



## Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of The Prince's School of Traditional Arts, October 2018

### 1 Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that The Prince's School of Traditional Arts (the School) is making commendable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the October 2017 [monitoring visit](#).

### 2 Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 The total number of students remains at 32. The MA numbers have increased to 23, of the 11 second year MA students and 12 of the first year MA students, eight and six respectively, are from non-EEC countries. The current PhD student body has one resubmission for the old University of Wales partnership and six students on the newly formed University of Wales Trinity Saints David's partnership (the University). The School aims to develop this partnership further and is already in discussion with the University on how to further enhance it.

3 The School has become part of The Prince's Foundation. HRH The Prince of Wales is merging many of his charitable organisations. The School will remain at Charlotte Road and the academic programme and financial issues will see no material change. The School awaits a decision from the Office for Students about its registration.

### 3 Findings from the monitoring visit

4 The School is making commendable progress in maintaining the academic standards and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities of its provision. All actions from the 2017 Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) have now been completed and the School continues to develop its own actions for improvement of its programmes and enhancement of the student experience. The School's Academic Board approves and monitors its action plan through a process of ongoing review. As such, the action plan is integral to the School's management and quality assurance processes. The School has engaged with relevant external reference points effectively and information produced is reliable, accessible and praised by students.

5 Initiatives including an Open Programmes timetable, a Hub School programme, an exhibition schedule and visiting lecturer programme, demonstrate that the School continues to develop and maintain an extended community of practice that enhances the students' learning experience. Students affirm that the programmes' key strength is their engagement with visiting tutors with outstanding skills and expertise.

6 The staff appraisal document and the first round of staff appraisals have been completed since the previous monitoring visit and have ensured that the School has continued to underpin its Staff Development Policy with a Staff Appraisal and Personal Development Scheme.

7 A range of actions underpin the School's ongoing development of its website and Social Media Policy. University's approval of the website ensures external oversight. With the merger of the School, its website will be subsumed into the Prince's Foundation website, but this process is being managed carefully, to ensure that the School's chief marketing tool is not compromised. The School has also taken great care to ensure GDPR compliance.

8 The School implemented plans for training to provide adequate support for supervisors of research students and it is ready to apply this for any new appointments.

9 Changes to the School's process for student feedback have encouraged students to complete questionnaires and Academic Board reviews the outcomes. Students affirm that their opinions are sought through formal and informal means and that the School is responsive and staff are clear that the mixture of formal and non-formal feedback is effective.

10 The School has evaluated the effectiveness of its processes for involving the wider community of teaching and support in the process of programme monitoring and review and dissemination of outcomes. Staff appraisals include the outreach staff who have an impact on teaching and the inclusion of a visiting tutor representative on academic boards enables greater involvement with the practitioners who form such an integral part of the student experience.

11 The School has updated its teaching and learning strategy and staff report that it has already had a demonstrable impact on the delivery of classes, such as the changes to the contextual studies module. Students affirmed that there had been changes made that impacted positively on the quality of their learning experience.

12 The School advertises its programmes on its website along with uploadable application forms and a downloadable admissions policy. Students describe the media-rich content of the website and the personalised approach of the admissions teams as exceptional. This process is GDPR compliant. The School also has withdrawal, refund and student protection policies available online.

13 The School observes the conventional requirements for application to research degrees and requires an IELTS test with a minimum overall score of 6.5 for students whose first language is not English and a bachelor's degree with at least a 2:1 qualification or higher degree. Students affirm these are applied scrupulously. The School's Admissions Committee selects candidates for interview and informs unsuccessful candidates they will not proceed. Candidates who attend an interview must provide degree certificates, passports and their application to the University's admissions committee for final approval. MA candidates must also complete an application form, provide a reference and portfolio of artwork.

14 Students affirmed to the review team that the assessment processes within the School are hugely supportive and enable them to build a critical framework alongside a technical ability. The system of critique and peer review is strongly embedded in practice and much admired by students. For Phd students, the more formal process of supervision is managed by the School and with support from the University. All students agree assessment processes are fair and timely and they are fully cognisant of academic appeals procedures. As suggested by the external examiner's report, assessment has been clarified with the adoption of clear grading criteria, which underpin the students' approval of assessment, but also ensure that the assessment aligns with the requirements of the University.

The MA retention and completion rates are 100 per cent. This completion rate maintains historically high levels of student performance, indicating that student recruitment and support systems are thorough, as confirmed by students.

#### **4 Progress in working with the external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education**

15 The School demonstrates highly effective engagement with relevant external reference points and must comply with the requirements of the University's Academic Quality Handbook which aligns with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code). The School's Teaching and Learning Strategy, MA module descriptors, student and researcher handbooks also align with Quality Code. Staff attendance at conferences ensures they remain up to date with the Quality Code and through reports and informal conversations staff share their findings with colleagues. Reference points include GDPR, CMA Guidance and international networks through the School's outreach contacts.

16 In line with its policies, the University monitors the School in advance of validating its provision with the most recent partnership review being 29 June 2017.

#### **5 Background to the monitoring visit**

17 The monitoring visit serves as a short check on the provider's continuing management of academic standards and quality of provision. It focuses on progress since the previous review. In addition, it provides an opportunity for QAA to advise the provider of any matters that have the potential to be of particular interest in the next monitoring visit or review.

18 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr Mark Langley, Reviewer, and Mr Cameron Waitt, QAA Officer, on 25 October 2018.

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