherence to agreed policies. It is supported by a diverse range of groups, committees, forums and teams in discharging its duties. These include, among many others, the Quality Management and Enhancement Group (QMEG) and the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Committee (LTEC). Students have the opportunity to participate throughout the various levels of governance in operation at LSC.

1.13   Academic Governance arrangements are supported by a series of policies and guidelines that span the student journey from recruitment and admission to the continuing support of student learning and individual well-being. The programme and module handbooks contain information on the programme structure, its aims, learning outcomes and assessments used to achieve credit in accordance with the Assessment and Feedback Policy and LSC's Learning and Teaching Strategy. The policies and programme documents are made available via the virtual learning environment (VLE).

1.14   LSC is responsible for setting, managing, marking and moderating all assessments undertaken by students enrolled on the BA (Hons) in Theatre Dance. It does so in accordance with the University's academic governance arrangements and regulations. External examiners are appointed by the University and they report annually on the learning, teaching, assessment and management of the validated programme. LSC are required to formally respond to the external examiner reports and agree a plan of action that includes the sharing of best practice. The governance structure, policies and processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.15   The review team looked at a range of documentation including meeting terms of reference, minutes of meetings, LSC policies, LSC Learning and Teaching Strategy, programme and module handbooks. The team also tested the impact of the governance structure in securing the academic framework through meetings with staff and students at LSC.

1.16   LSC has embedded a deliberative committee structure which provides robust oversight of academic standards. The Academic Board, which has overall responsibility for academic standards, is well supported by a series of committees, forums and teams with clear lines of communication that ensure appropriate actions that support the learning environment are formulated and acted upon. Programme specific issues are discussed at

Board of Study's meetings and subsequent actions communicated to the Academic Board. During induction students are encouraged to become representatives and to participate in a variety of meetings with engagement levels assessed against an internal target. Minutes of meetings confirm that staff and students are active participants in the oversight of academic standards.

1.17   LSC adheres to the responsibilities and the regulations as outlined in the University's Memorandum of Cooperation. While LSC retains operation control over the management of the student journey, for assessment and award of credit it adheres to the University's assessment regulations. In doing so LSC works closely with the appointed Link Tutor and the University's Centre for Academic Partnerships to ensure the regulations are applied appropriately to dance and theatre practice. The supportive partnership mechanisms have led to refinement of certain aspects of the regulations to ensure that LSC students are not disadvantaged due to long term injury or illness. Furthermore, the University Link Tutor, through attendance at Board of Study meetings, provides critical insight to the management and delivery of the programme.

1.18   As the degree-awarding body, the University takes responsibility for chairing the Progression (First-Tier Assessment) and Assessment Boards (Second-Tier Assessment). This ensures consistent application of the academic regulations that govern how qualifications are awarded, including any exit awards. The regulations are supported by a range of policies and procedures to enable and inform the award of credit and qualifications. The partnership approach to the maintenance of academic standards is robust and the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.19   LSC maintains a definitive programme specification and module handbooks that outline the structure of the programme, information on programme content and learning outcomes by level, design and delivery of module content and assessment. The programme specification is embedded in the annually updated Programme Handbook which provides the students with all necessary ancillary information associated with the delivery of the programme, such as assessment dates and signposts to other information sources including policies and supporting templates. The documents are made available through its VLE. As the principle reference point for course delivery, changes to the programme and modules handbooks must be approved by the Academic Board and the validating partner.

1.20   LSC maintains the required records that support the collaborative arrangement with the University, inclusive of the partnership agreement, the Memorandum of Cooperation, Programme Handbook, validation (approval) and revalidation (periodic review) reports, annual monitoring reports, external examiner reports, responses to external examiner reports and assessment outcomes. The documentation, processes and procedures in place allow for the Expectation to be met.

1.21   The review team looked at curriculum documents and the processes for maintaining currency and accuracy. The team looked at a range of validation and monitoring reports and met with staff, students and professional dance practitioners.

1.22   LSC scrupulously maintains records of minutes from the groups, committees, forums and teams that form its governance structure. These minutes feed into ongoing and active action plan summary documents that ensure LSC provision is continuously reviewed and enhanced for future cohorts.

1.23   For the one programme it delivers LSC maintains a detailed handbook and this provides a clear reference point for its students. To develop the programme LSC works with the University and professional practitioners to continuously review and enhance the provision through annual monitoring and validation/revalidation events. The processes are well documented and ensure LSC adheres to the requirements set out by the University. Externality in the process is provided through external examiners that are appointed by and report to the University. LSC discusses openly these reports with the awarding body and shares them with the student community through publication on its VLE.

1.24   LSC manages its provision well and can clearly demonstrate that its associated curriculum documents provide a clear reference point for programme delivery. Consequently the team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.1): Degree-awarding bodies establish and consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with their own academic frameworks and regulations.

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.25   LSC has established processes for the validation and revalidation of its programme with the University. Its Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manual ensures alignment with its awarding body process. LSC therefore works within the University's framework for validation and the latter in turn undertake to provide advice and guidance to LSC on their academic standards in preparation for formal programme approval events. This advice and guidance supports alignment with appropriate external reference points and in the academic standards between LSC and the University.

1.26   The validation and revalidation processes are undertaken by a panel that is chaired by the University with input from external subject specialists. The panel is required to review the programme design and structure, the admission and assessment criteria, support for learning and its currency and alignment with the academic standards of the University.

1.27   Post-validation modifications to curriculum also require externality and approval according to University processes and these are facilitated through consultation with the Link Tutor. The processes and procedures in place for setting and approving the academic standards of the programme would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.28   The review team looked at adherence to framework documents including LSC's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manual (QAEM), the University's Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook and validation and revalidation reports. The team also met staff, including the University Link Tutor and professional dance practitioners.

1.29   The processes for designing and approving new provision and revalidating existing provision are effective and ensure that academic standards align with those of the awarding body. The recent review and revalidation of the Theatre Dance programme and the adoption of the new curriculum confirms the successful partnership approach undertaken.
The curriculum documents that informed the process embed learning opportunities that successfully reflect recent professional developments in the field of dance, as well as the Subject Benchmark Statement for Dance, Drama and Performance.

1.30   Delivery of the curriculum is subject to continuous monitoring and review to ensure academic standards are maintained in accordance to the University's regulations.
The University requires the completion of an annual monitoring report using a prescribed template, which is submitted to the University for consideration. Completion of the report requires LSC to collate and review of a wide range of information sets inclusive of performance metrics, external examiner reports and Board of Study minutes.

1.31   LSC senior management, administrative and academic teams work closely and effectively with the University Link Tutor to prepare for and ensure adherence to curriculum approval and modification processes. Staff at LSC are also supported in their understanding of UK academic standards, subject specific benchmarks and the Quality Code through participation in meeting forums and through staff development opportunities that are held within the College, in partnership with the University and a range of external organisations.

1.32   The review team concludes that LSC works effectively with the University to implement effective and robust processes for the design and approval of its programme. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.2): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:

- **the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment**
- **both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.**

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.33   LSC has adopted the Academic Regulations of the University. There is a link to the regulations in the Programme Handbook. The regulations allow for the compensation of a failed module in specific circumstances. The award of credit and qualifications is determined by the Assessment Board. Compensation is discretionary and cannot be granted where modules are deemed 'non-compensatable'.

1.34   The Enhancement Strategy 2016-2020, which replaces the Learning and Teaching Strategy, provides the framework for LSC's approach to assessment, including the demonstration of the achievement of the learning outcomes through assessment. Each summative assessment is linked to the module learning outcomes and has published assessment criteria. LSC has published generic grade descriptors. Module handbooks contain assessment briefs and assessment criteria as well as grade descriptors and a link to the Assessment Regulations.

1.35   LSC uses the academic regulations of its awarding body and through its assessment process ensures that these are followed and academic standards are maintained. Therefore the arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.36   The review team reviewed a range of documentation including the Academic Regulations of its validating partner, the QAEM, and external examiner reports. The team held meetings with staff to gain further understanding of the award of credit and the operation of the assessment process.

1.37   LSC adheres to the Academic Regulations of the University. The University maintains oversight through the role of the Link Tutor who chairs the Assessment Board. This ensures that the award of credit and qualifications are in line with its Academic Regulations. LSC's Assessment Strategy emphasises the alignment of assessment to the achievement of learning outcomes. Staff who met with the review team confirmed that the awarding body determines the award of credit or qualifications in the application of its regulations.

1.38   External examiners confirm that the assessment process is rigorous and that the academic regulations are applied correctly. External examiners also confirm that the marking and moderation process has been carried out satisfactorily. External examiner reports seen by the review team were highly satisfied with the academic standards at LSC and confirmed that the process for the award of credit and qualifications is robust.

1.39   The review team found LSC's assessment framework and processes are aligned with those of its awarding body. The academic regulations are applied in a robust and consistent manner as verified by its external examiners. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.3): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.40   LSC works closely with the University under clearly defined responsibilities to ensure the BA (Hons) in Theatre Dance achieves and maintains threshold academic standards. LSC is required to prepare an annual monitoring report using a template provided by its awarding body. The report requires LSC to reflect and evaluate a diverse range of evidence, inclusive of external examiner reports, student metrics on progression and achievement, Board of Study minutes, validation or revalidation reports and student feedback. The process requires LSC to develop an action plan to address any issues or concerns determined from the evidence. The procedures for monitoring and review are themselves monitored and reviewed annually.

1.41   The annual monitoring and programme validation and revalidation processes are inclusive with the University staff, core faculty staff, current students, graduates and wider professional networks consulted continuously on the ongoing vitality and structure of the programme. The processes operated by LSC would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.42   The review team tested this Expectation by comparing the content of annual monitoring and validation and revalidation reports, against the requirements outlined in a range of procedural documents related to the approval and review of curriculum. The team also met senior management, staff and students of LSC to discuss their input to the process and general adherence to academic standards and wider alignment with UK frameworks.

1.43   LSC fulfils its obligations to annually monitor and report on issues associated with the provision that leads to the University award. In doing so it robustly evaluates a diverse range of quantitative and qualitative evidence, inclusive of external examiner reports and student feedback. Minor modifications are allowed as a result of annual programme monitoring with changes approved by the University. Externality in programme monitoring and review is evident through the appointment of subject specialists and external examiners, both of which are contracted to the University.

1.44   The role of external examiners ensures that threshold academic standards are achieved and that academic standards are being maintained. External examiners are asked to confirm in their reports that academic standards are being maintained and that they are comparable to those at other institutions.

1.45   The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and that the continuous review processes maintain academic standards and ensure that the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.4): In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:

- **UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved**
- **the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained.**

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.46   LSC uses the University's policy and procedure for the design and approval of programmes and modules and subsumes this policy within its own Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manual (QAEM). Within this process it is expected that external subject specialists will be involved in the validation of the programme. As part of the design of the programme, there is alignment with the appropriate Subject Benchmark Statement, which is confirmed at validation. The recent revalidation of the BA (Hons) Theatre Dance demonstrates externality in the process.

1.47   The external examining process confirms that UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved and that standards are comparable with other higher education institutions. The appointment of external examiners is undertaken by the validating institution. The QAEM outlines the role and responsibilities of external examiners. This involves scrutinising assessment briefs, examining samples of assessed work and confirming the rigour of the assessment process. In completing their reports external examiners also confirm that there is appropriate alignment with external reference points.

1.48   The review team considered programme validation and revalidation reports for this programme. The review team met staff involved in programme and curriculum development. The arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.49   Within LSC's quality assurance process outlined in its QAEM there is a requirement that external expertise is used in the programme validation process. This process is aligned with that of LSC's validating partner; the University takes the lead in approval events. The review team noted from the validation documentation that externals were involved in the revalidation of the programme.

1.50   The validating partner's appointment of a Link Tutor ensures that partner oversight is maintained. The Link Tutor is expected to take a pro-active role in ensuring policies and procedures of the validating body are followed as appropriate.

1.51   LSC is also accredited by the CDET who carry out an accreditation visit every four years as well as an annual assessment. LSC's accreditation by CDET recognises the professional standing of LSC in its particular area of expertise.

1.52   The review team concludes that the Expectation is met as LSC has in place effective policies and processes for the validation of its programme, using expertise to ensure that the curriculum is current and that academic standards are appropriately set and maintained. The associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

1.53   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

1.54   All seven expectations are met with low levels of risk.

1.55   The review team concludes that the setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards/the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations 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   LSC course approval process aligns with that of the University. The Senior Management Group reviews new programme proposals which are then referred to the Academic Board. This delegates design to a working group involving subject specialists and industry professionals. The sub-group is responsible for developing programme and supporting documentation and the process allows for consultation with staff, students, graduates, subject experts, Heads of Departments (internal and external) and University staff. The Academic Board is required to recommend to LSC's Directors if the documentation can be submitted for validation by its awarding body. In doing so the Board assesses the strategic fit of the programme to LSC and confirms that the submission uses and cites external reference points.

2.2   LSC currently has one programme that was initially designed and approved with the assistance of the University in 2011. The development of the process for programme approval is, therefore, largely informed by sector practice and the experience gained through the redesign of existing provision that was the subject of revalidation in 2016. Should a new programme be validated this would trigger an extraordinary provision meeting to further consider the operational management and learning and teaching resources in readiness for programme implementation. The process is robust and would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.3   The review team considered LSC and University policies and procedures, the committee structure and terms of reference, programme documents and validation/revalidation reports. The team also held meetings with senior staff; academic and administrative staff and University representatives.

2.4   The processes for designing and approving new provision and revalidating existing provision are effective and ensure that academic standards align with those of the awarding body. Staff at the LSC have a clear understanding of the procedures and work closely with the University Link Tutor on the development of curriculum for the Theatre Dance programme. The curriculum documents are well designed and fit for purpose and articulate clearly the course learning outcomes and assessment requirements.

2.5   The recent revalidation event for the Theatre Dance programme was chaired by the University. The process required the participation of external subject specialists, LSC staff and input from professional practitioners. Students were actively involved in the process and were consulted on curriculum design and consequently shaped the outcome of the new programme.

2.6   The alignment and partnership approach taken to ensure the effective design and approval of LSCs provision that leads to a University award leads the team to conclude that the Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B2): Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.

Quality Code, *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education*

Findings

2.7   LSC is responsible for the processes used to market, recruit and admit students; the Access and Participation Policy states a commitment to providing access and encouraging individuals from all backgrounds. The Marketing and Recruitment Committee have responsibility for reviewing policies and for planning, managing and reviewing LSC marketing events and admissions are overseen by the Admissions Review Board.

2.8   Marketing materials are produced by the Press and Marketing Officer under the editorial control of the Director, who checks the material for accuracy and clarity and ensures it adheres to University guidelines. Recruitment activity is varied and, includes Outreach Workshops, the Saturday Associate programme, LSC Juniors, Boys' Day, Summer School and Open Days, which are held for prospective students and their parents, in addition to this LSC actively takes part in events in the community which showcase available programmes. The sessions provide insight into vocational training and encourage exploration of future opportunities. LSC has an easy to navigate website, which contains appropriate information regarding how to apply, course fees, the audition process and entry requirements. All eligible applicants undertake an initial audition and then, if selected, are invited to a recall audition, which includes a physical assessment and an interview. Successful applicants are provided with information regarding accommodation, reading lists, clothing and finances and an in-depth induction process ensures students are prepared for higher education. Recruitment activities appear to encourage and support diversity while selection processes appear fair, inclusive and are transparent to students. The outlined processes appear to support the selection of students who are able to complete the programme and would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.9   The team reviewed the processes for selection, recruitment and admission by talking to staff and students, considering relevant policies and exploring relevant committees, LSC's website and promotional material.

2.10   LSC's Enhancement Strategy includes the aim to increase the diversity of the student intake and there are a variety of policies stating a commitment to inclusivity and equal opportunities. LSC encourage individuals from all backgrounds, regardless of their financial or socio-economic circumstance by offering outreach activity, financial support and targeted recruitment. An example of this would be the Boys' Day, which is offered to widen participation within this demographic, applicants involved in this are offered a free audition; figures suggest that there has been an increase in male applicants, which has been linked to the Boys' Day. Audition processes appear robust, the admissions panel includes teaching staff and subject specialists; decisions are recorded by panel members, minuted by the Admissions Review Board and conveyed to applicants through the online application form. Any new members of the panel are mentored to ensure consistency of expectations. Admissions are handled by a dedicated member of staff who supports students from initial contact to induction, including supporting International students. The induction process includes information relating to higher education expectations, academic misconduct, discussing students as partners; students are inducted at the beginning of each academic year and this is tailored to the level and needs of the students. The students comment

favourably on the audition process, value the induction process and feel they are provided with sufficient information to aid their transition into higher education.

2.11   Overall the review team concludes that the admission, selection and recruitment policies and practices adhere to the principles of fair admission and support the selection of appropriate students, therefore LSC meets the Expectation and the associated level of 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

2.12   LSC's Enhancement Strategy 2016-20 has a number of key strands and puts the student experience at the centre of its activities. It replaces the Learning and Teaching strategy 2013-18. Each priority is allocated a key performance indicator. The Strategy is underpinned by the Learning and Teaching guidelines 2016-17, which highlight elements of good practice. Academic Board, supported by the Learning, Teaching Enhancement Committee (LTEC) maintains oversight of the implementation of the strategy. The LTEC reviews pedagogic development and shares good practice through reports from Faculty Forums. The QAEM also reinforces support for learning and teaching practice.

2.13   Staff development underpins and is a component of each strand of the Enhancement Strategy. LSC also has a Staff Development policy that demonstrates a clear commitment to staff development and is linked to LSC's strategic priorities. There is a staff area on the VLE that provides information on staff development opportunities. The strategy reinforces LSC's support for teaching practice, and includes reflective practice, action research and continuous professional development. LSC uses the Programme Handbook to increase staff and student awareness of and engagement with the enhancement process.

2.14   There is a process flowchart for appointment and induction of staff to ensure consistency in the process. Academic staff as part of the appointment process are observed taking a class. All staff undergo an induction into LSC and the programme. LSC is committed to the continuous development of all staff. The Staff Development Team (SDT) identifies staff development themes and opportunities. In addition the Professional and Research network (PRN) enables staff to discuss current trends in their subject areas. There is an online forum on the VLE.

2.15   LSC welcomes staff development requests from individual academic and support staff, supported by the Head of Department. It organises a twice-yearly staff briefing and a development day (Lift-Off) and staff are invited to attend the University's annual learning and teaching conference.

2.16   The Faculty Recruitment and Enhancement Committee (FREC) and the SDT maintain oversight of the recruitment, appointment and development of staff and receive reports on the work of the PRN and on peer supported review of teaching (PSRT).

2.17   LSC has strategies for learning and teaching, the development and support of its academic staff and the development of learning opportunities for its students. The arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.18   The review team scrutinised a range of documentation, including committee minutes, reports on staff development relating to teaching practice and the embedding of peer review, and annual monitoring reports. The team also met a number of staff who commented on their experience.

2.19   The Enhancement Strategy emphasises the importance of research and professional activity as a key priority, with particular emphasis on professional practice, curricular research and the enhancement of LSC's reputation through publications, and conferences. All academic staff are expected to engage in evidence-based enhancement of their teaching practice through, for example, class surveys and questionnaires, which in turn feed into the annual monitoring process. LSC is committed to performance as a learning opportunity and this is embedded within the programme. This is strongly supported by external examiners, staff and students. Many academic staff have been or are professional practitioners and have links to the sector which is reflected in the teaching and performance elements of the programme. When the University revalidated the BA (Hons) in Theatre Dance, it commended the wide range of options and the well-rounded curriculum.

2.20   Staff development is linked to LSC's strategic priorities. The new Learning and Teaching Strategy is well understood by staff. The review team heard that it had been discussed extensively with staff through the committee structure and at events such as Lift Off, which is the biannual staff development. The strong connections with professional practice are also encouraged and supported in the Strategy.

2.21   LSC sets out the generic staff development expectations for all staff, including support staff. The Head of Learning and Teaching is LSC's lead for ensuring the enhancement of teaching practice and reports to the SDT. Academic Board also receives reports on staff development. The review team heard from staff about a wide range of staff development opportunities for all staff, including those who are part-time and self-employed. Staff are also able to attend specific staff development activities provided by LSC's awarding body, such as the annual learning and teaching conference. There is also online training available on DIVA in academic misconduct and assessment procedures. The team was informed that a significant number of staff are practitioners, and are accredited by their own professional bodies; they are encouraged to share their expertise both in the classroom and through the Faculty Forum and PRN.

2.22   Opportunities for teaching staff to reflect on teaching practice are embedded within the PSRT scheme which is now operational across LSC. The Head of Learning and Teaching and Faculty Forums report on engagement with PSRT to LTEC. Staff who met the review team were able to provide examples of how they had enhanced their practice through this process. Although it is a confidential process the Head of Learning and Teaching maintains oversight of its operation, identifies staff development needs and disseminates good practice. The team noted that there is also targeted staff development, such as use of plagiarism-detection software. This can be through one-to-one or group sessions to enable the potential for engagement by all staff.

2.23   There are mechanisms for academic and professional services staff to receive feedback from students through module feedback, annual surveys and student representation on committees, such as the Student Representatives Forum. LSC has run student surveys across all levels of the degree for some years and has formally taken part in the NSS. The staff also use quality assurance processes such as annual monitoring review, and the external examining process to reflect on potential changes to their academic and performance practice. Students made an explicit contribution to the development of the new programme.

2.24   Lift Off day enables LSC to bring together Faculty staff to focus on particular themes, teaching practice and update on current strategies and developments. It is reviewed and evaluated by the SDT. LSC pays for its part-time staff to attend to encourage a high level of engagement and also monitors attendance. Attendance at Lift Off is a key performance indicator in the Enhancement Strategy.

2.25   Staff informed the review team that LSC is actively working on increasing the number of staff who are members of the HEA, although it recognises that this is challenging given that many academic staff are part-time or self-employed. Staff are offered mentoring and financial support. Increased membership of the HEA is a key performance indicator in the Enhancement Strategy.

2.26   The review team considers that the systematic approach to the development of all staff; including part-time and self-employed faculty staff which enhances learning, teaching and support for students is **good practice**.

2.27   LSC has in place effective procedures to review the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practice to enable and support students to develop as independent learners and study their chosen subject. LSC works with its staff and students in developing and implementing these procedures. The review team confirms that Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B4): Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

Quality Code, *Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement*

Findings

2.28   LSC's QAEM provides details of the support available to students to enable them to realise their full potential. This support covers personal tutoring, student welfare, special needs, learning support and careers support. The Enhancement Strategy enables the enhancement of the student experience through the engagement of students in the review of academic and support services. Students are generally very satisfied with the range of support provided by LSC.

2.29   The Student Welfare Team and the Student Support and Progress Committee maintain oversight of support for student development. The Student Welfare Team reviews pastoral care, including nutrition, physiotherapy, and counselling. The QAEM provides details of the range of support available to support students in transitioning to higher education and progressing through their programme.

2.30   The core introductory module includes an introduction to study skills. There are also Study Skills guidelines available on the VLE. The Learning and Teaching Guidelines build formative assessment and reflective practice into programme design. Students reported satisfaction with the assessment process, both formative and summative, the timing and quality of feedback and the range of options offered throughout the curriculum.

2.31   All students undertake an induction into LSC and the programme which is evaluated by students and reviewed by the Student Induction Team. Students with special needs are supported by a separate Specific Learning Difficulties Support Policy. A range of other policies demonstrate LSC's commitment to enabling students to have a well-supported learning environment for example, Anti-bullying and Anti-harassment, Disordered Eating Support, and Equal Opportunities.

2.32   LSC has developed an Assessment and Feedback Policy which provides details for students and staff about the assessment process, including feedback, extenuating circumstances, academic misconduct and the use of plagiarism-detection software. The Enhancement Strategy emphasises the importance of assessment for learning, the role of formative assessment and different/creative/mechanisms for providing feedback.

2.33   LSC uses a number of mechanisms to monitor the arrangements for enabling student development and support, including annual monitoring, student surveys and the NSS. Within the committee structure, student representatives sit on a number of committees including Academic Board, LTEC and Health and Safety Committee; they also attend the Board of Study, Student Representatives Forum, and Student Engagement Team. Oversight of student performance, including monitoring the data on progression and completion rests with Student Support and Progress Committee. This committee also reviews outcomes trends post assessment, the induction week survey and the study skills guidelines.

2.34   LSC is committed to equal access and support for all students and has policies to support students in achieving the learning outcomes for the programme. This involves referral for additional support where appropriate.

2.35   LSC has a range of policies and practices for developing and supporting its students to enable them to achieve their academic and professional potential. The arrangements allow the Expectation to be met.

2.36   The team reviewed extensive documentation including policy papers, committee minutes, VLE resources, student feedback and met senior staff, students, and academic and professional support staff.

2.37   All programme and student support information is available on the VLE, which has recently been upgraded. It also has information on the outcomes of surveys, external examiner reports and LSC's news bulletin which contains information on visits by industry professionals and performance opportunities. There is also guidance on study skills.

2.38   From discussions with staff and students and scrutiny of the documentation provided the review team found LSC to be highly supportive of its students. It has in place a range of support in place to enable students to transition to and progress within higher education. Students new to LSC are provided with a range of information about LSC, access to funding, support services, their programme and performance opportunities. The induction period is evaluated through student feedback and areas for improvement are considered by the Student Induction Team.

2.39   Students with special needs are also supported and where appropriate may be referred for independent specialist assessment and support (the Halcyon Centre). Reasonable adjustments are offered in the assessment process.

2.40   LSC also has in place a detailed personal tutoring policy for its Level 4 and 5 students, which has recently been revised. Meetings with personal tutors may be one to one or group. Records of meetings are kept and referrals made to the appropriate support service. There is oversight of the operation of the policy from a staff and student perspective by the Head of Pastoral Care and the Registrar respectively. The updated policy will be reviewed by the Student Welfare Team. While some students who met the review team were not fully conversant with the revised policy, students reported that they were aware of the range of support available, felt well supported and can raise any issues expeditiously through the open-door policy.

2.41   The team considers the extent and accessibility of student support that reflects the particular needs of its students is **good practice**.

2.42   Employability is a key strand in the enhancement strategy. The Careers Guidance series provides lectures on a range of topics to support students' professional development and involve alumni and practitioners. The Professional Development and Employability Team (PDET) maintains oversight of LSC's support for enhancing the employability of its students. Minutes seen by the review team confirmed LSC's commitment to students' professional development through access to professional support, such as agents, presentations by employers and companies and its Kick Start initiative, a student development day, mentoring by alumni, and access to practitioners and professional networks.

2.43   LSC publishes a list of performance opportunities each year; these include Student Platform, Design for Dance, Dance Lab; Spring Showcase, Company Tours and Dance Overture. LSC carries out a graduate survey of destinations each year. The PDET receives and considers reports on graduate destinations. LSC has recently taken part in its first Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE).

2.44   Third year students also have the option to replace module M302 with work-based learning subject to a documented approval process (See Expectation B10). Third year students chose a company led by an artistic director. This enables students to understand more fully professional practice and encourages them to prepare for the next stage of their careers by connecting with prospective employers, agents and being part of running a company. Faculty staff also have extensive professional networks that facilitate student

employability through visiting speakers, external performance opportunities and mentoring by alumni. These networks are currently informal. However, LSC has plans to establish these link more formally.

2.45   The resources available to students are evaluated through surveys and the annual monitoring process. The Learning Resources and Enhancement Committee maintains oversight of the resources for learning and teaching. The outcomes of surveys are considered through the committee structure on which students are represented. LSC has recently taken part in its first NSS. External examiners also comment positively on the level and appropriateness of resources and professionally ready dancers. The review team heard that the students were satisfied with the standard of the facilities, their access to professional practitioners, and the emphasis on performance embedded within the programme.

2.46   The review team considers that the embedding of professional practice throughout the curriculum and the extracurricular activities, including engagement with professional networks enabling students to enhance their employment opportunities is **good practice**.

2.47   LSC's student support arrangements are effectively designed to enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. There is good practice in the range and accessibility of student support and access to professional practice. The team concludes that the arrangements in place to support student achievement meet the Expectation and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B5): Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

Quality Code, *Chapter B5: Student Engagement*

Findings

2.48   LSC states a commitment to 'facilitating and stimulating student engagement' through both formal and informal mechanisms. There is an open-door policy that provides individual support, alongside collection of feedback through various surveys and LSC provide opportunities for engagement through an active student representative system. LSC's Enhancement Strategy includes clear aims to strengthen current approaches and encourage a culture of partnership; the effectiveness of student engagement is reviewed by the Student Engagement Team.

2.49   LSC have a comprehensive committee structure which highlights meetings where students are invited. There is student representation at a number of committees; the minutes show student representatives are present in most meetings and monitoring data suggests previous targets of 50 per cent attendance have been exceeded and the target has now been increased to 80 per cent. Student representation is explained at induction and students are provided with effective information explaining what each meeting does, with clear differentiation for boards, committees and forums. In addition to this student representatives are invited for a personalised induction by the committee secretaries, who ensure the representatives, are prepared for relevant committees, introducing key documents, aims and responsibilities.

2.50   The Student Representative Forum discusses the day-to-day current provision and future developments at LSC and provides students with a forum to represent the views of their peers in raising any concerns, questions or issues to management; forums are well attended with resulting action plans.

2.51   Student surveys are used to provide evidence-based enhancement including the NSS and Level 4 and Level 5 internal surveys, a student induction survey and class surveys. Consideration of the types of surveys used was undertaken by a sub-set of the Student Engagement Team, attended by student representatives, resulting in a report and action plan showing clear consideration of tools for effective student engagement.

2.52   LSC are embedding student engagement effectively in all aspects of the educational experience and creating an evolving culture of partnership; the concept of students as partners is shared with both staff and students. Students are actively engaged through both formal and informal processes with an extensive student representative system, which is outlined for both staff and students and results in tangible impacts for students. The design therefore appears to allow the Expectation to be met.

2.53   In order to consider student engagement practice at LSC the team reviewed documents related to student engagement, including induction materials and explored minutes of committees with student representation. In addition to this the team discussed student engagement with staff and students to explore how effective steps to engage students are.

2.54   Students are invited to sign up as a student representative at induction; this creates a pool of student representatives who can sign up to particular committees and share the time commitment effectively, which is beneficial with the comprehensive committee structure and allows more students the opportunity to develop valuable transferable skills which could

aid employability. Students confirm that while there is no formal training for student representatives they feel fully supported in their role, are prepared before meetings and feel they are valued as partners.

2.55   Impact of student engagement can be seen in a number of examples including the introduction of an Open Mic Night, the creation of Health and Well-being Weeks, LSC sports clothes, and changes to assessment deadlines. Impact is shared through a half-termly bulletin detailing enhancements made as a result of student feedback. The concept of student as partners is shared with both staff and students.

2.56   The review team concludes that LSC takes deliberate steps to engage students, formally and informally in quality assurance and the enhancement of their educational experience, there are clear attempts to build a culture of partnership allows the Expectation to be met and that the associated level of risk 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

2.57   LSC Assessment and Feedback Policy states a commitment to fair and reliable assessment and the Enhancement Strategy includes the commitment to enable students to achieve the projected outcomes through a well-aligned and reliable assessment process. The Student Support and Progress Committee review grades with resulting action plans and all grades are decided at the Assessment Board, overseen by the University.

2.58   At LSC, the programmes combine a mixture of formative and summative assessment to integrate learning and assessment and assessment types are varied to encourage inclusivity. The Learning and Teaching Guidelines address expectations of assessment and encourages effective, timely feedback, while general assessment expectations are made clear in the QAEM, including discussion related to second marking, feedback, relevant committees and academic misconduct.

2.59   Recognition of prior learning (discussed as accreditation of prior learning (APL)) is outlined in the QAEM, which states the responsibility rests with the applicant to provide sufficient evidence. The process is discussed and applicants are signposted to relevant information. APL is the responsibility of the Admissions Board and is assessed by the Chair.

2.60   There are mechanisms in place to ensure students are able to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes and there are clear processes for marking, moderation and examination boards which appear equitable, valid and reliable therefore the arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.61   In order to test the Expectation, the team had meetings with staff and students and reviewed the relevant documents, policies and guidelines which are available to staff and students, considered the external moderation arrangements and explored the committee structure.

2.62   A robust Programme Handbook provides valuable information, defining the difference between formative and summative assessment and providing a clear assessment schedule. The Programme Handbook includes all module narratives, which contain more detailed assessment information, including clear weighting and dates. Programme learning outcomes are mapped to modules. Module Handbooks contain a further, very detailed, breakdown of assessment expectations. Students feel the information provided aids their ability to meet learning outcomes and they value the range of assessments available, including the opportunity to undertake work-based learning for one module (discussed in more detail in Expectation B10). Academic integrity is promoted, across all levels, through advisory sessions and during induction. LSC use plagiarism-detection software as a learning tool to promote good academic practice and academic misconduct is rare; when it does occur, it is dealt with using the University's regulations and recorded for monitoring purposes.

2.63   Staff have been provided with development opportunities around assessment and feedback during the Lift Off event and also have the opportunity to participate in individual or

small group development sessions where appropriate. External examiners believe assessment, marking and feedback to be appropriate and both employers and students value the variety of learning opportunities available, which results in increased employability. All grades are collated and presented at the Assessment Board where the final grade decisions are made; this is chaired by the University's Link Tutor and complies with the University regulations to ensure a consistent approach.

2.64   The team concludes that students are provided with a variety of opportunities, which not only allow them to meet the learning outcomes but also increase employability. There are mechanisms in place that allow LSC to operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, therefore the Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B7): Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.

Quality Code, *Chapter B7: External Examining*

Findings

2.65   External examiners are appointed by the University on the recommendation of LSC. The Senior Management Group formally records its approval. External examiners are appointed for a period of 4 years. There are two external examiners appointed to the BA (Hons) Theatre Dance degree programme. The QAEM also outlines the role and responsibilities of externals. Students are informed of the names of the external examiners in the Programme Handbook and on the VLE.

2.66   External examiners submit their reports to the University on a standard template. The reports are then forwarded to LSC. The Programme Leader prepares a response within 6 weeks of receiving the report. The response is agreed with the Link Tutor before being forwarded to the external examiner. The report informs the annual monitoring process.

2.67   LSC makes appropriate use of its external examiners to verify and confirm academic standards. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met in principle.

2.68   The team reviewed a range of documentation including the policy for appointment, external examiner reports, responses and annual monitoring reports. The team also met staff and students to ascertain how the policy operated in practice.

2.69   The arrangements for external examining including appointment and induction are managed by the validating partner. LSC's QAEM also sets out the relationship between LSC and its external examiners; this policy is aligned with the requirements of the validating institution. The Programme leader ensures that the external examiners are fully conversant with the policies and practices of LSC.

2.70   The process for the appointment, induction and reporting of external examiners is clearly laid out and adhered to by LSC and its staff. Arrangements are made for externals to approve assessment briefs and view live performances. The review team heard about the high level of engagement by staff with external examiners, leading, where appropriate, to changes in the curriculum. Staff who met with the review team demonstrated a good understanding of the external examiner system and its contribution to the maintenance of academic standards as well as the enhancement of student learning opportunities.

2.71   The report template requires external examiners to confirm the appropriateness of standards for the programme; the marking and moderation process, the assessment process and that appropriate response has been made to the previous report. It also identifies any good practice.

2.72   External examiner reports seen by the review team confirmed that standards were being appropriately set and provided informative and constructive feedback to support the enhancement of the learning experience. The University Link Tutor maintains oversight of the external examiner process with its partner and is responsible for their induction, chairing the assessment board and ensuring that LSC is responding appropriately and in a timely manner to the reports.

2.73   The team noted that external examiner reports are available on the VLE and are considered at Academic Board which has student representatives. A summary is also considered at the Board of Study, which student representatives also attend.

2.74   The team concludes that the policy for the appointment of and engagement with its external examiners is clearly set out and effectively implemented. Through its reporting systems, LSC makes scrupulous use of its external examiners in the setting and maintaining of standards. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B8): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.

Quality Code, *Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review*

Findings

2.75   LSC's systematic process for programme monitoring and review is outlined in their Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manual which were written to align with the University's Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook. This includes an annual cycle of programme monitoring and a six-year cycle of period review, the latter of which is also a mechanism for updating the memorandum of cooperation.

2.76   The annual monitoring report is produced on a standard University template and is written by LSC's Head of Learning and Teaching. It is sent to the University Link Tutor for feedback. It is informed by external examiner reports, assessment board minutes and student data on admissions, progression and achievement. Student surveys and feedback mechanisms also inform the process.

2.77   LSC staff are invited to comment on the draft annual monitoring reports prior to submission and review at the Board of Study and Academic Board. The Academic Board confirms any issues identified and formulates a plan of action to address them. The validating institution formally considers the annual monitoring report and provides feedback to LSC. Progress against the action plan is overseen by the Academic Board and Board of Study. Modifications of curriculum are allowed as a result of annual programme monitoring but the changes must be ratified by the University.

2.78   The six-year cycle of period review for revalidating the programmes is also overseen by the University. The process requires LSC to evaluate the full range of data from the annual monitoring process and to ensure that students inform the design and re-approval process. Externality in programme monitoring and review is evident through the appointment of subject specialists and external examiners, both of which are contracted to the awarding body.

2.79   The committee structure and processes in place to monitor and review its provision would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.80   The review team considered annual monitoring, validation and revalidation reports, procedural documents and committee minutes. The team also met staff, students and University representatives.

2.81   While the annual report is prepared by LSC Head of Learning and Teaching the overall responsibility for ensuring the process is implemented according to procedure rests with the Dean of Studies/Programme Leader and Head of Learning and Teaching, both of whom report to the College Director.

2.82   The Academic Board has strategic oversight of programme monitoring and review and is supported by reports that feed through the committee structure, including the Quality Management and Enhancement Group and Board of Study. The students that met the review team confirmed the range of formal and informal feedback mechanisms led to programme specific actions that enhanced delivery of the programme. They also confirmed that they provide feedback via a range of surveys that are reviewed during Student Engagement Team meetings. LSC's monitoring and review processes are themselves

reviewed at the Quality Management and Enhancement Group and reported on to the Academic Board.

2.83   The annual monitoring process is evidence based and effective in identifying issues to be addressed by a formal action plan. The reports also contain a review of the previous year's actions, as such they are cyclical in nature and provide a systematic mechanism for the continuous monitoring and review of the Theatre Dance programme.

2.84   The Theatre Dance programme was revalidated in 2016 and this provided LSC with an opportunity to redesign the provision to ensure documentation reflected recent changes in external reference points, learning outcomes and assessments and current sector practice. The revalidation led to commendations from the review panel on the design and balance of the programme and the use of well-constructed assessment methods to support learning. The review process was robust and supported by curriculum documentation and the analysis of student data and reports from the annual monitoring process.

2.85   The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and that the review and monitoring processes are effective and consequently the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B9): Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.

Quality Code, *Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints*

Findings

2.86   Complaints regarding teaching and learning are LSC's responsibility. However, they can be raised at the University if LSC procedures have been exhausted. The University holds final responsibility for academic appeals. Both processes are discussed in detail in the Complaints and Appeal Procedure, which is on the VLE.

2.87   Academic Appeals and Complaints are both discussed in one document, however, the difference is explained. The procedure is clear, including the use of informal processes before progressing to formal processes, timeframes are given and students are effectively signposted to the University for Academic Appeals. The Complaints and Appeal Procedure is on the VLE, in addition to this there is a link to Appeals information and the complaints procedure is outlined in Programme Handbook, suggesting students and staff have access to the appropriate information. Complaints and appeals procedures are in place and made available to students. The Complaint and Appeal Procedure appears fair, contains relevant, accessible information with clear timeframes and informal resolution is effectively encouraged. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.88   The team reviewed the Complaint and Appeal Procedure and information available to both staff and students and discussed how this worked in practice and examples of informal resolution with staff and students.

2.89   LSC's open-door policy, individual approach and extensive student representation systems appear to provide opportunity for informal resolution; any issues raised are then actioned where appropriate, allowing enhancement opportunities. Students are encouraged to address issues informally with staff and the Dean of Studies and/or Director where appropriate. Students felt able to discuss concerns with staff and while they had not used the processes and were not aware of the formal procedures they felt confident that they would know where to find the appropriate information. Support staff are aware of their responsibilities around complaints and appeals and have received training regarding changing sector expectations. The team heard that the current policy is under review to consider how this could be made more accessible for students.

2.90   The team concludes that LSC have appropriate procedures in place that are fair, accessible, and timely and provide opportunity for informal resolution that is valued by the student body; the Expectation is therefore met with a low level of associated risk.

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

2.91   The memorandum of cooperation with the University does not allow for serial arrangements and the co-delivery of the BA Hons in Theatre Dance. The Theatre Dance programme does, however, allow students the opportunity to undertake work-based learning and this is part of the College's commitment to fostering ongoing links with the industry to improve the employability of its students.

2.92   Work-based learning is taken in lieu of the final year FHEQ Level 6 module, such work-based learning opportunities are subject to application by the student and the acceptance of a formal contractual arrangement between LSC and the work-based learning provider. The placement must provide equivalent opportunity to meet the learning outcomes of the module and students are also required to complete and submit a critical reflection to support the award of credit.

2.93   The work-based placements are managed appropriately and this would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.94   The review team looked at the module handbook and the processes and supporting documents for managing the worked based provision. The team also met students and staff to discuss their role in ensuring the appropriateness of work-based placements.

2.95   While it is the responsibility of the student to arrange the work-based learning placement, the activity must be supported by a formal contract of employment that has to be approved by LSC. All opportunities are robustly scrutinised to ensure the employers understand what is required of them and to ensure the contractual arrangement confirms that the work-based learning provides the same level of assessment as the in-house process and that the provision is cost effective.

2.96   The responsibility for assessment rests with LSC with the Programme Leader and external examiner required to attend a performance to assess the student in the same way they would with other students. Both are required to ensure that the assessment and external examiner processes adhere to the University guidelines.

2.97   The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and that the processes for managing worked-based learning are effective and ensure that the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B11): Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols.
This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.

Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*

Findings

2.98   LSC does not offer research degrees.

Expectation: Not applicable
Level of risk: Not applicable

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

2.100   All 10 applicable expectations are met with low levels of risk. There are three features of good practice regarding the systematic approach to the professional development of staff, the embedding of professional practice throughout the curriculum and extra-curricular activities and extent and accessibility of student support. There are no recommendations for improvement or affirmations. LSC has plans to enhance this area further. Student engagement in the management of this area is widespread and supported. Managing the needs of students is a clear focus of LSC's strategies and policies in this area.

2.101   The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at the provider is **commended**.

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   LSC provide information to the public, prospective and current students through its website and information for current students is available through its VLE. Review of marketing provision, including the website and review of policies and procedures, is the responsibility of the Marketing and Recruitment Committee and the VLE Review Team was set up to evaluate, advise and facilitate on the use of LSC's VLE. The Director has final responsibility for all published material with additional oversight provided by the awarding body.

3.2   LSC's website is well organised and accessible, it contains effective information regarding the College, the programme on offer, the admissions process and useful information about welfare, accommodation, funding, and upcoming events. The programme details on the website provide a clear breakdown of what to expect each year alongside a detailed programme specification. The VLE contains programme information, including programme and module handbooks, relevant policies and procedures and student support information; this is regularly reviewed and updated. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manual gives detailed information on all aspects of the learning experience including programme design, student engagement, assessment and teaching and learning; this is available to both staff and students. Consideration of published material can be seen in the Marketing and Recruitment Committee and VLE Review Team. LSC graduates receive a breakdown of their final grades and a letter confirming their final classification. A few months later they receive a Diploma Supplement and a Certificate, which are approved by the University.

3.3   LSC produces information for the intended audiences that appears to be robust, accessible and fit for purpose. There are processes in place to ensure information is accessible, accurate and trustworthy. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

3.4   In order to review the information provided the team participated in meetings with both staff and students and considered information available to the public, prospective and current students through the website, at induction and through LSC's VLE, relevant policies, procedures and quality assurance processes.

3.5   Students agreed the information provided to them before they enrolled on the course was fit for purpose, they felt prepared for the auditions process. Where changes have been made to the course, for example as a result of revalidation, this was highlighted on the homepage of the website and all students were signposted to this. Policies and procedures are available on the website and VLE and external examiners agree sufficient information is available to them to undertake their role effectively.

3.6   Current students receive information from a number of sources, there is a robust induction process, which aids not only the transition into higher education but also the transition between levels. The Programme Handbook offers comprehensive information

regarding the course content and assessment expectations, as well as providing an academic calendar and signposting to relevant policies. Module Handbooks provide detailed information regarding content, delivery and assessment; students comment on the usefulness of information provided.

3.7　　　Responsibility for the information provided to students through the VLE is shared, individuals are made aware of their responsibilities through the VLE Responsibilities Checklist; this has been reviewed and updated for 2017-18 to allow for monitoring and is tracked by the VLE Review Team.

3.8　　　The team concludes that there are mechanisms in place to ensure information is accessible and trustworthy, the information provided is robust and fit for purpose therefore the Expectation is met with an associated low level of risk.

Expectation:　Met
Level of risk:　Low

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

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

3.10   The Expectation is met with a low level of risk.

3.11   The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at the provider **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 LSC's Enhancement Strategy emphasises the link between the LSC's quality assurance procedures and the culture of quality enhancement. The strategy clearly articulates LSC's core commitments to the enhancement of the student experience aligned with key performance indicators. The enhancement priorities include learning, teaching and assessment, teaching practice, effective student support services, employability, and research and professional activity.

4.2 Good practice in learning, teaching and assessment is identified and shared through PSRT, Lift Off, and the Professional Research Network forum with reports being made to a number of committees.

4.3 A range of quality assurance mechanisms also contribute to the identification of potential enhancement, including annual monitoring, programme revalidation and review and professional body recognition.

4.4 Significant emphasis is placed on developing student performance. Opportunities for students to undertake a range of professional and performance activities are embedded within the curriculum. This commitment to professional practice is also evidenced in teaching staff appointments, staff development opportunities and engagement with professional networks.

4.5 LSC is taking a variety of steps to facilitate improvement in student learning opportunities. The arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

4.6 The review team considered a range of documentation including committee minutes, policy documents, strategies and action plans. The team also met with senior managers, academic and professional support staff as well as student representatives.

4.7 The Enhancement Strategy sets out the strategic priorities monitored against a set of key performance indicators. Staff informed the review team that the strategy has been discussed in various committees and influences how they develop the curriculum. A number of committees play a key role in disseminating enhancements as do events such as Lift Off. The team also heard that extensive mapping of the Quality Code has led to the identification of areas for enhancement as well as good practice. Responsibility for delivering the key priorities in the Strategy is allocated across a number of committees.

4.8 The QAEM is a comprehensive manual available on the VLE that outlines key policies and processes to support and enable the enhancement of the student experience. The QAEM is reviewed and updated annually through the committee structure.

4.9 The reports seen by the review team as part of the annual monitoring process identify areas for improvement and good practice. External examiner reports feed into this process. The review team was informed by staff that discussions with external examiners also lead to changes to the curriculum and approaches to practice. Staff have access to a range of data on retention, progression and student employment, including the internal NSS, the DLHE, retention, progression and achievement. The Student Welfare Team, the Student

Support and Progress Committee and the Professional Development and Employability Team monitor key data and review the impact of strategies and initiatives.

4.10   Students contribute to the enhancement process through their membership of key committees, such as the Academic Board, Board of Study, Student Engagement Team, Student Representatives Forum; as well as the student representation scheme, student surveys, and feedback on modules as well as feeding into the recent revalidation of the programme.

4.11   The team heard that students felt their voice was being heard and were able to provide examples of how LSC had responded to issues raised by the student body. LSC has recruited a larger pool of student volunteers as representatives to improve availability and student attendance at meetings.

4.12   Staff and students are kept informed of new developments, performance opportunities, support sessions, revisions to policy and practice through the VLE. LSC also publishes a termly newsletter for staff and students.

4.13   The review team was informed that the PSRT is used to identify and share good practice with staff being encouraged to reflect on their observations. The annual report produced by the Head of Learning and Teaching is considered by the Staff Development Team. It feeds into the agenda for Lift Off and the Professional and Research Network.

4.14   LSC demonstrates a clear commitment through its strategies, policies and processes to the enhancement of student learning opportunities. Through its alignment and mapping of the Quality Code it is developing an ethos of continuous improvement. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

4.16   The Expectation is met with a low level of risk

4.17   The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at the provider is **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.

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.