



# Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of Royal Academy of Dance

June 2017

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## About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD). The review took place from 20 to 22 June 2017 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Mr Hugo Burchell
- Dr Nicola Jackson
- Mr Matthew Kearns (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)<sup>1</sup> 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](#)<sup>2</sup> and explains the method for [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).<sup>3</sup> For an explanation of terms see the glossary at the end of this report.

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<sup>1</sup> The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code).

<sup>2</sup> QAA website: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk).

<sup>3</sup> Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers): [www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education](http://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 degree-awarding bodies **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

### Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice**.

- The individualised and proactive study support provided to students, including those on placement, which enables students' academic and professional development (Expectation B4).
- The wide range of placement opportunities, which effectively enhance students' employability (Expectation B4).
- The institutional commitment to supporting staff research and scholarly activity, which effectively informs programme development and delivery (Enhancement).

### Recommendations

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

By January 2018:

- make explicit, and regularly evaluate, clearly defined targets for the learning and teaching strategy (Expectation B3)
- develop institutional mechanisms to provide an annual overview of higher education that includes an evaluation of comparative data for student achievement and satisfaction (Expectation B8, B5)
- ensure that the strategy underpinning enhancement initiatives is more clearly defined and supported by specific and measurable targets (Enhancement).

### Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions already being taken to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to students:

- the action being taken to support students' understanding of the mechanisms through which they can raise issues and receive responses in a timely and effective fashion (Expectation B5)
- the steps being taken to support students' understanding of different types of assessment feedback, and further develop assessment literacy (Expectation B6).

## **Financial sustainability, management and governance**

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

## About the provider

The Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) is a company incorporated by Royal Statute, and is registered as a charity. The RAD was founded in 1920 as the Association of Teachers of Operatic Dancing of Great Britain. The RAD operates as a not-for-profit organisation with a worldwide examining and membership function. It is also an accredited provider of initial teacher training. The RAD is located in Battersea, South West London, with a range of facilities including a library and archive, information technology suites and performance spaces.

The RAD delivered its first full-time degree programme, validated by the University of Durham, in 1992. Between 2004 and 2016 the RAD worked in partnership with the University of Surrey. Following a strategic review of its partnership activity, the University of Surrey gave notice that it would be terminating its agreement. In 2015 a new institutional agreement was signed with the University of Bath as a new awarding body. The agreement defines the responsibilities of both organisations, with the RAD working within the requirements of the University of Bath's Quality Assurance Code of Practice. Individual programme-level agreements outlining specific responsibilities have also been signed for the four programmes currently validated.

The RAD's strategic plan sets out its mission as 'leading the world in dance education and training'. Its four strategic objectives support this mission through its vision to be the leading international authority on dance teacher education and professional development; to be the preferred membership organisation for dance teachers and students; to be an international leader in providing dance examinations; and to be recognised as a leading international source of expertise on the benefits of dance to the community.

In 2020 the RAD will be moving to new purpose-built premises, also in Battersea. The move is intended to enhance the student experience by providing much larger premises and a high quality physical environment, with better facilities, including purpose-built performance spaces, formal and informal learning areas, a library and archive.

The Faculty of Education within the RAD was established in 1999 and now delivers a range of dance teacher programmes to over 1,000 students of whom, in 2016-17, 183 are registered on higher education programmes. Of these 183 students, 94 are studying by distance learning. There are 21 full and part-time teaching staff.

The RAD was subject to a Review for Specific Course Designation in 2014. The report identified two areas of good practice, including the support for placement mentors, and research activity and links with the dance industry. There were two advisable recommendations related to assessment practice, and three desirable recommendations concerning the clarification of the committee structure, facilitating the attendance of students at meetings, and formalising the procedures to ensure consistency of programme handbooks. Following that review the RAD formulated an action plan, which informed the annual monitoring visits. At the 2016 monitoring visit the RAD was deemed to have made acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, evaluate and enhance its higher education provision.

## 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 Responsibility for setting and maintaining threshold standards is in practice shared between the RAD and its awarding body, the University of Bath. Programmes designed and delivered by the RAD are currently validated by the awarding body and are subject to the latter's approval and review processes. The respective responsibilities of the RAD and the University are codified in an institutional agreement, and in separate agreements for each validated award.

1.2 The RAD has developed thorough and well-documented institutional frameworks, policies and procedures that govern academic standards. These include a set of General Regulations, a Code of Practice on the Assessment of Students' Work, a Quality Assurance Policy and an Academic Standards Policy. These documents were approved by the University as part of the institutional validation process. The regulatory framework and associated policies, and its clearly defined responsibilities for standards under the terms of its agreement with the University, would enable this Expectation to be met.

1.3 The team considered a range of documentation relating to the setting and maintenance of threshold standards from both the awarding body and the RAD. The team also met with staff and students, and with a representative from the University, to discuss how academic standards are managed in practice.

1.4 The RAD's committee structure is the key mechanism for maintaining and assuring academic standards. The Education Sub-Committee of the Board of Trustees has responsibility for ensuring that validated programmes are maintained to the appropriate standards. The committee, which includes representation from the University, receives external examiners' reports and considers proposals for modifications to programmes of study. The Policy and Strategy Committee is responsible for the review and approval of quality assurance policies and procedures. The Learning and Teaching Committee has a specific role in assuring the maintenance of academic standards of programmes of study, and receives and evaluates issues from Annual Programme Review, and periodic review.

1.5 The RAD's General Regulations outline the qualifications and credit that are awarded to students in line with nationally recognised external reference points, including *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ). Programme-specific regulations describe the classifications for the award, pass marks for each level and stage of study, and requirements for progression. Together with programme specifications, they also specify the modules that comprise the programme, the level of each module and its credit value. Programme specifications state the relevant Subject Benchmark Statement with which the programme is aligned. Programme handbooks include module descriptors that outline each module's alignment with the FHEQ and the intended learning outcomes. Programme learning outcomes inform those of individual modules, although comprehensive mapping has only been completed for one programme, in advance of the recent periodic review. The RAD intends to complete this mapping process for its other higher education programmes.

1.6 Programme approval and periodic review processes test alignment with the relevant external reference points and consider the appropriateness of learning outcomes and associated assessment methods. External examiners' reports confirm that national threshold standards are set and maintained appropriately and are being met.

1.7 Overall, the review team found evidence that the awards offered are mapped against relevant national benchmarks through the joint responsibilities with the awarding body. The RAD is fully aware of its responsibilities for securing and maintaining threshold standards, and is fulfilling them thoroughly and effectively. 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 (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**

1.8 The Board of Trustees has oversight of academic standards through the Education Sub-Committee and the Programme and Partnership Management Committee, which provide the deliberative interface with the RAD's awarding body. Faculty strategies, policies and procedures are reviewed annually at a Policy and Strategy Committee and ratified by the Education Sub-Committee. The clear and effective policies for governing academic credit and qualifications would enable this Expectation to be met.

1.9 The team considered a range of documentation relating to the governance of threshold academic standards and their regulatory underpinning. It also met with staff and students, and with a representative from the awarding body who serves on the Education Sub-Committee.

1.10 A set of General Regulations provide an overarching academic framework. The regulations set out the qualifications that are awarded and the level and volume of credit for each, the process for the accreditation of prior learning (APL), and assessment and progression requirements. Programme-specific regulations provide a systematic and consistent adaptation, and are reviewed as part of the periodic review process. The regulations explicitly describe the requirements for progression on each programme and the level and volume of credit required for the award of a qualification. Recently revisited grade descriptors delineate student achievement above and below the requisite threshold.

1.11 A Code of Practice on the Assessment of Students' Work Within Taught Programmes outlines a series of general and specific principles. Programme-specific assessment and examination booklets set out assessment modes and criteria for each module, and map the latter onto the relevant learning outcomes. External examiners comment on the overall loading of assessment in relation to the number of credits awarded, and confirm that assessment enables students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes.

1.12 The review team concludes that there is a comprehensive academic framework for awarding academic credit and qualifications that is supported by effective governance arrangements, which meet the requirements of the awarding body. 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**

1.13 The RAD maintains a definitive record of each programme it delivers on behalf of its awarding body through programme specifications and module outlines. The awarding body is responsible for maintaining oversight over definitive documents and recording and agreeing any subsequent changes made to them.

1.14 Programme specifications constitute the critical reference point for the delivery of each programme and detail the FHEQ level, educational aims and assessment strategies. Programme specifications are also mapped to relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.15 The team tested the operation of these processes by examining a range of documentary evidence, including example programme specifications, module outlines and programme handbooks. The team also met with teaching and delivery staff, senior staff and students from across the provision.

1.16 Programme specifications and module outlines inform students' programme handbooks. These handbooks clearly communicate programme and module learning outcomes, modes of assessment and learning and teaching methods. Students also receive assessment and examination booklets, which are informed by programme specifications and module outlines.

1.17 Programme specifications and module outlines operate as effective reference points. Module outlines specify the learning outcomes, credit value, the level of study and assessment strategy. Individual modules are also mapped to relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.

1.18 The awarding body is responsible for the process for making minor or major changes to programme specifications and module outlines. The definition of minor and major changes is articulated in the awarding body's Quality Assurance Code of Practice. Minor changes can be made by the RAD through a clear internal process, and submitted to the relevant programme manager and Head of Learning and Teaching. Major changes must be approved by the internal committee structure before being ratified by the University of Bath Programme and Partnership Approval Committee. The Education Sub-Committee of the Board of Trustees has institutional oversight of both major and minor changes.

1.19 The review team concludes that programme specifications and module outlines function as effective reference points for the delivery, assessment and review of the provision. The RAD is meeting the requirements of its awarding body in its delivery of approved programmes, and the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

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

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

**Findings**

1.20 Responsibility for formal academic approval of all programmes rests with the RAD's awarding body, the University of Bath. The programme approval process considers the appropriateness of learning outcomes and associated methods of assessment, and the alignment of both to programme content, and to learning and teaching activities. Independent external panel members are included as part of all validations and periodic degree scheme reviews. Institutional and programme approval processes by the University of Bath ensure that new programmes meet UK threshold academic standards.

1.21 Responsibility for maintaining a record of all formal decisions relating to programme approval rests with the awarding body. The RAD operates a series of general and programme regulations, which ensure that all the awarding body procedures and processes are followed. Senior staff confirm that the final responsibility for programme approval rests with the awarding body and that the RAD regulations sit alongside those of the University. Responsibilities are clearly articulated and understood, and formal academic approval of all programmes rests with the awarding body. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.22 The team examined a range of evidence, including institutional and programme agreements and regulations, responsibility checklists and annual review reports. Reviewers held meetings with staff, senior staff and students.

1.23 The RAD recognises its responsibilities in the institutional agreement with the University of Bath for its four validated programmes. General Regulations govern the framework for programmes supported by programme-specific regulations.

1.24 Staff confirm the effective use of Subject Benchmark Statements, formalised through a mapping exercise in the design of programmes. Ultimate responsibility for academic standards rests with the awarding body, and policies and processes for programme validation and approval are well understood by staff. Minutes and reports confirm that there are good communications between RAD and the awarding body. The Link Academic Advisor takes an active role in the partnership.

1.25 Overall, the review team found that systems are in place to ensure that academic standards are set at a level that meets UK threshold requirements and are in accordance with the RAD and the awarding body's academic frameworks and regulations. 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 (A3.2): 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**

1.26 The RAD has a robust committee structure in place and a comprehensive range of quality assurance policies and procedures. A code of practice lays out principles and procedures for assessment. Assessment outcomes are scrutinised by internal moderators, and by external examiners appointed by the awarding body. Results are considered by Student Progress and Assessment Boards, ratified at Boards of Examiners and then conferred by the University. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.27 To review the effectiveness of these processes the team examined documents from the various review activities, particularly assessment, external examiners' reports and programme specifications, and discussed their operation with staff. Meetings were held with teaching staff, senior staff and students.

1.28 Learning outcomes are mapped to assessment criteria at the defined level for the programme and level of qualification. Programme learning outcomes inform module learning outcomes, module structure, credit value, content and assessment.

1.29 External examiners' reports confirm that the RAD is maintaining threshold academic standards, and that assessment requirements are appropriate to the module level, allowing students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes. Staff confirm that appropriate procedures are used.

1.30 Assessment and examination booklets describe assessment modes and criteria for each module, and map the latter to the relevant module learning outcomes. External examiners comment positively on the overall loading of assessment in relation to the number of credits awarded, and confirm that assessment processes enable students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes.

1.31 Programme-specific regulations describe the classifications for the award, pass marks for each level and stage, and the requirements for progression. Together with programme specifications, the regulations specify the modules that comprise the programme, the level of each module and its credit value. Specifications state the relevant Subject Benchmark Statement with which the programme is aligned and against the Higher Education Credit Framework for England.

1.32 Effective systems are in place to ensure that the achievement of relevant learning outcomes has been demonstrated through robust assessment processes, and that both UK threshold standards and the awarding body's academic standards have been satisfied. The Expectation is therefore met and the 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**

1.33 The RAD follows the awarding body's processes for annual and periodic review of its academic programmes. All programmes undergo Annual Programme Reviews, which consider programme content, delivery and assessment, learning and teaching resources and curriculum development. Where appropriate, reviews consider relationships with the partner organisations that provide teaching placements. Annual Programme Reviews inform an Annual Monitoring Report and action plan, with oversight by the Education Sub-Committee and the awarding body.

1.34 To review the effectiveness of these processes the team examined documents from the various review activities, particularly the annual monitoring and programme review reports and external examiner documentation. Reviewers met with staff, senior staff and students.

1.35 All validated programmes are periodically reviewed at least once every five years. University of Bath guidelines emphasise the role of the process in evaluating the security of academic standards. One programme, the Postgraduate Certificate in Education: Dance Teaching, has so far been reviewed under the aegis of the new awarding body. Modifications to existing programmes follow the procedures of the awarding body and amendments are approved through the Faculty of Education's committee structure. These structures and processes would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.36 Modules are designed with learning outcomes clearly identified in programme specifications. Module learning outcomes and assessment information are recorded in programme handbooks.

1.37 Annual Programme Reviews confirm that learning outcomes are mapped to assessment criteria at the defined level for the programme and outcome awards for each level of qualification. Teaching staff, senior staff and the University of Bath Head of Learning Partnerships all confirm that these procedures are assiduously followed. Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) include consideration of student module evaluations and are made available to students through the Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) and are posted on the virtual learning environment (VLE). Significant issues arising are also discussed with students during tutorials.

1.38 External examiners' reports confirm that the RAD is maintaining threshold academic standards, and that assessment requirements are appropriate to the module level, allowing students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes. The Expectation is therefore met and 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**

1.39 The RAD follows the requirements of its awarding body by the involvement of external and independent expertise in the maintenance and assurance of academic standards. These requirements are stipulated in an institutional agreement and in the quality management processes of both the RAD and the University of Bath. Requirements include the appointment of external examiners for each of the programmes and the involvement of appropriate externality at programme validation and periodic review. The clear and well-defined principles underpinning the use of externality in securing threshold standards would enable this Expectation to be met.

1.40 The team considered a range of documentation relating to the involvement of externality in the setting and maintaining of standards, including external examiners' reports, minutes of examination boards, reports from periodic reviews, and reports from professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) accreditation visits. The team held meetings with a range of staff and students to explore how effectively external and independent expertise is applied in practice.

1.41 External examiners are appointed to provide assurance of academic standards. The agreements between the RAD and the awarding body set out the respective responsibilities of the two institutions for the nomination, approval, appointment and induction of external examiners. The University's quality assurance guidelines provide information on their role and duties. External examiners sample student work submitted for assessment, attend examination boards and submit an annual report to confirm that national threshold academic standards are set appropriately, and are being met.

1.42 Examiners' reports are scrutinised and responded to as part of the Annual Programme Review process, and are additionally considered by the Education Sub-Committee, and the undergraduate and postgraduate boards of study, which note any issues raised, particularly in relation to programme developments.

1.43 In line with the University's quality assurance requirements, independent external panel members are included as part of all validations and periodic programme reviews. External panel members provide an academic or professional perspective on the RAD's higher education programmes.

1.44 The RAD also engages with the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) and Ofsted for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education: Dance Teaching, which grants qualified teacher status. PSRB activity is overseen by the Head of Quality Assurance and the relevant programme manager.

1.45 Externality is embedded in the RAD's quality assurance activities and in those of the awarding body, and appropriate consideration is given to external advice in the setting and

maintenance of academic standards. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and 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

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

1.47 All seven of the Expectations for this judgement area are met and the associated level of risk is low in all areas. There are no features of good practice, recommendations or affirmations.

1.48 The team notes that the primary responsibility for much of this judgement area lies not with the RAD but with its awarding body, the University of Bath. The RAD has effective and well managed relationships with its awarding body, and responds appropriately to its requirements. The RAD has internal policies and processes to ensure that it can meet its responsibilities to the awarding body.

1.49 The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies at the provider **meets** UK expectations.

## 2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

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

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

#### **Findings**

2.1 The RAD Faculty of Education oversees programme design and development, with ultimate responsibility for approval resting with the awarding body, the University of Bath, following its procedures for collaborative provision. Staff describe extensive deliberation of programme design and any future changes. Staff follow all relevant University processes for design and approval of programmes and there is ongoing and effective communication between both institutions. Allocation of duties is identified in the responsibilities checklist and partnership agreements. The collaborative approach to ensuring these responsibilities are met was confirmed by senior staff at the RAD, and at the University. Final approval for programmes rests with the Programmes and Partnerships Approval Committee of the University. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.2 The review team examined a wide range of evidence, including institutional and programme partnership agreements, responsibility checklists, and programme specifications.

The team also held meetings with a wide range of staff and students.

2.3 The faculty committee structure includes programme meetings, the SSLC, the Education Sub-Committee and the Learning and Teaching Committee. These bodies ensure appropriate stakeholder involvement through student, staff and, where appropriate, awarding body representation. The Learning and Teaching Committee scrutinises recommendations prior to submission of programme approval documentation. Review and validation panels include the awarding body, external panel members, students, programme managers, teaching staff, and employers. Recommendations for approval are submitted to the University's Programmes and Partnerships Approval Committee.

2.4 The Learning and Teaching Handbook includes templates for documentation, and minutes of the Learning and Teaching Committee show appropriate consideration of programme design. Minutes of review and pre-validation panels show that staff and students have effective input to programme approval.

2.5 Changes to modules follow consideration of external examiners' comments and other matters emanating from Annual Programme Review and programme meetings. Examples provided include changes to assessment weighting and mode of study for one module of the BA (Hons) Ballet Education. Staff and students were also involved in the programme redesign of the Master of Arts in Education (Dance Teaching). Staff confirmed their understanding of the process for minor and major modifications. Close collaboration with the awarding body is effective in overseeing changes. Learning outcomes are mapped and amended appropriately as part of the modification process.

2.6 Systematic processes are in place to ensure effective design, development and approval of programmes, and the responsibilities around these are clearly articulated and



are effectively implemented. The Expectation is therefore met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**

**Level of risk: Low**

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

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

**Findings**

2.7 The RAD clearly articulates the processes through which it ensures the fair recruitment and admission of prospective students in its Admissions Policy and Procedure. These policies and procedures would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.8 The team tested the admissions policies and procedures by examining a selection of documentary evidence, including the Admissions Policy and Procedure, pre-enrolment information, and marketing information provided to prospective students. The review team also met with senior staff responsible for the management of the admissions and induction process, teaching staff and a range of students.

2.9 The RAD provides detailed information about its programmes of study to prospective students through its prospectus, website and open days. These clearly describe the admissions process and relevant entry requirements. The Registrar is responsible for the accuracy of this information, with the Head of Marketing, Communication and Membership authorised to make changes to information for prospective students, in consultation with programme teams.

2.10 Prospective students submit an application form which is readily available on the website. Successful applicants are subsequently invited to audition or interview. These events take place either at the RAD or online for international applicants. The selection process also informs prospective students of the necessary steps to submit an application for accreditation of prior learning (APL). The website contains detailed selection criteria through which prospective students are assessed, and the admissions officer operates as a first point of contact for prospective students. The Registrar has oversight of the admissions process, with individual programme teams responsible for making offers to prospective students.

2.11 Once prospective students have accepted an offer, pre-enrolment information is sent to them. This includes an action plan to prepare students for their programme of study. Students also receive an induction, where they are informed about the content of their programme and academic regulations and are introduced to key members of staff. The Student Support Officer offers effective guidance and support for prospective students with additional learning needs, working with them to identify any necessary support required and circulating this to programme teams to ensure that it is put in place.

2.12 New staff members receive information about the recruitment and admissions processes at their induction, which enables them to understand their roles and responsibilities clearly. New staff shadow interviews and auditions with experienced staff, and their grading of an admissions interview or audition is verified by another member of staff to ensure that recruitment processes are fair and reliable.

2.13 Recruitment and admissions policies are monitored and reviewed by the Education Sub-Committee of the Board of Trustees as well as by the Policy and Strategy Committee. Annual Monitoring Reports also review recruitment and admissions processes at programme

level and make changes as required.

2.14 There is not a distinct admissions complaints and appeals process. However, students can submit a complaint or appeal about the admissions process to the Registrar, who acts on this in consultation with the Director of Education and Training to decide whether it should be upheld. To date, no complaints or appeals about admissions have been received.

2.15 The RAD operates fair, reliable and inclusive admissions procedures which enable the recruitment of students who have the potential to complete their programme of study. Students confirm the accuracy of information they receive and that entry requirements are clearly communicated to them. 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 (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**

2.16 The Learning and Teaching Strategy 2016-20 describes a series of objectives relating to initiatives in the Faculty of Education. These objectives are grouped under six guiding principles that include the enhancement of learning opportunities and teaching practice, partnership, collaborative practice and work-based learning, and the articulation of reflective professional practice with current scholarship. In addition, the Research Strategy 2016-2021 sets out principles for the development and support of excellence in staff research, and seeks to promote the benefits of research-informed teaching by encouraging all teaching staff to become research active. The policies, procedures and strategic approach for the development and enhancement of learning opportunities and teaching practices would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.17 The team scrutinised the various frameworks, strategies and policies to support learning and teaching, as well as the minutes of institutional and programme-level committees. The team held meetings with a wide range of staff. It also met with a range of students, including those on programmes delivered through distance learning, to discuss their experiences.

2.18 The Learning and Teaching Committee has specific responsibility and effective oversight for implementing, monitoring and reviewing the Learning and Teaching Strategy. The committee makes recommendations to both the Policy and Strategy Committee and the Finance and Resources Committee. The current iteration of the Learning and Teaching Strategy has only recently been developed and approved. Teaching staff confirm that its guiding principles have informed, and have been informed by, current teaching practice. Recent enhancements to the learning and teaching environment demonstrate a strategic direction and approach, particularly through the adoption of a new VLE, and through a more systematic link between staff research and pedagogic practice. However, the strategy underpinning this activity is not supported by specific, measurable targets against which its success can be measured. The omission of performance indicators reduces the overall effectiveness of the strategy. The review team therefore **recommends** that, by January 2018, the RAD makes explicit, and regularly evaluates, clearly defined targets for the learning and teaching strategy.

2.19 Specific responsibilities for the management of learning and teaching practices are explicitly defined. The Head of Learning and Teaching and the Head of Teacher Education have defined roles in ensuring that teaching staff maintain an appropriate quality of academic and professional support for students. New academic staff are supported by an initial professional development programme that seeks to enhance their teaching practice and ensure that they are appropriately prepared for their duties. The induction process for academic staff is coordinated and supportive, and is accompanied by ongoing mentoring activities.

2.20 A Learning and Teaching Handbook provides an overview of relevant institutional structures and policies. It contains information on committee structures, quality assurance processes, assessment principles, and student support and guidance procedures. A section

on learning and teaching guidelines contains statements on the different modes of teaching delivery in operation, and the opportunities for continuing professional development for staff.

2.21 One strand of the Learning and Teaching Strategy focuses on ensuring that academic staff engage in reflective professional practice informed by current scholarship. The Staff Development Policy outlines the ways in which staff are supported in their professional development. Methods include a semester-long schedule of induction activities, annual appraisal, against which the aims and objectives of the strategy are implicitly mapped, peer review and peer mentoring processes for both taught and distance-learning tutoring, and staff development funding. Staff routinely attend conferences, workshops and seminars delivered by the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) and the Higher Education Academy (HEA). In addition, the faculty holds its own training and planning days, at which attendance is compulsory, where teaching practice is discussed and information about recent procedural or policy changes is imparted.

2.22 Most academic staff hold postgraduate and/or teaching qualifications. The Staff Development Policy states that staff without a teaching qualification (or equivalent experience) are recommended to undertake a mentored programme of teacher training.

2.23 The RAD's ambition is to develop an international research profile for dance teacher education and professional development. The Research Manager has responsibility for the delivery and oversight of activities, which are underpinned by a Research Strategy and related policy. Full-time academic staff are allocated specific time for research and scholarship, and the institutional commitment to developing and supporting staff research is beginning to demonstrate a positive impact on programme development and pedagogic activity.

2.24 Feedback from students and other stakeholders is gathered effectively, and helps ensure that learning opportunities and teaching practices are developed and improved. Students complete module evaluation and end-of-programme surveys, which ask about the quality of teaching, learning resources and academic support. Survey results are considered as part of the Annual Programme Review process, and feedback is used for quality improvement purposes. A Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC), formally instituted at the start of January 2016, is chaired by a student and meets three times a year. Its remit is to discuss matters pertaining to learning and teaching and to ensure that improvements are made. An annual report is submitted to the awarding body. Module tutors also complete an evaluation form each time they convene or contribute to a module. Outcomes of the evaluation are considered as part of annual review and contribute to curriculum development.

2.25 Learning resources, as well as other aspects of students' learning experience, are considered through the annual and periodic programme review processes. A recent significant development has been the implementation of the new VLE in response to student and staff feedback, with an evaluation currently taking place. In 2020 the RAD will be moving to new, purpose-built headquarters, with additional space and facilities including a bespoke performance space, library and archive.

2.26 Information on learning opportunities is provided to students through programme handbooks, and for distance-learning programmes through module study guides and resource lists, which are incorporated into module outlines. These are updated annually to take account of changes.

2.27 The RAD has a strategic basis for the ongoing enhancement of learning opportunities and teaching practices. Specific and measurable targets would allow for more effective evaluation of teaching and learning. Students are engaged in quality assurance processes and this feedback is used effectively as a means of identifying and promoting

improvements. Staff are supported in maintaining their professional, pedagogic and research practice. The team therefore concludes that the 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 The strategic approach to enabling student development and achievement is evident in the Learning and Teaching Strategy. This provides a series of objectives relating to the development and enhancement of learning opportunities and resources, and of teaching practice. The Student Support Policy sets out a series of principles including a commitment to equality and diversity. The policy also describes the specific roles and responsibilities of key members of staff, and of students. The strategic and enhancement focused approach to enabling student development and achievement would enable this Expectation to be met.

2.29 The team scrutinised the various frameworks, policies and procedures relating to students' academic, personal and professional support. Reviewers held meetings with a range of staff responsible for programme delivery and academic support, and with students on a number of programmes of study, including distance learners and those with experience of placement. Additionally, the review team held a meeting with placement mentors.

2.30 Pastoral and academic support systems are in place for all programmes, and are described in the Learning and Teaching Handbook and in individual programme handbooks. The Learning and Teaching Handbook provides detailed information on the opportunities available, and information on the roles of staff members who support students academically and pastorally, along with details on learning resources.

2.31 Programme managers and level coordinators provide students with academic and pastoral support additional to that offered by module tutors. Placement mentors support students on teaching placements. Academic feedback is provided for both formative and summative assessment tasks, and a tutor feedback form allows students to collate feedback from a variety of tutors, and to reflect on their learning and development. Examples of formative feedback provide evidence on how assessment is used to support students' personal and professional development. However, some students reported inconsistency in assessment practice and in the developmental guidance they receive. This matter is also considered under Expectation B6.

2.32 Students are encouraged to engage in personal development planning (PDP) to support their academic and professional development. Issues can be discussed during end-of-year and end-of-programme student reviews. Students receive transcripts at the end of each academic year, stage or level of study, which enables them to gauge their academic progress.

2.33 The website and prospectus outline the student support processes. Applicants are encouraged to disclose additional learning needs as early as possible in the admissions process. Face-to-face inductions introduce new students to support staff and mechanisms, as well as to the programme regulations and to the available learning resources. Students enrolled on distance-learning programmes attend a compulsory intensive study seminar and induction that affords them the opportunity to meet with academic and support staff, and with other students. Students are generally positive about induction and the support they received in their transition to higher education, although they commented that the amount of information they received initially could be overwhelming.

2.34 A full-time member of faculty teaching staff undertakes a Student Support Officer role

and is the main point of contact for those with additional learning needs or disabilities. The Student Support Officer meets students with additional learning needs and liaises with academic and administrative staff to ensure that reasonable adjustments are put in place for them. A Study Skills Coordinator develops, delivers and reviews the faculty's study skills sessions and materials. Study skills modules are available on the VLE, and individual and group tutorials are also offered to students. Recent work has been done on inclusive assessment, with a working group reporting to the SSLC and other faculty committees and several recommendations now being implemented. Assistive software has recently been purchased for student computers.

2.35 The faculty has appropriate fitness to study and practise policies and procedures in place to monitor and support students with particular issues. Students who disclose mental health conditions are directed to additional resources on the VLE, and teaching staff have received training from a clinical psychologist on how to identify early signs and symptoms, and help to signpost students to appropriate support services. The RAD also has a counselling service. A flexible approach to student placements means that those who begin to experience issues with their mental health or with learning differences while on placement can be suitably supported in continuing with their studies.

2.36 Academic and pastoral support is formally monitored and evaluated as part of the Annual Programme Review process, where opportunities for development and improvement are identified. Staff responsible for student support and study skills report at programme meetings. These meetings also provide an opportunity for students to give feedback and receive updates on the learning experience and support services. The Head of Learning and Teaching meets monthly with the student support and Study Skills Coordinators to review activities.

2.37 Approaches to student support are highly effective and are conscientiously monitored, reviewed and delivered. Students spoke very positively about the mechanisms in place for supporting their development, including those relating to study skills. The team considers that the individualised and proactive study support provided to students, including those on placement, is a feature of **good practice**.

2.38 Students' employability skills are explicitly developed through programme content, particularly in placement modules, and through the advice provided to students by programme managers and tutors. Programmes are closely aligned with the dance teaching profession, and there is a range of opportunities for students to engage with professional practitioners and organisations. An institutional professional development portfolio enables students and graduates to engage in activities specifically related to dance teaching. Placements are critical to enabling students to develop their professional skills and employment potential. Mentors noted that the 'real life' situations that students encounter on placement, including working with children and parents, and developing administrative abilities and pedagogic practice, are invaluable in preparing them for employment. Students spoke of their confidence in facing their future professional roles, and noted particularly the variety of placement opportunities and the support provided while they were out on placement. The review team concludes that the wide range of placement opportunities, which effectively enhance students' employability, is a feature of **good practice**.

2.39 The RAD has a framework for enabling student development and achievement that is comprehensive in its scope and effective in practice. The study support mechanisms and placement opportunities available to students are features of good practice. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met 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**

2.40 The RAD takes a variety of deliberate steps to engage students in the assurance and enhancement of their learning opportunities. These activities include student representation at key quality assurance committees, at the SSLC and through module and programme evaluations. The strategic approach to student engagement is articulated in a Student Charter and Policy for Student Engagement and Partnership, which are reviewed annually by the Policy and Strategy Committee to ensure their continued effectiveness. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.41 The review team tested the operation of these processes by examining a range of documentary evidence, including the Student Charter, the Policy for Student Engagement and Partnership, and SSLC minutes. The review team met with students from across the provision, and with teaching staff and senior staff.

2.42 Student representatives attend key quality assurance committees such as programme meetings and the Education Sub-Committee of the Board of Trustees. Each programme has several student representatives who sit on the SSLC, which takes place three times a year. SSLC collects and considers students' feedback, and receives Annual Monitoring Reports and external examiners' reports. AMRs consider the results of student feedback, for example from module evaluation questionnaires and end-of-programme surveys, and identify any necessary actions arising. An annual review of SSLC meetings considers the actions taken as result of students' comments, and a report is sent to the awarding body to identify trends or further action if required.

2.43 Student representatives are offered support and guidance through the provision of a Student Representative Handbook available on the VLE, in addition to support offered by programme staff. Programme handbooks clearly explain the student engagement processes and how students can participate within them.

2.44 The processes for student engagement are broadly effective at engaging students as partners in the quality assurance and enhancement of their experience. However, students stated that on occasions the RAD does not respond quickly enough to issues raised. They consider that there is limited opportunity to resolve issues informally outside the formal processes. The institution recognises that students can sometimes be unsure of the ways through which they can offer feedback concerning their experience, and has recently introduced a student issues and concerns flowchart to signpost the formal and informal mechanisms through which students can raise concerns. There are also additional processes to enable students to raise concerns outside the formal committee structure, including group tutorials and meetings three times a year between the Director of Education and Training and student representatives. The review team **affirms** the action being taken to support students' understanding of the mechanisms through which they can raise concerns and receive responses in a timely and effective fashion.

2.45 In response to feedback from students the RAD has introduced formal face-to-face training for student representatives, including specific training for the chair and deputy chair of the SSLC. A student representative has also recently been included on the Learning and Teaching Committee in response to feedback. The RAD acknowledges that it can be difficult

to encourage students to attend committees regularly, and ensures that the dates for meetings are included in programme handbooks to provide advance notice.

2.46 The RAD takes a range of deliberate steps to engage students in the quality assurance and enhancement of their educational experience, and continues to take steps to support students' understanding of these processes. The review team therefore concludes that that the Expectation is met, and the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

**Expectation (B6): Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.**

**Quality Code, Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning**

**Findings**

2.47 Assessment is governed by the Faculty of Education Code of Practice on the Assessment of Students' Work Within Taught Programmes. Assessments are designed and approved in line with requirements of the awarding body. These are conducted systematically and effectively using detailed grade descriptors. Both formative and summative feedback is given regularly to students. Internal verification and external moderation processes are robustly followed. The Faculty of Education monitors implementation, through Student Progress and Assessment Boards with responsibility for ensuring that adherence to assessment regulations is maintained, prior to final confirmation of grades at the Boards of Examiners. Examination boards make recommendations to the awarding body for the awarding of certificates, diplomas and degrees. Examination boards are chaired by the Director of Education and Training and attended by all academic tutors, the Registrar, Head of Quality Assurance and external examiners. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.48 The review team examined a range of evidence, including assessment policies and codes of practice, Assessment Board and Board of Examiners minutes and external examiners' reports. The review team held meetings with teaching and support staff, senior staff and students.

2.49 Assessment is considered as a process of evaluation and appraisal that involves judging work to identify strengths and areas for improvement, in order for marks to be awarded. Assessment involves frequent formative and summative assessments and feedback to support the development of knowledge, understanding and skills. Students value the range and variety of assessment.

2.50 Students are issued with assessment and examination booklets and are assessed against detailed grade descriptors. Oversight of the range of assessment is maintained by programme managers. Assessment and examination booklets are internally reviewed each year by programme managers and the Head of Learning and Teaching, and approved by external examiners before dissemination to students. External examiners' reports highlight the variety of assessment modes.

2.51 First marking and internal moderation of assessed work operates in line with the RAD's assessment code of practice. Progression, achievement, awards and retention rates are considered at Annual Programme Review meetings and any issues arising are addressed through action plans. Internal verification processes are robust, with oversight by the programme coordinator, and new staff are mentored by more experienced colleagues. Placement mentors contribute to formative assessment and have an annual standardisation session. Marking and moderation schedules are issued before the start of each academic year and monitored by programme managers and the Registrar.

2.52 Changes to the assessment strategy are considered at team meetings. Recent examples of changes include the recent alteration of an assessment weighting in BA (Hons) Ballet Education to enable students to better demonstrate level 6 skills. In 2015-16,

the Faculty of Education developed new undergraduate and postgraduate grade descriptors. These were created collaboratively among academic staff and written to overcome previous difficulties with more generic descriptors, and in response to comments by external examiners. The new grade descriptors are written in the light of professional practice norms, including subject-specific and educational scholarship. Prior to implementation, students were consulted through group tutorials, during which they welcomed the new descriptors and offered positive feedback. Formal approval was provided by the Learning and Teaching Committee.

2.53 Examination boards are conducted regularly under specified terms of reference and standing orders. Formal minutes of Board of Examiner meetings show evidence of systematic submission of assessments and consideration of any special circumstances for students.

2.54 External examiners' feedback confirms that assessment practices are robust and clear with fair procedures for awarding grades. Examiners' reports also confirm that marking and feedback are thorough, with detailed text annotations and constructive feedback by first markers related to assessment criteria that is clearly mapped against the learning outcomes. The 2016-17 module evaluation questionnaire feedback has been used to indicate levels of satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of feedback.

2.55 The RAD is aware of the need to further increase assessment literacy in students to enable independent learning and has set up an inclusive assessment working party to consider ways of developing students' understanding of verbal and other feedback. Materials have been designed and are available on the VLE to support this activity and obtain students' responses. The team heard from a number of students who considered that feedback is not always consistent between teaching groups, nor is it always specific to their personal development. Students reported inconsistencies in advice given by tutors. Some students wanted more guidance on how to improve, while others stated that their feedback had been entirely supportive of their development. The team **affirms** the steps being taken to support students' understanding of different types of assessment feedback, and further develop assessment literacy.

2.56 The RAD operates equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment in a systematic manner. Assessments are varied, with a robust marking and moderating system. Formative and summative feedback is provided effectively. Current work is in hand to further embed assessment literacy for students. The Expectation is therefore met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

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

### **Quality Code, Chapter B7: External Examining**

#### **Findings**

2.57 The agreement between the RAD and the University of Bath outlines the respective responsibilities of the two institutions for the nomination, approval, appointment and induction of external examiners. The University's quality assurance guidelines provide comprehensive information on their role and duties. The University approves and appoints external examiners, and induction activities are shared between the University and the RAD. The processes for nominating and inducting external examiners, for supporting them in the discharge of their responsibilities, and for considering their reports would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.58 The team considered the University's guidance for external examiners and the RAD's regulatory and operational information pertaining to assessment, external examiners' reports and responses, and the minutes of examination boards. The team met academic and senior staff, and students, to discuss the external examiner process.

2.59 External examiners are appointed for each programme, and normally serve for a period of three years, with a possible extension of one further year. Nominations for external examiners are considered at the RAD's Undergraduate and Postgraduate Board of Studies. The Director of Education and Training then reviews nominations, and the Head of Quality Assurance subsequently makes a recommendation to the University for the appointment. An induction takes place at the RAD, which includes meetings with the relevant programme manager, the Head of Quality Assurance and, where possible, with students.

2.60 External examiners are sent a sample of written work across the range of marks (including all failed assignments), and observe practical assignments live or through video recordings. They attend Boards of Examiners at which decisions relating to student progression and achievement are made, and submit an annual report to confirm that national threshold standards are set appropriately, and in line with external reference points. Areas of good practice and opportunities for enhancement are also described. The University's report template includes a confidential section where examiners can raise sensitive matters relating, for example, to particular students or members of staff.

2.61 External examiners' reports are scrutinised and responded to as part of the Annual Programme Review process, which includes an action plan relating to any recommendations. Reports are additionally considered by the Education Sub-Committee, and the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Board of Studies, where any issues are considered and addressed. Examiners record whether previous recommendations have been acted upon. Teaching staff provided examples of issues and suggestions raised in external examiners' reports being used for quality improvement purposes. An overview of annual monitoring has previously formed part of an overarching annual report to the awarding body. Under the new agreement with the University of Bath, comments are received through individual Annual Monitoring Reports rather than through an overarching report. This matter is also addressed under Expectation B8.

2.62 Information about external examiners is published in the relevant programme handbook. Reports are discussed at programme meetings, and at the SSLC, and are additionally made available to students on the VLE as part of the annual review documentation. Faculty staff are actively encouraged to take up external examiner (and other advisory) roles, and a number of staff are currently employed in such positions.

2.63 The RAD has a well-established system of external examining in place, governed by the awarding body's protocols and requirements. It makes effective use of its external examiners in assuring and developing the quality of its students' learning opportunities. The team therefore concludes that 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**

2.64 The RAD operates a structured and systematic set of processes to monitor and review programmes, according to the awarding body procedures. These include annual monitoring of modules and programmes and periodic degree scheme reviews. These arrangements would allow Expectation B8 to be met.

2.65 The review team examined a range of evidence, including annual and periodic monitoring and review reports, external examiner documentation, and minutes of key quality assurance committees, and had discussions with teaching and support staff, senior staff and students.

2.66 All programmes undergo Annual Programme Reviews, full-day meetings of relevant staff to consider a range of data, and reports at programme level, including feedback from students, staff and external stakeholders. Information for staff concerning programme monitoring and review is contained in the Learning and Teaching Handbook. Modules are evaluated using a standard proforma and are informed by tutor and student feedback and other key data provided by programme teams.

2.67 Annual Programme Review considers programme content, delivery, assessment, learning and teaching, and outcomes for students, including equality of opportunities. These activities result in an Annual Monitoring Report for each programme, with an associated action plan which is used internally and is also submitted to the awarding body. AMRs are made available to students for comment through SSLC meetings and through the VLE. Any particular issues of note are also shared with students through tutorials.

2.68 External examiners' reports are viewed as an important element of monitoring and are positive about the rigour of programme review processes. Issues identified in AMRs are taken forward in the detailed action plans, which are monitored throughout the year through programme meetings, the Education Sub-Committee and Faculty of Education's committees. The University of Bath's Link Academic Advisor also reviews the actions three times a year to ensure that these are being addressed. A full review and evaluation of action plans takes place at the next Annual Programme Review.

2.69 Periodic reviews of all validated programmes take place at least every five years according to the awarding body's processes and procedures. The first RAD programme to undergo the University of Bath's Degree Scheme Review was the Postgraduate Certificate in Education: Dance Teaching (with Qualified Teacher Status) in January 2017. According to the cycle all other validated programmes are due for review in early 2019.

2.70 Curriculum changes arising from annual and periodic review are considered by the Faculty of Education. Minor, intermediate and major changes are deliberated and submitted for approval to the Learning and Teaching Committee. All major changes are submitted to the University of Bath's Programmes and Partnerships Approval Committee, following deliberation by the Learning and Teaching Committee. The University of Bath Head of Learning Partnerships is involved in discussions concerning all changes to programmes, and is responsible for taking these through the University committee structure.

2.71 Comparative data in relation to key aspects of delivery, such as student recruitment, retention, achievement and success, are produced by the Registrar and considered by the Education Sub-Committee, with a summary going to the Board of Trustees. Although there is detailed data for student achievement provided in the AMRs, minutes of the Education Sub-Committee and the Learning and Teaching Committee show very limited evaluation of comparative institution-wide achievement or student satisfaction data to inform strategic developments. The previous awarding body, the University of Surrey, required the RAD to produce a collated annual review report across programmes, allowing comparative evaluation and an overview of provision with an associated action plan. This overarching annual report is not required by the University of Bath. The team **recommends** that, by January 2018, the RAD develops institutional mechanisms to provide an annual overview of higher education, which includes an evaluation of comparative data for student achievement and satisfaction (B8). This matter is also addressed under Expectation B7 in relation to oversight of external examiners' comments.

2.72 The RAD operates effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes. These processes demonstrate rigorous adherence to the awarding body's systems and include an appropriate level of externality. There is need for greater oversight of the RAD's higher education to include more effective use of comparative data to evaluate the provision. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is moderate.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Moderate**



**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**

2.73 The RAD operates fair and transparent complaints and appeals processes, which are clearly articulated within its Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure and Student Grievance Policy and Procedure. These procedures are communicated to students through programme handbooks and are accessible online. The policies and procedures in place to govern complaints and appeals would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.74 The review team tested the effective operation of these processes by scrutinising a range of documentary evidence, including the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure, Student Grievance Policy and Procedure, programme handbooks, and the awarding body procedures. The review team held meetings with professional support staff responsible for managing the complaints and appeals process and a range of students.

2.75 Students are initially encouraged to raise any concerns informally with the relevant member of staff or programme manager, who is required to respond within five working days. If a student remains dissatisfied, a formal complaint can be submitted to the Registrar, with the Director of Education and Training appointing a senior member of staff to review the complaint and convene a grievance meeting to seek resolution. The senior member of staff will confirm the outcome of the meeting within five working days and send any necessary recommendations arising from the complaint to the Director of Education for consideration. If the student remains dissatisfied then they can use the awarding body's complaints procedure.

2.76 Academic appeals are submitted to the Registrar within 10 working days of a student receiving an assessment decision. Decisions on appeals are provided within 15 working days and a completion of procedures letter issued. If the student is dissatisfied they can then enter the awarding body's academic appeals process, and are also informed of their right to appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

2.77 Complaints and academic appeals policies and procedures work effectively in practice. The RAD clearly explains its processes to students through programme handbooks. An issues and concerns flowchart clearly signposts the arrangements available for students. There is clear information on how students can enter awarding body complaints and appeals system once they have exhausted the internal processes. The Student Support Officer and Registrar offer support for students making a complaint or academic appeal to ensure that these processes are accessible, and advice and guidance is also available from programme managers. The Education Sub-Committee receives a summary report of complaints and academic appeals from the Director of Education and Training. The AMR process documents complaints, with trends passed to the Education Sub-Committee for consideration.

2.78 The Academy operates fair, accessible and timely processes for handling complaints and academic appeals. Policies and processes are clearly communicated to students. 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 (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**

2.79 A stated intention of the Learning and Teaching Strategy is to work in partnership through collaborative practice and work-based learning. Activity is centred around the provision of teaching placements for students. Operationally, this activity is supported by the Student Placements: Integrated Policies and Procedures, which sets out the broad principles around partner selection, contractual agreements, quality assurance of placements, and risk management. These frameworks and procedures for managing student placements enable this Expectation to be met.

2.80 The team scrutinised the policies and quality assurance documentation related to the operation and review of placement. The team held meetings with students and with placement mentors to explore their experiences, and discussed with senior and teaching staff the role of placements as part of the institution's pedagogic approach.

2.81 The Student Placements: Integrated Policies and Procedures document provides an institutional framework. The process for identifying and approving placement hosts is managed at programme level. There are clear placement agreements signed by both parties which set out roles and responsibilities, including those for students' assessment. For the Postgraduate Diploma in Education: Dance Teaching a partnership management committee has been established, attended by the Link Academic Advisor and school-based tutor representatives. This model provides a platform for any issues arising from teaching placements to be discussed and actioned.

2.82 The RAD keeps a register of all placement providers. Since 2003-04, for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education: Dance Teaching (with Qualified Teacher Status) and 2014-15 for the BA (Hons) Ballet Education programme, a member of the quality assurance team has visited new placement providers with a rolling programme of visits to partnership schools. Written reports from visits are submitted to, and overseen by, the Head of Quality Assurance. The processes by which placement providers can raise concerns about students are thorough and well established, and work effectively. Procedures for managing concerns with the placement providers themselves are set out in the respective placement handbooks, and are well understood by students and staff. The Head of Quality Assurance has responsibility for investigating any concerns.

2.83 Programmes with significant placement elements publish dedicated student handbooks that provide information on timetabling, and assessment methodologies for placement modules. Handbooks clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of mentors and students and the processes to be followed in the case of any issues that arise.

2.84 Comprehensive support for mentors is provided through a Placement Handbook. The VLE is increasingly being used as a means of providing placement mentors with access to relevant documentation and, more recently, as a discussion forum. Twice-yearly mentor training days are held for placement providers on undergraduate programmes, the latter attracting CPD accreditation. For the Postgraduate Diploma in Education: Dance Teaching (with Qualified Teacher Status) a mandatory school-based tutor training day is held prior to the start of the placement.

2.85 Students spoke positively about the process by which placement mentors are allocated, and the support they receive while they are on placement. Placement mentors commented positively about their value in effectively developing the skills needed for students' future professional roles. The team concludes that the wide range of placement opportunities, which effectively enhance students' employability, is **good practice**.

2.86 Placement activity is diligently managed and overseen. Students, staff and placement mentors speak of the positive impact that placements have on student learning opportunities and the institution's connections with industry. The team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and 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**

2.87 The RAD does not offer research degrees; therefore, this Expectation is not applicable.

**Expectation: Not applicable**

**Level of risk: Not applicable**

## The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

2.89 All Expectations in this area are met and the associated level of risk is low in most areas. One area of moderate risk is identified under Expectation B8. The review team identified two areas of good practice, two affirmations and two recommendations.

2.90 The two areas of good practice identify the support provided for students, and the wide range of placement opportunities.

2.91 The two affirmations relate to actions being taken to respond to students' concerns, and to the steps being taken to develop assessment literacy.

2.92 The two recommendations encourage the RAD to identify explicit, and regularly measured, targets for the learning and teaching strategy, and to provide institutional mechanisms to provide an annual overview of provision.

2.93 The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at the provider **meets** UK expectations.

### 3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

**Expectation (C): UK higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.**

#### Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

##### Findings

3.1 The RAD recognises the importance of producing accurate, valid and fit-for-purpose information for all audiences. It has robust processes to ensure the accuracy of the information it produces, with the Head of Learning and Teaching and Head of Quality Assurance possessing oversight of information provided to current students. The Head of Marketing, Communication and Membership is responsible for information provided to prospective students. These policies and procedures would allow the Expectation to be met.

3.2 The review team tested the operation of these procedures by examining documentary evidence, including the institutional information approval processes, marketing information provided to prospective students and information provided to current students about their programme of study. The review team also met with senior staff responsible for the information processes, teaching staff and a selection of students.

3.3 The institutional policies, procedures and clearly defined responsibilities provide an effective vehicle for ensuring that information is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. There is a wide range of information to inform prospective students about its provision, including its prospectus and website. Students confirm that this information is accurate and helpful in informing their decision to study. These materials also clearly explain the relationship between the RAD and the awarding body. Students receive pre-enrolment information such as a pre-programme action plan, which enables them to prepare effectively for their programme of study. Information for prospective students, including the prospectus, is signed off by the Director of Education and Training and the Director of Marketing, Communication and Membership. The Head of Business Management is responsible for making changes to the Faculty of Education webpages on the RAD website. Quality assurance policies are reviewed annually and updates and amendments are approved through the Policy and Strategy Committee.

3.4 Once enrolled, students receive detailed and fit-for-purpose information about their programme of study and what they can expect, including programme handbooks and examination and assessment information, which is also accessible on the VLE. The Learning and Teaching Handbook clearly defines the minimum level of information required for key documents such as handbooks. Information for current students, such as programme handbooks, is reviewed annually by programme managers, and subsequently signed off by the Head of Learning and Teaching and Head of Quality Assurance. Module leaders annually update study guides, which are reviewed by the relevant programme manager, with the Head of Learning and Teaching responsible for the final sign-off. Module evaluations collect student feedback about the quality of information provided to ensure that it is accessible and fit for purpose.

3.5 Transcripts of academic agreement are issued to students at the end of each academic year detailing their assessment results, with the awarding body taking responsibility for the production of a final award certificate.

3.6 The RAD has robust policies and procedures in place to ensure that the information it provides to all audiences is accessible, fit for purpose and trustworthy. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**

**Level of risk: Low**

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

3.7 The Expectation for this judgement area is met and the associated level of risk is low.

3.8 Information published by the College is fit for purpose and trustworthy. Processes for the development and verification of information are understood by staff. Students confirm that information is comprehensive, accessible and helpful to them, and that they are provided with sound information to support their learning.

3.9 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 The RAD's strategic aim is 'to be the leading international authority on dance teacher education and professional development'. This aspiration underpins an institutional ethos of enhancement, supported effectively through well-established quality improvement processes, articulated through a well-defined deliberative structure. There are clear terms of reference for deliberative committees, which include the aspiration to promote excellence in learning and teaching and to develop, enhance and disseminate learning and teaching approaches and practices. Enhancement is included in the job specifications for the Heads of Teaching and Learning and Teacher Education. These processes and approaches would allow the Expectation to be met.

4.2 The team considered a wide range of evidence, including annual and periodic monitoring and programme review reports, external examiners' documentation and published documents cataloguing improvement initiatives. The review team held meetings with academic and support staff, senior staff and students.

4.3 Although the RAD does not have a formalised policy or strategy, an institutional ethos of enhancement is underpinned by a systematic and deliberative quality assurance system. This is supported by a robust academic framework, a coherent range of policy and procedural documentation and a well-functioning committee structure.

4.4 The thorough annual programme monitoring and review process allows holistic team discussion and considers data at both module and programme level. Feedback from students, staff and external examiners is taken into account. These discussions culminate in an AMR and action plan, which is shared with students through the SSLC, and significant issues are also discussed with students at group tutorial. This systematic approach drives quality initiatives to support the enhancement of students' learning experience.

4.5 External examiners' comments are used assiduously as part of the quality cycle and these are considered at Annual Programme Reviews, Programme Meetings and the Education Sub-Committee. External examiners comment positively on the Faculty of Education's commitment to the maintenance of high standards, and an institutional eagerness to develop programme content in order to enhance quality. There is evidence of continuous reflection on the appropriateness and effectiveness of module content, and of student progression, by programme teams and module convenors. This supports an ethos that expects and encourages enhancement of students' learning opportunities.

4.6 A number of enhancement initiatives have been generated through these processes. These include a planned move to new premises in 2020, to offer more bespoke dance studios, formal teaching spaces, social learning areas for students, and an expanded library and archive. The newly developed VLE has been designed to enhance interactivity and is well used, with the emerging development of discussion forums.

4.7 Study skills modules at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels have been introduced to encourage and enhance the development of students' independent study. The Study Skills Coordinator has oversight of these arrangements. Students commented positively about the provision of study skills and how well they are supported. This matter is addressed as good practice in expectation B4.

4.8 The RAD is conscientiously working to take action to support students' understanding of the mechanisms through which they can raise concerns and receive responses in timely and effective fashion, and to engage students as widely as possible. SSLCs have been added to the Faculty of Education's committee structure, and are designed to support student engagement. This matter is also addressed as an affirmation under Expectation B5.

4.9 A coherent research policy and strategy are in place and demonstrate a systematic and deliberate commitment to promoting excellence in dance teaching scholarship. Initiatives provide opportunities for staff to build an external publication profile, and to inform their pedagogy research activity has explicitly informed several student dissertations. Three staff have presented academic papers at international conferences, capitalising on the RAD's international profile and networking opportunities, which are recognised by the awarding body. For example, staff have engaged with research in Dance for Lifelong Wellbeing, resulting in research reports in 2013 and 2017 and a Lifelong Wellbeing publication, as well as a Silver Swans dance programme for older students. Research outcomes are used to inform staff development and are circulated through a regular staff newsletter. The Lifelong Wellbeing programme has also provided placement opportunities for students.

4.10 All academic staff meet with the Research Manager, or designated senior academic, at the beginning of each year to discuss research aspirations and to set targets. These expectations are reviewed twice a year as part of the annual appraisal. All full-time academic staff are allocated a half day's research time. Staff development sessions provide an opportunity to present research findings to colleagues, and are followed by discussion of how such research might impact on learning and teaching practices. Former students who are employers contribute to these projects. The review team considers that the institutional commitment to supporting staff research and scholarly activity, which effectively informs programme development and delivery, is **good practice**.

4.11 The RAD has a number of diversity initiatives in addition to the Lifelong Wellbeing project. Project B Boys forms part of a range of initiatives involving male role models in football and cricket to encourage more diverse recruitment.

4.12 However, while the RAD has a wide range of improvement activities, the lack of a formalised policy or strategy for enhancement means there is an absence of coherent measurement of the impact of the many activities that are taking place. A more systematic approach to enhancement would strengthen the effectiveness of the approach and allow for the development of an associated action plan and set of performance measures. The team **recommends** that, by January 2018, the RAD ensures that the strategy underpinning enhancement initiatives is more clearly defined and supported by specific and measurable targets.

4.13 Overall, the RAD has a range of deliberate enhancement initiatives, underpinned by robust and effective annual review processes and a robust and effective committee structure, which drive quality enhancement. There is a lack of a formalised enhancement strategy with overt measures of impact. The team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

## The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

4.15 A range of deliberate mechanisms are in place which enable enhancement to take place. There is one area of good practice in the institutional commitment to supporting staff research and scholarly activity. The one recommendation relates to a lack of a formalised enhancement strategy with overt measures of impact.

4.16 The Expectation in this area is met and the associated level of risk is low.

4.17 The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at the provider **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](http://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](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx).

### Academic standards

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

### Award

A qualification, or academic credit, conferred in formal recognition that a student has achieved the intended **learning outcomes** and passed the assessments required to meet the academic standards set for a **programme** or unit of study.

### Awarding organisation

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

### Blended learning

Learning delivered by a number of different methods, usually including face-to-face and e-learning (see **technology enhanced or enabled learning**).

### Credit(s)

A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education **programmes of study**, expressed as numbers of credits at a specific level.

### Degree-awarding body

A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award degrees, conferred by Royal Charter, or under Section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, or under Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, or by Papal Bull, or, since 1999, granted by the Privy Council on advice from QAA (in response to applications for taught degree awarding powers, research degree awarding powers or university title).

### Distance learning

A course of study that does not involve face-to-face contact between students and tutors but instead uses technology such as the internet, intranets, broadcast media, CD-ROM and video, or traditional methods of correspondence - learning 'at a distance'. See also **blended learning**.

### Dual award or double award

The granting of separate awards (and certificates) for the same **programme** by two **degree-awarding bodies** who have jointly delivered the programme of study leading to them. See also **multiple award**.

### e-learning

See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

### **Enhancement**

The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in our review processes.

### **Expectations**

Statements in the **Quality Code** that set out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

### **Flexible and distributed learning**

A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations. See also **distance learning**.

### **Framework**

A published formal structure. See also **framework for higher education qualifications**.

### **Framework for higher education qualifications**

A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (FQHEIS).

### **Good practice**

A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

### **Learning opportunities**

The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

### **Learning outcomes**

What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

### **Multiple awards**

An arrangement where three or more **degree-awarding bodies** together provide a single jointly delivered **programme** (or programmes) leading to a separate **award** (and separate certification) of each awarding body. The arrangement is the same as for **dual/double awards**, but with three or more awarding bodies being involved.

### **Operational definition**

A formal definition of a term, establishing exactly what QAA means when using it in reviews and reports.

### **Programme (of study)**

An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

### **Programme specifications**

Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of programmes of study, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

### **Quality Code**

Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of **reference points** for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the **Expectations** that all providers are required to meet.

### **Reference points**

Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured.

### **Self-evaluation document**

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

### **Subject Benchmark Statement**

A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

### **Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or e-learning)**

Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

### **Threshold academic standard**

The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic **award**. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks** and **Subject Benchmark Statements**.

### **Virtual learning environment (VLE)**

An intranet or password-only interactive website (also referred to as a platform or user interface) giving access to **learning opportunities** electronically. These might include such resources as course handbooks, information and reading lists; blogs, message boards and forums; recorded lectures; and/or facilities for online seminars (webinars).

### **Widening participation**

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

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