# Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts Ltd

October 2017

## Contents

# About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts Ltd. The review took place from 17 to 19 October 2017 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Sally Bentley (reviewer)
- Ms Sophie Elliott (student reviewer)
- Mr Peter Hymans (reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provision and to make judgements as to whether or not academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. These expectations are the statements in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)[1] setting out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and of each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

In Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
    - the setting and maintenance of academic standards
    - the quality of student learning opportunities
    - the information provided about higher education provision
    - the enhancement of student learning opportunities
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

The QAA website gives more information about QAA[2] and explains the method for Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers).[3] For an explanation of terms see the glossary at the end of this report.

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.
[2] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk.
[3] Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers):
www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education.

# Key findings

## Judgements

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

- The maintenance of the academic standards of the 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 is **commended**.

## Good practice

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

- The comprehensive and supportive processes for selection and admissions, which provide a positive introduction to the student learning experience (Expectation B2).
- The well-developed systems and resources for academic and pastoral support (Expectation B4 and Enhancement).
- The systematic approach to developing employability skills and industry-readiness (Expectation B4 and Enhancement).
- The comprehensive outreach activities and support systems for students from diverse backgrounds (Enhancement and Expectation B2).
- The strategy for enhancement, and its implementation, which has enabled significant improvements to the student experience (Enhancement).

## Recommendations

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

By April 2018:

- work with its awarding body to clarify and record the process for updating and publishing the definitive programme record (Expectation A2.2)
- fully articulate plans for the next stage of development of the intranet taking account of sector practice (Expectations B4 and C)
- communicate to students and update documentation in the light of recent changes in external accreditation (Expectation C).

By September 2018:

- develop provision of electronic library resources, to increase availability of learning materials to support study at the forefront of the discipline (Expectation B4)
- guide students who are considering employment outside of the industry towards appropriate careers advice (Expectation B4).

## Affirmation of action being taken

The review team did not identify any affirmations.

# About the provider

Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts Ltd is a small specialist Institution which was founded in 1945. There are around 450 students studying on programmes leading to careers in theatre and its related industries. The Institution is one of the UK's leading drama schools, with a long-standing and international reputation for providing training in acting, musical theatre, actor musicianship, directing, producing and technical theatre. The Institution's mission focuses on excellence, access and innovation. The Institution combines skills-based training designed to create industry-ready graduates with the development of individual creativity through project opportunities, all of which are designed to nurture intelligent, creative artists and practitioners.

The Institution is managed by the Principal and Artistic Director and the Executive Director, supported by a senior management team consisting of a Chief Operating Officer, Director of Academic Affairs, Project and Estates Director and Commercial Director.

At the time of the review visit the Institution was based in Wood Green, North London but was in the process of a major capital development project which will mean relocating to new premises in Peckham, South London.

The most recent Ofsted inspection in October 2015 rated the Institution as outstanding in a number of areas (including quality of teaching, learning and assessment), and in overall effectiveness.

The previous QAA review was a Review for Specific Course Designation (RSCD) in January 2014. The outcome of this review was confidence in academic standards, quality and enhancement and information. There were four recommendations from this review, and the most recent annual monitoring visit in 2016 concluded that commendable progress was being made in implementing these.

Since the RSCD there have been a number of changes including: changes in the organisational structure, creation of some new positions, the introduction of new programmes and rationalisation of awarding body arrangements. All of the higher education programmes are now offered in partnership with The University of East Anglia (UEA).

The acting and musical theatre programmes were previously accredited by Drama UK, which ceased to operate in September 2016. The programmes will in future be accredited by The Council for Dance Education and Training (CDET), which accredits courses in Drama, Dance and Musical Theatre. Mountview is now also a full member of the Federation of Drama Schools (FDS) which was created in 2017 by a group of drama schools that provide conservatoire-style vocational training.

The current programmes are:

Undergraduate provision
BA (Hons) Performance: Acting
BA (Hons) Performance: Actor Musician
BA (Hons) Performance: Musical Theatre
BA (Hons) Theatre Production Arts: Lighting
BA (Hons) Theatre Production Arts: Sound
BA (Hons) Theatre Production Arts: Stage Management
FdA Theatre Production Arts: Lighting
FdA Theatre Production Arts: Sound
FdA Theatre Production Arts: Stage Management

Postgraduate provision
MA Creative Producing
MA Musical Direction
MA Performance: Acting
MA Performance: Musical Theatre
MA Theatre Directing.

# 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     Under the terms of the Partnership Agreement with the awarding body, UEA, the University's Senate has the ultimate responsibility for the academic standards of the awards delivered by the Institution. New programmes are designed by the Institution and are referenced to the FHEQ, relevant Characteristic Statements and the Subject Benchmark Statement for Dance, Drama and Performance (2015), which together inform the level of the learning outcomes and content of the programmes. Industry standards and expectations also inform the proposed programme content.

1.2     Before the UEA validation event, new programme proposals are considered by the Institution's Executive Working Group (EWG). The Internal Course Approval document guides the EWG on matters to consider for approval of a new programme. Following approval by the EWG full programme documentation is developed for approval by UEA.

1.3     The management of academic standards within the Institution is undertaken by the Principal and Artistic Director alongside the senior management team who report to the

Board of Trustees (the Board). The academic portfolio is reviewed by the EWG and the UEA Joint Board of Study (JBOS), a joint committee between the Institution and UEA. JBOS is responsible for strategic planning, the overview and maintenance of academic standards, and ensuring continuous improvement of the student experience and student outcomes.

1.4     These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met. To test their operation the team scrutinised a range of documentation (including the partnership agreement with UEA and documentation relating to the development and approval of programmes). The team also held a number of meetings with staff (including a representative of the awarding body) and met students, alumni and employers.

1.5     Programme validation events are chaired by a senior UEA academic staff member and the panel includes a UEA Partnerships Office representative, a UEA subject expert, a current student, an external academic subject expert, an industry adviser and an internal academic staff member. Completed programme proposals on the UEA forms clearly display engagement with the FHEQ and Subject Benchmark Statements. The Validation Outcomes Action Plan for the FdA Theatre Production Arts, which was produced in response to the validation report, shows that all actions required for approval were completed. This included better articulation of the honours level of the BA and ensuring that the documentation reflects the requirements of the QAA Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement (the latter being achieved by including employer engagement and work-based learning as a key component of the programme).

1.6     In practice the process works effectively, all programme validation documentation is scrutinised by UEA with any required amendments to align with external reference points put in place before final approval is made.

1.7     The Institution has appropriate procedures which ensure that referencing to external reference points is rigorous. The final approval of programmes rests with the awarding body, which requires the Institution to demonstrate engagement with the appropriate external reference points. 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       There is a clear committee structure for the consideration of matters relating to academic standards. Minutes of the Learning, Teaching & Assessment (LTAS) Working Group, Heads of Department meetings, Curriculum Development meetings, Discipline Team meetings, the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Working Group and the Programme, Module and Component Monitoring and Review meeting all inform the EWG.

1.9       The EWG, consisting of Heads of Department and individuals from the Executive Team, meets monthly to discuss the approval and development of new provision alongside the implementation of academic and quality standards across the Institution. The EWG minutes inform the Executive Committee.

1.10       The Executive reports to JBOS in respect of the quality and standards of the programmes, and to the Board. At a meeting of the Board it was suggested that, as a result of the major changes taking place with the move to the new premises and expansion of provision, there is an argument for creating an Academic Subcommittee to ensure academic affairs are appropriately managed when the organisation moves to new premises. At the October 2017 meeting of the Board the decision was made to establish the subcommittee and a Board member was designated to be Chair. At the time of the review the terms of reference of the new subcommittee were in development. The Academic Subcommittee will not have delegated powers, but will provide a layer of scrutiny and support prior to academic reporting at the full Board.

1.11       During the academic year 2016-17, a restructuring took place which divided the role of the Academic Director (who previously oversaw academic services, student services, HR, business planning and governance). Those responsibilities have now been allocated to two separate Directors, the Director of Academic Affairs who has the responsibility for oversight of all matters relating to academic standards and a Chief Operating Officer with responsibility for student services and business planning.

1.12       All programmes are constructed in a modular framework. The intensity of the programmes, and their vocational nature, necessitate that all modules are compulsory and no programme operates a pass/fail module. The assessment regulations that govern how academic credit is awarded are approved by UEA and are reviewed regularly to ensure they are fit for purpose. Regulations are included in all programme handbooks for students, who receive detailed briefings on the operation of the regulations during induction and at transition points.

1.13       These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met. To test their operation the team scrutinised a range of documentation relating to the committee and management structures, including minutes of meetings. The team also held a number of meetings with staff (including a representative of the awarding body) and met students, alumni and employers.

1.14       The processes have worked effectively to date. However, the Institution has recognised that in order to ensure that it meets its responsibility for the management of

academic standards in the future it has made the decision to create an academic subcommittee with responsibility for academic standards. The restructuring of senior staffing has ensured that appropriate management resource has been made available to focus on the management of academic standards.

1.15     The Institution's own internal processes, and its adherence to UEA's requirements, ensure that there is appropriate oversight of academic standards. The Institution has recognised that it needs to further strengthen capabilities for managing its responsibilities for academic standards, and has taken appropriate action in the establishment of an academic subcommittee of the Board. 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**

1.16     The Institution works with UEA to produce definitive information about programme aims, intended learning outcomes and assessments, ensuring that the programme structures are consistent with relevant reference points and that the content demonstrates compliance with the academic regulations of UEA. Programme development is also informed by the views of higher education sector and industry experts, and the Subject Benchmark Statement for Drama, Dance and Performance. The definitive records of each programme display how the overall outcomes are aligned with the qualification descriptor in the FHEQ.

1.17     These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met. To test their operation the team scrutinised a range of documentation. The team also held a number of meetings with staff (including a representative of the awarding body) and met students, alumni and employers.

1.18     The Quality Code determines that it is the responsibility of the awarding body to define the format of the definitive record. In the Partnership Agreement, UEA has determined that the programme specification is the definitive record, and the agreement states that programme specifications are held at both UEA and the Institution.

1.19     Through the examination of documentation provided by the Institution and meetings with staff, the review team could not precisely clarify the responsibilities of the Institution and UEA in the handling of the definitive record for each programme, including which partner has ultimate responsibility for holding the definitive record. Using the definitive records, the Institution transfers information within the programme specifications into user-friendly programme handbooks, providing academic and support staff with a reference point for delivering the programmes and enabling student development and achievement, and students with accessible documents detailing key elements of both their academic and non-academic experience. For every module of learning that contributes to a qualification, the Institution provides students and staff with a formal record of indicative content and structure, the constituent parts, assessment scheme and intended learning outcomes as approved by UEA in the form of module specifications. Therefore, information is recorded both at the level of individual modules and for the programmes as a whole.

1.20     The programme specification is changed only through due process, agreed with UEA and set out in the Partnership Handbook. UEA templates are used to make changes to existing modules, and to propose new programmes, presenting proposed changes in assessment to JBOS. Minor revisions are also reported to the JBOS; major revisions to any programme or definitive programme document are subject to discussion with and then approval by UEA. Any changes are then approved by UEA before the Institution can update programme handbooks and module specifications. The review team was told that following approval of minor modifications, the Institution updates these documents to reflect the modification. In UEA's records the original version of the programme specification is retained and supplemented with a log of any approved minor modifications.

1.21     The team concludes that the successful integration of the programme and module specifications within programme handbooks results in an understanding of what is required in terms of adherence to academic frameworks for both staff and students. However, there is some lack of clarity in the responsibilities for the definitive documentation and the possibility of confusion or inconsistency between documentation. The review team therefore **recommends** that the Institution work with its awarding body to clarify and record the process for updating and publishing the definitive programme record.

1.22     The Expectation is met. The associated level of risk is moderate because the recommendation arises from a lack of clarity about responsibilities.

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

**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**

1.23     Responsibility for ensuring that programmes are approved in a way which ensures that academic standards are set at the required level rests with UEA. Through its own approval process, UEA has responsibility for positioning the qualification at the appropriate level, ensuring that the programme outcomes are aligned with relevant qualification descriptions, qualification characteristics and Subject Benchmark Statements, thus ensuring that the programme meets the required standards.

1.24     The Institution has a well-developed internal process for programme design, development and internal approval prior to submission to UEA (see Expectation B1). This involves the use of external reference points to ensure that the proposed new programmes are benchmarked externally against UK threshold academic standards and the standards of the relevant professional bodies.

1.25     These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met. To test their operation the team scrutinised a range of documentation (including UEA approval reports, programme specifications and quality-related documentation). The team also held meetings with staff (including a representative of the awarding body) and met students, alumni and employers.

1.26     Staff met by the team spoke confidently about how they use external reference points during programme approval and re-approval to ensure that standards are set at a level which meets UK threshold standards and industry-specific requirements. The Institution involves external advisers formally and informally in the development and internal approval stage, draws on the relevant Subject Benchmark Statements and is confident in using the FHEQ to ensure that levels are set correctly. The process also draws on industry-specific reference points, experts and regulatory bodies as appropriate to the subject area, to ensure that professional requirements are met.

1.27     The Institution therefore meets its responsibilities for designing and developing provision, which meets UK academic and industry-specific professional standards. 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**

1.28     UEA is responsible for ensuring that credit is only awarded where students have met the required learning outcomes and that UK threshold standards, as articulated in the FHEQ, and relevant professional standards have been met. To achieve this, UEA requires that the Institution adheres to its policies and procedures.

1.29     The Institution is responsible for fulfilling the requirements of UEA, which it does through the clearly defined roles of its senior staff (including a Director of Academic Affairs, and its key committees). The EWG, which is attended by executive members and heads of courses, has internal responsibility for academic planning and development and the quality of the student learning experience. JBOS is the committee which formally and systematically considers and approves all key documentation relating to academic standards. The EWG replaced the Academic Planning and Quality Committee following a senior management restructure in 2015. The Heads of Department meetings include consideration of quality assurance (for example, the Quality Code, external moderation, Ofsted inspection, QAA review, annual monitoring review).

1.30     The decision has recently been taken to establish an Academic Subcommittee to oversee academic issues as the volume of work, both business and academic-related, expands following the move to new premises. This group will provide an internal forum for discussing and considering matters related to standards and the quality of learning opportunities before the further presentation and approval of reports and proposals by JBOS.

1.31     The Institution has policies and procedures to cover all key areas of operation that relate to academic standards and these are available on either the website or the intranet. The policies and procedures on assessment, which are an important way that the Institution ensures credit is awarded only where appropriate, are discussed further under Expectation B6.

1.32     In addition to alignment with the FHEQ and UEA's regulations and requirements, the Institution aligns itself to industry standards. The LTAS is mapped to Arts Council England priorities to ensure industry-relevant standards are met. It was a member of Drama UK which used to provide industry accreditation until 2016. It is a member of this body's successor, the FDS, for collaborative working (although this group does not accredit its members). It recently joined the Council for Dance and Drama Education and Training, which is an accrediting body. These connections enable the Institution to demonstrate that it is aligned to industry standards.

1.33     These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met. To test their operation the team scrutinised a range of documentation (including committee minutes, external examiner reports and regulations). The team also held a number of meetings with

staff (including a representative of the awarding body) and met students, alumni and employers.

1.34     The Institution's own processes and the part it plays in UEA's processes for external examining, examination boards and other assessment activities are all operating effectively to ensure that credit is only awarded where learning outcomes have been achieved. This is further discussed in Expectation B6.

1.35     The review team concludes that the Institution works in partnership with its awarding body and operates successful practices to ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where the learning outcomes have been demonstrably achieved and both UK threshold standards and the awarding body's requirements have been satisfied. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

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

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

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

**Findings**

1.36     The awarding body is responsible for the monitoring and review of the programmes in order to ensure that academic standards are achieved and maintained over time. JBOS is the forum where UEA considers and approves the Institution's formal annual monitoring and review report.

1.37     UEA requires the Institution to produce a synoptic annual monitoring report known as the Self-Assessment, Review and Evaluation Report (SARE). This is based on the completion of programme and module-level reports, all completed on UEA's templates. Each stage of the institutional, programme, module and component monitoring process draws on the analysis of relevant data to inform the consideration of the management of academic standards. In addition to retention, progression, achievement and employability data, the process includes consideration of external examiner reports and the involvement of the awarding body and industry experts to provide external perspectives to the process. These processes are further discussed in Expectation B8.

1.38     These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met. To test their operation the team considered a range of documentation including those from the monitoring and review cycle. The team also held meetings with staff (including a representative of the awarding body) and met students, alumni and employers.

1.39     Involvement in the shared process for programme, module and component monitoring and review is thorough and provides the awarding body the information it needs to maintain oversight of UK academic standards at module and programme level (further explained in Expectation B8). Annual monitoring and review reports also indicate that industry standards are being achieved and maintained. Clear action plans are formulated as part of this process and their implementation is monitored, although no issues were identified in relation to academic standards in the reports seen by the team. Academic staff members confirmed their understanding of the way in which annual monitoring and review is used to ensure that relevant standards are maintained through programme delivery and assessment.

1.40     The monitoring and review processes ensure that the Institution effectively meets the awarding body's requirements. The team concludes that the Expectation is 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**

1.41     The UEA Partnership Handbook requires that external and independent expertise is used in all stages of setting and maintaining academic standards including in the processes for programme design and approval, programme modification, revalidation and institutional approval. These processes use external and independent expertise either by requiring attendance of external panel members or by requiring consultation on proposed changes to programmes.

1.42     In the development of new programmes, staff leading the process engage in industry research, contacting external sources to advise on programme content. At the point of approval, the panel considering the new programme proposal includes an industry adviser/employer.

1.43     The UEA Academic Link is a senior UEA academic appointed to provide advice and guidance on UEA practices, and is also a colleague with subject expertise. Academic Link staff are consulted on new programme proposals, curriculum design and delivery and programme modifications, and attend JBOS and assessment boards to support oversight of academic standards.

1.44     External examiners are used in maintaining and setting academic standards in the process of programme design and approval, and their comments and reports are considered during the self-evaluation process that takes place for review/revalidation.

1.45     In a recent example of the development of a new programme (the MA Site-Specific Theatre Practice) industry practitioners were consulted during the development of the programme to test the market, encourage responses on the chosen course leader and provide an opinion on issues in the sector.

1.46     These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met, with the Institution consulting widely on the development of new programmes. To test their operation the team scrutinised a range of documentation (including programme validation documentation and reports of validation panels). The team also held meetings with staff (including a representative of the awarding body) and met students, alumni and employers.

1.47     The Institution consults external academics when developing programmes, although the process as described to the review team is relatively informal and is not formally documented. However, the oversight from UEA and the external examiner ensures comparability of standards with similar programmes in other institutions. In practice the processes for the establishment and maintenance of academic standards are effective as they are ultimately overseen by the awarding body, which ensures that the Institution is meeting its responsibilities.

1.48     The internal processes, and adherence to the requirements of UEA, ensure that when designing new programmes appropriate use is made of independent expertise to establish the content and academic standards of the programmes. 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

1.49    In reaching its judgement about academic standards, the review team considered its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. The team also took into consideration that the awarding body has ultimate responsibility for the setting of academic standards.

1.50    The Institution's main responsibilities for maintaining academic standards are for adhering to the policies and procedures of its awarding body. The positive judgement in this area demonstrates that the Institution does so effectively. All Expectations in this judgement area are met and the associated level of risk is low in all but one case. There are no affirmations.

1.51    There is one recommendation in this area, in Expectation A2.2, which relates to the need to clarify and document the process for updating and publishing definitive programme records. Arising from the recommendation, there is a moderate level of risk in Expectation A2.2. The identified issue arises from a lack of clarity about responsibilities and, although this does not present any serious risk to the management of this judgement area, the review team considers that without appropriate action it could lead to more serious problems over time.

1.52    The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations **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 awarding body is responsible for the approval and modification of programmes. The Institution takes responsibility for the design and development of new programmes, together with the submission of requests for modifications to the awarding body. These processes have been mapped against the Expectations of the Quality Code and this has been discussed at the partnership meetings with the awarding body.

2.2 There is a well-developed internal process for the design and development of new programmes. The first part of the process is an open-ended approach, based on dialogue and debate with internal staff and students, and with external industry professionals to ensure a creative and forward-thinking approach. External reference points are then drawn on to give the emergent design firm roots in sector expectations. Once the concept is formed, an Initial Course Proposal is prepared and submitted to the EWG which considers the business case, the fit with the existing portfolio and the programme content. The proposal is then taken to JBOS for further discussion and for approval to proceed to validation. A full programme proposal to UEA takes the form of a suite of approval documents, including a rationale and programme specification. These documents are taken to the EWG for detailed discussion and progression on to the awarding body's validation event. UEA is then responsible for the formal validation process that includes industry and academic representatives on the panel.

2.3 Revalidation of the portfolio of programmes is undertaken by UEA. Prior to revalidation, the internal process is to use discipline team meetings, termly student representative meetings, the annual curriculum development meetings and the Programme Monitoring and Component and Module Review (PMCMR) process to feed into a rationale for change in the format required by the awarding body. The proposal is also discussed with external examiners and industry advisers.

2.4 The awarding body expects the Institution to follow its modification process, which involves the completion of a template, the updating of the programme or module specification and the approval of the proposed changes by JBOS.

2.5 These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met. To test their operation the team scrutinised a range of documentation (including recent programme validation documentation). The team also held meetings with staff (including a representative of the awarding body) and met students, alumni and employers.

2.6 There are long-term plans to develop a portfolio of programmes to make a 'creative wheel' of practice covering all dimensions related to their domain of professional practice. Recently three postgraduate programmes have been approved, four new programmes are currently going through the internal design and development process and four more programmes are in the early stages of development and will be formed into full programme proposals in the autumn. The Institution has planned a staggered start for these new

programmes, which are all being developed for the new premises, to ensure they are introduced in a managed and sustainable manner.

2.7      There is a commitment to involving students at every stage of the development and enhancement cycle. Students met by the team confirmed that their ideas for refining and further developing a recently approved programme had been adopted. The awarding body's approval process also involves the panel meeting students.

2.8      This internal stage of programme design, development and approval is well developed with particular space and time being given to the early stages of the process to ensure that a full range of staff, students and externals can influence the design before it takes shape as a firm structure.

2.9      The Institution carries out its part in revalidation and periodic review thoroughly and effectively. Revalidation was recently used to refine pathways in BA Theatre Production Arts. The modification process works effectively, although there is some potential confusion in relation to the updating of the definitive record, which is discussed in Expectation A2.2.

2.10      The review team concludes that there is an effective process for the design, development and modification of programmes and that the Institution meets the requirements of its awarding body. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

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

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

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

**Findings**

2.11      The Institution is responsible for the recruitment, selection and admission of students as set out in the UEA Partnership Agreement. The Institution has a robust Admissions, Selection and Recruitment Policy, which is informed by the Equality and Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Both policies are transparent, valid, inclusive and fair.

2.12      The EWG is responsible for setting admissions targets, which are followed by Heads of Department who set the criteria for selection. After initially applying online, the applicants receive a full description of the rigorous audition and interview process they will experience in order to be recruited onto their preferred programme.

2.13      Entry requirement and requirements for audition and interview are detailed on the website. This ensures that necessary and essential information (including course fees) is available for students both nationally and internationally and that recommended CMA guidance is being met.

2.14      The International Strategy outlines the approach to international recruitment and applications. International auditions are held in various countries to facilitate the recruitment of international students. The Selection Procedure chart outlines the process and journey from admission to selection from the perspective of the prospective student.

2.15      These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met. To test their operation the team scrutinised a range of documentation relating to admissions. The team also held meetings with staff (including a representative of the awarding body) and met students, alumni and employers.

2.16      During the review visit, the team met with current students who spoke highly of their experience of applying for a place at the Institution, notifying the team that all necessary information required was available, and describing the entire process through selection to recruitment as fair and inclusive. There are opportunities for applicants to visit the Institution, to meet current students, to observe classes and to sample a 'day in the life' of a student. Students value the advice they receive during their audition and interview process from both staff and students, informing the review team that part of their final decision to study at Mountview was influenced by the warm experience of applying and visiting the Institution.

2.17      The Institution takes into account the talent of an individual over their formal qualifications, aiming to build a diverse and capable cohort demonstrating the aptitude and enthusiasm to become successful future practitioners. To ensure the opportunity to study at Mountview is presented to a wide range of prospective students, the Institution is in the third year of the Scouting Outreach Programme through which it works in partnership with 37 arts institutions who identify talented individuals from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Through the programme, the nominated students are financially and culturally supported to achieve admission, audition and selection on to programmes.

2.18     The Institution engages in further outreach initiatives with young people within the local community through provision of short courses, and current students have opportunities to tour performances in local schools. These outreach initiatives have resulted in the recruitment of students through an unconventional route; adding further strength to the recruitment processes.

2.19     In order to ensure a smooth transition from prospective to current student, induction and briefing packs are provided to new students at least two months before the enrolment process begins. The induction process is mapped to the Student Induction Policy, which was developed by the Safeguarding Working Group to ensure that practice is effective and appropriate.

2.20     The application, interview and audition process is reviewed annually and admissions, selection and recruitment processes and policies are discussed at the EWG meetings, the findings of which are incorporated into the Institution's action plan. This rigorous approach ensures all levels of staff and students are consulted with and incorporated into the inclusive approach to monitoring and developing the recruitment of new students.

2.21     From the discussions in meetings and scrutiny of documentation, the review team considers the comprehensive and supportive processes for selection and admissions, which provide a positive introduction to the student learning experience, to be **good practice**.

2.22     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**

2.23    Developments in learning, teaching and assessment are grouped in the LTAS under six headings: Championing Innovation in Practice, Collaboration, Industry Ready Graduates, Lifelong Learning, Using Technology and Supporting Learning. A regularly updated action plan considered at the LTAS Working Group monitors progress against these headings and prioritises actions. One outcome from this process was the reorganisation of the term shape to front-load practical skills teaching and to separate it from rehearsal practice, a move welcomed by students on all programmes.

2.24    Programme learning and teaching strategies are articulated in programme handbooks. In line with the Subject Benchmark Statement for Dance, Drama and Performance, the delivery of theory on performance programmes takes place through a variety of approaches that facilitate students' artistic, creative and scholarly development around the integration of practice and theory. The majority of classes are practical and fully interactive and include peer learning and team teaching with a strong emphasis placed on group skills.

2.25    The Staff Recruitment Policy outlines the procedure to be followed for the appointment of academic staff. New staff, both full-time and sessional, receive an induction from their line manager. This includes guidance on teaching and assessing at higher education levels. Before a new member of staff undertakes assessment, they shadow another member of staff through the assessment process. The Institution has been accepted as an Access Member of the Higher Education Academy, which allows its staff to access HEA resources in support of teaching and learning.

2.26    Teaching observations are undertaken in three forms: subject specific, cross department, and teaching specific, which all use the same form, which is detailed and encourages depth of reflection. The in-house Lesson Observations Report 2015-16 showed that there was a notable improvement made in relation to the areas identified for development in the previous academic year. The Lesson Observations Report for 2016-17 is detailed and identifies the main areas for improvement, including making better use of resources and flexibility in teaching methods, as well as good practice such as dealing with questions and structuring of classes.

2.27    The Professional Development Policy gives guidance to staff on how to request funding to undertake professional development including sabbaticals. Staff can request up to five paid working days per annum to engage in professional development activities. Staff met by the team confirmed that the Institution is supportive and has enabled four members of teaching staff to gain a higher education teaching qualification and one to undertake a master's degree.

2.28    All permanent staff engage in annual appraisals with their line manager to review the year, identify whether targets have been met and to set new targets for the forthcoming year. Lesson observation feedback is also discussed at appraisal and this feeds into discussions around development needs and opportunities.

2.29    All staff take part in three staff development days per year. Recent topics have included the Teaching and Assessment Strategy and the academic year shape. A freelance training day was scheduled in response to the Lesson Observations Report. The development day was held in September 2017 and included two sessions on teaching and assessment.

2.30    These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met. To test their operation the team scrutinised a range of documentation relating to staffing and learning and teaching practices. The team also held meetings with staff (including a representative of the awarding body) and met students, alumni and employers.

2.31    In the recent National Student Survey students expressed 92 per cent satisfaction with the teaching on their programme, with highly complimentary written comments. Students met at the visit confirmed the high quality of the teaching.

2.32    At a meeting with staff it was stated that all new staff had prior experience of teaching at other similar institutions. CVs of staff indicate that they have a variety of qualification level with some having diplomas and others having postgraduate and teaching qualifications. All teaching and support staff are recruited against criteria that include appropriate qualification and/or equivalent professional practice. CVs of teaching staff are received and monitored by UEA.

2.33    Teaching staff have extensive industry experience and many are active in their disciplines. The well-developed lesson observations ensure that good practice and areas for development are identified and actioned. Recruitment of teaching staff is rigorous and allows for those with extensive professional experience to be employed as well as those with good academic qualifications, dependent on the individual job description. Appraisal and staff development ensures that individual teaching staff are enabled to develop their teaching and to seek professional development opportunities.

2.34    There are appropriate systems for the appointment of teaching staff and the monitoring of performance, backed by an appraisal and staff development ethos. 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**

2.35　　The EWG, consisting of Heads of Department and individuals from the Executive Team, meets monthly to discuss the approval and development of new provision including the resources required to meet the needs of students. The EWG has oversight of all matters relating to learning resources, which is a standing item on the agenda. The LTAS Working Group, Heads of Department meetings, Curriculum Development meetings, Discipline Team meetings, the SND Adjustment Working Group and the PMCMR all inform the EWG in matters relating to student support and learning resources.

2.36　　The Institution's annual monitoring process provides oversight of quality assurance including learning resources and student support and enhancement indicators, all of which contribute to enabling student development and achievement. Student feedback and representation on various levels of the committee structure inform the review process.

2.37　　Students have access to a range of specialist facilities including 'Green Screen', radio and recording studios, and workshops with specialist staff in all disciplines. This provides students with resources and experience to enter the professional industry having achieved specialist skills that are current, in demand and well regarded.

2.38　　These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met. The team tested their operation by scrutinising a range of documents (including documents and minutes relating to student support, LTAS, results of the 2017 National Student Survey (NSS) and the student submission). The team also held a number of meetings with staff (including a representative of the awarding body) and met students, alumni and employers. The team was given a demonstration of the new intranet by a member of staff and a student.

2.39　　Students confirmed that resources provided for learning meet their needs. In
the 2017 NSS students indicated that they were 79 per cent satisfied with their learning resources overall but this was influenced by a lower score in one discipline. While satisfaction with library and programme-specific resources was high, there was less satisfaction with IT resources. There has been some work on updating IT in line with the LTAS which was ongoing at the time of the review visit.

2.40　　The LTAS states that students create their own informal virtual learning environment (VLE) through the use of social media but also indicates that the Institution should scope a VLE for sharing resources, learning materials and subject forums. The LTAS Group update of July 2017 indicates that the action is outstanding.

2.41　　Although the Institution previously had an intranet this was not used by students and has now been discontinued. As part of the actions arising from the LTAS, a new intranet is being developed which is intended to form the basis of a VLE. At the time of the review implementation of the intranet was limited, with no minimum content expectations set, and the milestones for its further development were unclear. The review team **recommends** that the Institution fully articulate plans for the next stage of development of the intranet, taking account of sector practice.

2.42　　Students have access to a library which hosts specialist collections necessary to support student achievement. Students confirmed to the team that the library was an

excellent resource and appreciated that it was available on Saturdays. Students currently have virtually no access to online journals or other electronic resources. Discussions have taken place with UEA which has given guidance on the provision of electronic resources, but at the time of the visit there were no definite plans on how to take the issue forward. Staff met at the visit appreciated the importance of electronic resources, particularly for the postgraduate programmes, and it was noted that there had been a related recommendation arising from a recent programme approval event. The review team **recommends** that the Institution develop provision of electronic library resources to increase availability of learning materials to support study at the forefront of the discipline.

2.43     Student support is a strength of the Institution and is driven by the LTAS under the Supporting Learning strand. Students stated that they felt well supported from their first interview or audition and while on programme. The Student Handbook informs students of their entitlement to support while at the Institution including learning support, medical support, a student services department, counselling, and financial assistance. Students at the visit confirmed they were highly satisfied with the level of support they receive.

2.44     Personal tutors look after approximately 15 students. Their role is to support the learning progression of individual students and to be the first port of call for their pastoral needs. Students meet with their personal tutor at the end of each term to review their progress. Any actions arising from the meeting are recorded by the student. Personal tutors also meet the whole group for a tutorial session once per term to encourage peer-to-peer support and provide a forum for discussion on challenges such as homesickness, independent living and time management.

2.45     Since the last review the Institution has introduced SEND support and has appointed a Student Welfare Manager, partly in response to a growing need for mental health support. The Student Welfare Manager has excellent links to external agencies including those offering mental health support and has undertaken training in mental health first aid which is going to be extended to other staff. The work of the Student Welfare Manager is highly valued by students. The review team considers that the well-developed systems and resources for academic and pastoral support constitute **good practice**.

2.46     Driven by the LTAS the future employability of graduates is a priority for the Institution. An Industry Liaison Officer has been appointed who undertakes a wide variety of activities both within and extra to the curriculum, including preparation for auditions and providing information on how performers need to manage their business affairs. Together with the provision of careers and industry classes and opportunities to work with industry professionals throughout their training this enables students to develop an informed understanding of working as a self-employed practitioner with realistic expectations of the challenges they may face. Students highly value the contribution the Industry Liaison Officer has made to their learning experience. Industry professionals who met the team confirmed that alumni of Mountview are industry-ready upon graduation and are highly competent individuals in a competitive environment. Former students the team met also confirmed the value of the support for employability skills, and they felt it gave them an advantage in their working lives. The review team considers that the systematic approach to developing employability skills and industry-readiness constitutes **good practice**.

2.47     Careers advice for students intending to continue into the performing arts professions is good. Staff have excellent industry contacts and are available to advise students and former students on their career. However there is no independent careers advice available for those students who may not wish to continue on their original career pathway. The review team **recommends** that the Institution guide students who are considering employment outside of the industry towards appropriate careers advice.

2.48      In practice the processes work effectively, with some aspects of student support being exemplary (including the development of employability skills and pastoral support). There are, however, three recommendations relating to areas where further development is needed (access to electronic resources, development of the intranet and access to independent careers advice). The recommendations relate to issues indicative of insufficient priority being given to assuring quality in planning processes in particular areas. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is moderate.

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

**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**

2.49    At the beginning of their programme, students are provided with a Student Charter, which sets out what is expected from students and, in turn, what they can expect from the Institution. This provides a basis of understanding in the relationship between the student body and the staff as they progress through the higher education provision and training offered.

2.50    The Institution actively encourages student engagement in the development and enhancement of the learning experience, as detailed in the Student Handbook, successfully promoting opportunities for students to participate in the Student Representative Group and the Students' Union.

2.51    Student representatives are nominated from each cohort, to engage with staff at various levels to present the views of the student body. This opportunity to participate in discussions formally is promoted to new students during induction week, alongside informal routes for communication between staff and students via the open-door policy.

2.52    Termly Student Representative Group meetings are held to discuss any ongoing matters within the student body's experience, providing the Institution with a platform to receive student feedback, and to provide a response. Representatives are presented with updates in these meetings, for example on the LTAS.

2.53    These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met. The team tested their operation by scrutinising a range of documents. The team also held meetings with staff (including a representative of the awarding body) and met students, alumni and employers.

2.54    As part of the implementation of the LTAS, the Institution has implemented feedback journals for students to complete continuously during their studies, which inform one-to-one termly progress meetings students have individually with a personal tutor to develop their learning plan and goals for the future. The personal tutor, who supports students in developing independent learning and self-management skills, has the responsibility of ensuring the health and wellbeing of students is considered, alongside providing a platform for discussion for any other questions or concerns students may have.

2.55    The Students' Union is considerably well-developed for a relatively small Institution, providing students with a wealth of information and support during their training, as well as presenting students with additional opportunities to engage. Students are supported with a substantial range of counselling and support services and dedicated support staff who can answer students' queries. The Students' Union has an International Officer; a Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender and Queer or Questioning (LBGTQ+) Officer; a Diversity Officer; an Events Officer; a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Officer and a Student Welfare Officer. This team represents the student body with any issues they face while studying at the Institution, present any larger issues on a national level with the NUS, further the comprehensive support system available to students and create additional opportunities for formal student engagement.

2.56    Students are invited to complete an annual Student Consultation Questionnaire, which is fed into the Annual Monitoring Process. Evaluation forms are distributed to students and completed within the Institution, providing staff with a source of qualitative feedback to

integrate into their development and planning each year within their own disciplines and lessons. These engagement processes lead to direct impact on module enhancement from the student body, the outcome of which is then considered by the Institution formally and incorporated into programme modifications proposed to UEA. The membership of the Board includes a recent graduate and there are opportunities for current students to meet the Board during the year to contribute student opinion at an institutional level. Students are also represented on JBOS, at annual monitoring meetings and in the programme approval processes.

2.57    Through these rigorous processes of student engagement, the Institution creates and maintains a productive environment within which students and staff participate in discussions that aim to bring about demonstrable enhancement of the educational experience, as set out in detail in Expectations B4 and Enhancement. This process of discussion leading to change has improved the student learning experience by enabling students to clarify their understanding of their programmes in structure and purpose. Furthermore, this has improved practice within the higher education provision as the new term shape accurately mirrors industry practice, thus enhancing the students' employability prospects and expectations. As noted in Expectation B4, the work being done to enhance employability is identified as good practice by the team.

2.58    The team concludes that deliberate steps are being taken to ensure engagement with students at an institutional level. Students have opportunities to contribute to the development and enhancement of their learning environment, to the processes for approval and monitoring of programmes and the processes for enhancing employability. 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

2.59     Under the partnership arrangements with its awarding body, the Institution is responsible for setting assignments, first and second marking, moderation and providing feedback on assessment. The awarding body is responsible for the appointment of external examiners, the procedures relating to examination boards and the oversight of the assessment processes. The Institution is responsible for the convening and chairing of examination boards according to the awarding body's procedures, with the UEA's Partnerships Manager acting as secretary.

2.60     To fulfil these responsibilities, there are a range of internal systems in place. There is a set of general regulations for the programmes covering matters such as conduct in examinations and plagiarism. There are plans to review this document, together with other policies and guidance documents on assessment, to align processes more closely with UEA and to bring guidance on assessment into a single more accessible place, which the team noted would be helpful to staff and students. The Institution monitors and responds to changes in awarding body assessment policy and procedure through JBOS. LTAS is in its second year of implementation.

2.61     External examiner reports are considered by the EWG, the student representative meetings and department-level meetings. JBOS formally receives and tracks responses to external examiner reports. Marking and moderation is undertaken in accordance with UEA policy and is aligned to Quality Code expectations. All assessments are carried out in English. There is a Plagiarism and Collusion Policy and a set of Regulations on Assessments and Cheating in Examinations. The policy on Reasonable Adjustments is currently being reviewed by its SEND working group. The Institution has Extenuating Circumstances Regulations and an Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Policy.

2.62     The policies and procedures in place would enable the Expectation to be met. To test their operation the team examined a range of documentation (including the general regulations, policies and procedures relating to assessment, external examiner reports, minutes of meetings and student work). The team also held meetings with staff (including a representative of the awarding body) and met students, alumni and employers.

2.63     Module specifications with formal assessment requirements are on the intranet and these includes details of the assignments and the assessment criteria, and a table showing the volume, timing and nature of assessments. There is a helpful lexicon and useful grade tables indicating how percentage scores are assigned. Students have expressed mixed views about how accessible and helpful the assessment criteria are and the Institution plans to raise student awareness further.

2.64     All student work is multiple marked and moderated to ensure parity with parallel groups, and students confirm the process is timely, helpful and fair. The Institution is currently piloting 'cross-over' assignments where students on different programmes contribute to and are assessed on different roles in the same project. Assessment boards are effectively managed. Assignments are kept securely (whether paper or electronic).

2.65    The QAA review in 2014 made a recommendation to 'Provide feedback to students in a timely manner', and this has been addressed effectively. Students on the programme where this was the issue now report that marks and feedback are received within 20 working days and students confirm that feedback on assessment is timely. Assessment and feedback were among the weaker areas in the first set of NSS outcomes for the performance programmes (all below 80 per cent) and the Institution continues to refine and improve this area. The recent implementation of LTAS has improved qualitative feedback to students, with feedback having less focus on the marks and more focus on how students can improve, and this has been welcomed by students. Written reviews of progress and achievement are provided by tutors for each component at the end of each phase of study and termly one-to-one student progress tutorials are then held between students and their personal tutor to discuss their feedback and create the basis of a learning plan for the next term. These action points are recorded by students in their journal, which is used by students to locate and reflect on their progress across all their modules. Verbal feedback to final year performance students is recorded for quality purposes (for appeals and the provision of student reference) and to ensure absent students can access their feedback).

2.66    Staff training is given before assessments to ensure that staff, particularly new staff and freelancers, are familiar with how to mark the wide range of assessment types used in the programmes. New staff and freelancers shadow an experienced marker until they have demonstrated confidence and competence with the assessment process.

2.67    Assessment is constructively aligned, with careful thought being given to how theory and subject knowledge can be taught and assessed through practical work as well as through seminars and written assignments. There is very little written assessment on the undergraduate performance programmes as much of the subject content, theory, research and critical analysis is done through practice (which is in accordance with the Subject Benchmark Statement for Dance, Drama and Performance). All undergraduate programmes have annual Reflections on Acting Practice (RAPs) which are essays where students bring together theory, subject knowledge and academic resources to inform reflections on practice. The programme annual monitoring process has identified that in Theatre Production levels of academic research and writing have remained a concern across the years and the Institution has brought in various mechanisms to support these and other students. These include a guidance document on writing the reflective essay, tailored briefings on referencing and a co-curricular session on research skills available to all students.

2.68    Similarity plagiarism-detection software is not currently used, given the small amount of written work and small group sizes, but staff remain vigilant for plagiarism in written work submitted, and use the Plagiarism and Collusion Policy if needed. Plagiarism and collusion is reported as minimal because much of the assessment is either practical or a reflection and evaluation of the student's own practice.

2.69    Reasonable adjustments are made for both practical and written work, with the Welfare Officer coordinating support for students. The SEND Working Group reviews and monitors the adjustments available to students and develops new policy and practice.

2.70    The Institution fulfils the requirements of its awarding body in the area of assessment and manages the procedures for which it is responsible effectively. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

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

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

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

### Findings

2.71    UEA defines the roles and responsibilities of external examiners. It also approves appointments and scrutinises external examiner reports and the response to them. The Institution is responsible for identifying and nominating external examiners and management of their induction. External examiner reports are submitted in the first instance to the Institution who forward them to the UEA Partnerships Office together with an action plan.

2.72    External examiners attend the relevant final assessment board to ratify marks and endorse academic decisions. The external examiner reports to the Board on their evaluation of the programme, the way in which it is being delivered, its comparison to other programmes in the sector and the achievement of its students. This is followed by a full written report to the Institution.

2.73    The external examiner reports are responded to by the Course Leader and incorporated into the PMCMR action plan. The PMCMR action plan is considered by JBOS and signed off by the UEA Academic Director of Partnerships before publication on the student intranet.

2.74    These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met. The team tested their operation through scrutiny of a range of evidence including the partnership agreement, relevant policies and procedures, external examiner reports and associated action plans, minutes of assessment boards and committee minutes. The team also held meetings with staff (including a representative of the awarding body) and met students, alumni and employers.

2.75    External examiner reports confirm that the programmes are being delivered in line with the FHEQ and that standards are comparable with those being delivered at other institutions.

2.76    Some students met by the review team were aware that an external examiner had attended their assessment but none had met an external examiner formally. Student representatives have access to the external examiner reports by attendance at programme meetings, and reports have now been added to the new intranet, but the review team considers that student awareness of the external examining process could be improved.

2.77    The external examining procedures together with the rigour with which the Institution applies them ensure that the views of external examiners are considered and responded to in an appropriate manner. The Institution's processes for the identification and induction of external examiners ensure that examiners can make a positive contribution to the maintenance of academic standards. In response to the previous QAA review, external examiner reports are now discussed at the EWG and are available on the student intranet. This process of discussion and sharing of information ensures that external examiner comments are available for all stakeholders.

2.78    In practice the UEA processes, and the manner in which the Institution meets its responsibilities in relation to external examining, ensure that the views of external examiners play a key role in the maintenance of academic standards.

2.79      The Institution meets its obligations for external examining under the agreement with the awarding body rigorously, which contributes to the maintenance of academic standards. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

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

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

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

**Findings**

2.80     The Institution shares the responsibility for annual monitoring with UEA and together they have mapped how the process meets the Expectation. In the previous QAA review in 2014, the approach to reviewing components and modules was commended. The comprehensive annual monitoring process was also identified as good practice in the same review. Together these processes are known as the Programme, Module and Component Monitoring and Review (PMCMR) process. This internal process feeds directly into the awarding body's system for monitoring and review. The 2016 QAA annual monitoring visit report confirmed that the good practice had been further built upon.

2.81     The first stage of the monitoring process is to use qualitative feedback from students, external examiner reports, achievement data and feedback from staff to undertake a review at the weekly curriculum meetings (separately at undergraduate and postgraduate level). The heads of discipline each write a Component and Module Report which is discussed at the meetings. Undergraduate and postgraduate portfolio heads draw this information together to write a programme-level report which is discussed at an Institution-wide meeting attended by all heads, the Senior Programme Manager and a representative from UEA. It also receives and takes account of commentaries from student and industry representatives. The report draws on quantitative data relating to recruitment, retention and achievement and qualitative feedback from students. Any proposed changes are then taken through UEA's process for approval of modifications. Together this review cycle results in a 360-degree approach to monitoring that encourages fresh thinking about specific components and modules, as well as across the programme as a whole.

2.82     After the meeting a synoptic report, which is required by UEA, called the Self-Assessment Review and Evaluation (SARE) is drawn up by the Director of Academic Affairs. An organisation-wide action plan is produced that is reviewed, together with the programme reports, by the EWG and the termly JBOS meeting. It is ultimately reviewed at the following year's PMCMR meeting.

2.83     The awarding body undertakes a periodic review and revalidation of the academic provision every five years which follows UEA's process. The EWG is responsible for considering any necessary review of internal policies and strategies, though there is no systematic or documented approach to this process.

2.84     These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met. The team tested their operation through scrutiny of a range of evidence (monitoring reports, their associated action plans, minutes of meetings, related policies and procedures). The team also held meetings with staff (including a representative of the awarding body) and met students, alumni and employers.

2.85     The component and module stage of the process enables the Institution to effectively consider specialist components, the sub-module units of study. This allows the different specialist skills needed on these professional programmes to be considered in their own right without being lost in the general evaluation of a module that may contain several distinctly different elements.

2.86    The reports looked at by the team demonstrated a thoughtful and effective evaluation of components, modules and programmes. The reports are considered at a range of meetings, with the reports being amended after each to take account of comments. Staff have a good understanding of the annual monitoring and review process and understand how it can be used to enhance their programmes. Students gave examples of how their comments had been taken into account when reviewing and developing programmes. Modifications needed as a result of monitoring and review are taken appropriately through the required approval process.

2.87    The Institution plans to develop a more advanced and systematic approach to data capture and management, partly in response to a recommendation in its 2015 Ofsted report but also to ensure that it better meets the requirements of the awarding body.

2.88    The Institution continues to build on the previously identified good practice, it effectively responds to the awarding body's monitoring and review requirements and has usefully supplemented this with its own well-developed internal procedures. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

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

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

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

**Findings**

2.89    The Institution is jointly responsible with the awarding body for managing formal appeals and complaints that arise within the Institution. It has three robust and comprehensive appeals and complaints policies: one surrounding admissions; a second dealing with academic matters; and a third addressing non-academic concerns. All three policies are available to all stakeholders on the Institution's website.

2.90    The Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy provides prospective students with information on what steps to take if they are unsatisfied with their experience of applying for a place, who to contact and how long the process of reaching an outcome will take.

2.91    The Academic Appeals and Complaints Policy details the procedure the Institution will take to manage a formal complaint or appeal, any issue is initially handled by the Institution internally and is then passed on to UEA if the student is dissatisfied with the result of the first stage of the process. The Academic Appeals and Complaints Policy explicitly identifies which body an appeal or complaint must be directed towards in the event of one being issued. It is clearly laid out how an anonymous, individual or group complaint or appeal will be handled by the Institution.

2.92    The Non-Academic Concerns and Complaints Policy informs students of the process following a complaint addressing an issue that can be resolved by the Institution internally. If students wish to continue pursuing their complaint, the Institution will ultimately present the complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

2.93    These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met. The team tested their operation through scrutiny of a range of evidence. The team also held meetings with staff (including a representative of the awarding body) and met students, alumni and employers.

2.94    Other than the website, relevant policies and procedures are included in the programme handbooks to ensure ease of access and transparency of process. Both the Academic Complaints and Appeals, and the Non-Academic Complaints Policy are annually reviewed by JBOS to ensure the process is fair, accessible and the outcomes are timely and enable enhancement.

2.95    The approach to complaints is initially to aim to resolve the issue informally through the open-door policy. Students informed the review team that the shared philosophy of courage and trust within the Institution has led to them feeling they could raise a concern with anyone, particularly the Student Welfare Officer, a member of the Students' Union or a student representative. Informal complaints are managed via the personal tutor system, who hold individual meetings with students to discuss their progress and any areas of concern. If it is deemed necessary, the personal tutor or member of staff dealing with the complaint will inform the Course Leader, Senior Programme Manager or Director of Academic Affairs in order to resolve the issue in the most efficient manner possible.

2.96    Students are encouraged to use their student representative system if or when they have any concerns or complaints in order for the relevant channels to be used effectively to produce a fair outcome. The opportunity is also given to students to raise issues at the

Board on an annual basis, encouraging an enhancement of provision underpinned by student contribution.

2.97     Meetings with students and staff confirmed a thorough understanding of policy and procedure. Information is transparent and accessible and, when required to be applied, the Institution is timely and effective in managing any issues which arise. 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**

2.98      The Institution has no higher education provision that it manages with other institutions. There is an explicit statement in the Partnership Handbook that serial arrangements undertaken without the permission of the awarding body are not permitted. Therefore the application of this Expectation to the provision is in the context of involving external organisations in the provision of placements.

2.99      The FdA and BA (Hons) Theatre Production Arts students undertake work-based learning involving shadowing professionals and working off-site, gaining valuable learning and networking experience for their future employability. The students on the MA in Musical Direction and the MA in Creative Producing also engage in shadowing activities from time to time.

2.100      Students are encouraged to identify their own work placement opportunities and are supervised by production arts staff. Work-based learning opportunities are approved by staff managing the programme, who ensure the placements have appropriate health and safety policies and insurance. During the placement, staff liaise with students to ensure they are receiving an appropriate experience.

2.101      Comprehensive work-based learning documentation includes guidance for providers, guidance for students and a work experience handbook for students. The guidance documents clearly define roles and responsibilities of all parties and ensure a safe and productive learning experience.

2.102      Students who engage in work-based learning are not formally assessed by the placement provider; the Institution considers placements to be a learning experience on which they reflect following the opportunity. Employers do, however, pass on useful commentary and feedback for the student in relation to how well the student understood work practices, was able to apply theory to practical situations, the student's approach to problem-solving and exercise of personal responsibility.

2.103      These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met. The team tested their operation through examination of a range of documentation including work placement guidance documents for providers and students. The team also held meetings with staff (including a representative of the awarding body) and met students, alumni and employers.

2.104      The Institution's procedures are rigorous. Programme staff ensure that placements are suitable and safe. The guidance given to placement providers and students is clear and comprehensive. Providers are not required to assess students against learning outcomes but do give feedback to the Institution on their work performance while on placement.

2.105      In practice, the work-based learning aspects of the provision provide a sound framework for the professional development of students and contribute significantly to their employability.

2.106    The Institution has rigorous mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness of the work-based learning experience. The Expectation is therefore 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**

2.107    There is no research degree provision therefore this Expectation is not applicable.

**Expectation:    Not applicable**
**Level of risk:    Not applicable**

# The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

2.109    All of the 10 applicable Expectations in this judgement area are met. Nine are judged to be of low risk and one of moderate risk.

2.110    There are three recommendations in this judgement area. The team identified the need to fully articulate plans for the next stage of development of the intranet, taking account of sector practice. Develop provision of electronic library resources to increase availability of learning materials to support study at the forefront of the discipline. Guide students who are considering employment outside of the industry towards appropriate careers advice. The recommendations in Expectation B4 arise from insufficient priority being given to assuring quality in planning processes in particular areas. The issues identified do not present serious risks to the judgement area but there are some moderate risks which could, without appropriate action, lead to more serious problems over time.

2.111    There are a number of areas of good practice in the approach taken by the Institution to managing the quality of student learning opportunities. In particular, the team identifies as good practice the comprehensive and supportive processes for selection and admissions, the systematic approach to developing employability skills and industry-readiness, and the well-developed systems and resources for academic and pastoral support. There is also a related area of good practice in Enhancement, concerning the comprehensive outreach activities and support systems for students from diverse backgrounds.

2.112    The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities **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 Institution has an informative website in place, which provides accurate and reliable information to the public and all associated stake-holders. The Academy has recently finalised the process of ensuring that the website takes account of CMA, HEFCE and UEA guidance. This includes providing a thorough breakdown of programme elements and the content of modules, an accurate representation of term dates and notes of attendance expectations, a clear depiction of annual fee increases and details of additional programme expenses.

3.2 The Academy ensures that information provided to prospective students, and students going through the enrolment process complies with the appropriate guidance. By providing clear references in their terms and conditions and explaining the consultation of any programme changes or changes to information after an offer is made, the Academy successfully adheres to CMA, HEFCE and UEA indicators.

3.3 Currently, students are provided with an Offer Letter detailing the programme title, qualification, duration of programme and programme fee alongside descriptive instructions of what the student needs to complete in order to begin their studies at Mountview. A Welcome Pack is provided to students before they arrive at the Institution detailing expectations of the student, term dates and details of the provision they will receive. The Student Handbook provides an informative and formal central location for students to find any information they will require during their studies, including information on enrolment and fees, assessment and feedback, complaints and appeals, as well as other policies and procedures in place at the Institution.

3.4 Students are provided with clear information detailing their assignment schedule and processes in module specifications and programme handbooks, ensuring that students are able to complete their studies in an organised and confident manner. The information detailing assessments is reviewed in the Partnerships Office Annual External Examiner Report, and in the Programme, Module, and Component Monitoring Review.

3.5 The module specifications are comprehensive, providing students with a wealth of fundamental information surrounding the structure of their chosen programme. Using this document, students can access a clear written representation of each assessment they are due to undergo, the components within each assessment are mapped against learning outcomes and credit weightings, providing students with a detailed understanding of what they need to achieve and how they will go about doing so to obtain their award.

3.6 Programme handbooks provide students with a full depiction of what they can expect of their experience studying at the Institution, including advice surrounding student support options available, a breakdown of assessment practice and feedback procedures.

3.7 The review team met with staff and students, and were shown that since the previous QAA visit, the Institution has upgraded its internal online software, ensuring that all students have been assigned an @mountview email address to improve communication.

All students have access to up-to-date software, which has improved online learning opportunities. This is an early stage of the ongoing development of the internal VLE which, at the time of the visit, was still being integrated into full use and was not being used to its full potential.

3.8      The acting and musical theatre programmes were previously accredited by Drama UK which ceased to operate in September 2016. The programmes will in future be accredited by CDET, which was created by a group of drama schools in April 2017. From the meeting with students it was apparent that the recent change in accreditation organisation from Drama UK to CDET had not been communicated to students. This was acknowledged by senior staff and the awarding body representative. The review team **recommends** that the Institution communicate to students and update documentation in light of the recent changes to external accreditation.

3.9      The review team concludes that despite an oversight in amending and communicating information surrounding the change of accrediting body to current students, the Institution works effectively alongside UEA to ensure that all information provided to students and the public is accurate and up to date. Overall, students have been presented with accurate information that is fit for purpose from their initial application to the assessment processes and requirements of their programmes. Therefore 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

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

3.11    The Expectation in this judgement area is met and the associated level of risk is low. There is one recommendation associated with this judgement area and no areas of good practice.

3.12    The Institution works with its awarding body to operate appropriate mechanisms to ensure that information relating to the programmes is fit for purpose, accessible and reliable and these mechanisms generally work effectively.

3.13    The team identified that there had been a failure to notify students of a change in accreditation status, leading to a recommendation that the Institution should communicate to students and update documentation in the light of recent changes to accreditation. However, the recommendation arises from a minor oversight which does not constitute any serious risk to the management of this area.

3.14    The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities **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 Institution mission has three key strategic themes (excellence, access and innovation) and it has developed a coherent vision for enhancement which is articulated in a strategic road map. The responsibility for strategically enhancing student learning opportunities is through EWG. The LTAS Working Group was established to develop and implement the first strategy for the enhancement of learning, teaching and assessment and is now an important and established part of the Institution's meeting structure.

4.2 The Institution has outlined key areas where it has been strategically and consistently enhancing student learning opportunities for a number of years. These areas might be summarised as improving teaching, learning and assessment through the development of the LTAS and improving resources and infrastructure, focusing on the move to new premises in Peckham.

4.3 These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met. To test their operation the team scrutinised a range of documentation including strategies. The team also held a number of meetings with staff (including a representative of the awarding body) and met students, alumni and employers.

4.4 The LTAS has been shaped around six key themes: championing innovation in practice; collaboration; industry-ready graduates; lifelong learning; using technology; and supporting learning. Collaboratively developed with staff and students, the strategy runs from 2015-20 and its implementation has been overseen by regular meetings of the LTAS Group, which makes annual reports on progress to the Executive Board, student representative meetings and the JBOS. The LTAS was mapped to Arts Council England priorities to ensure industry-relevant standards were met, as well as to the Institution's own mission. Good progress is being made with its implementation, with several projects completed and having a positive impact on the student experience. The strand on staff development ensures staff are being equipped to respond to the other initiatives.

4.5 The first strand, championing innovation in practice, has already resulted in the successful delivery of two key projects related to curriculum structure. The first has been a thorough review of term shape which looked at the relationship between skills development and application. This resulted in a major change to delivery with skills now being typically taught and developed early in the term and then applied through a project towards the end of the term, leading to a more manageable student experience. The process was prompted by feedback from students and analysis of performance data. Over the previous two years a working group met to draw up and implement plans and the project is now in the evaluation and further development stage, with feedback from students being very positive. A related but distinct initiative was to develop more shared working between Performance and Production departments including the sharing of good practice, a research and development group and joint assessed projects for students (still in the early stages of development). This move to increase cross-department working has been enabled and strengthened by the 'creative wheel' approach to portfolio development, which continues to expand the range of skills and expertise available and to see all aspects of performance and production as inter-related. This holistic approach to curriculum delivery has involved staff collaborating to ensure that the various elements of the student experience are ordered and developed

in a holistic and relational manner. Together these developments have been well-received by students resulting in a good rating for teaching (between 88 per cent and 96 per cent) and positive comments in the recent NSS.

4.6     Developing industry-ready graduates was the second strand of the LTAS, where the team saw evidence of a long-standing and well-embedded approach to employability which took another important step forward as a result of the strategy. Through the LTAS, the Institution enhanced employability through three of the strands: championing innovation, industry-ready graduates and life-long learning. This included identifying a set of Mountview Graduate Attributes using feedback from employers through the programme and module review cycle. The attributes are used to support discussions with students and employers. The new Industry Liaison Officer oversees preparation for careers in the profession by direct work with students and external liaison with industry professionals. Students are given weekly employability classes at level 5 focused on securing self-employed work, which current students and alumni commented were very helpful in preparing them for work and are reported by alumni and employers as unique to the Institution. There is individual support for students at level 6 on how to present themselves to agents. The Showcase and Panel weeks are highly valued by employers, alumni and students as they provide students the opportunity not only to showcase their skills to agents and directors, common in the sector, but to go through a series of activities to prepare students to apply for and secure work including support with promoting themselves and well-developed mock auditions. The preparation of an extensive repertoire was also reported by employers and alumni as unique to the Institution. There is support for students seeking to establish their own companies and sometimes staff facilitate joint business plans.

4.7     Current employability enhancements being moved forward through the LTAS include increasing the number of placement opportunities. Currently these are mainly for Production students who highly value their work experiences. Some Performance students have secured roles in external performances and have been assessed through these. The 2017 revalidation of the portfolio reflected this strengthened focus on employability. Other LTAS initiatives already completed include improved external performance venues with higher levels of technical equipment, more cross-department working and more opportunities for students to be taught alongside professionals.

4.8     Employers' comments are drawn upon in programme development and annual monitoring. External examiners, employers and alumni consistently comment on industry readiness as an area of strength. The Institution reports high levels of employment for its students using industry measures such as numbers of students with an agent sign up (generally above 90 per cent) or with paid work in shows, according to their discipline. The Institution has participated in the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education for the first time this year and is pleased with its performance: 50-70 per cent of students go on to work in the industry and 90-100 per cent go on to work or further study, indicating the work on employability and alignment with industry needs is having the intended impact in this very competitive sector. This systematic approach to developing employability skills and industry-readiness is identified in Expectation B4 as good practice.

4.9     A third strand of the LTAS relates to the development of new resources and infrastructure. The planned move to Peckham is the main element of this and is part of a long-term plan to enhance learning opportunities for students. It is ambitious and carefully thought through as both a student experience enhancement and a business improvement. Students noted communication across several buildings and across disciplines is an area for development and the new building is expected by staff and students to facilitate improvement in this area. Existing students report that the current facilities remain everything they hoped for despite this major project being underway and they are pleased the Institution has offered them a chance to return and use the facilities as alumni. The Institution has also

developed and recently implemented a new website which is a strategic move to engage with the use of technology to aid recruitment and improve the clarity of information for applicants, as well as to prepare for the move to the new premises, which will have both business and educational strands of activity. This development goes hand-in-hand with ensuring that the Institution is and remains compliant with current and up-coming legal requirements in consumer law.

4.10     A fourth enhancement strand in the LTAS is supporting learning. The Institution has a long and sustained commitment to excellent student support recognised by the team as good practice in Expectation B4. These systems underpin its mission to increase participation from under-represented groups. The Institution runs a suite of activities to ensure its fulfilment including foundation-level training, accessible facilities, bursaries and hardship funding, community, academy and short courses, schools and community outreach, scouting and apprenticeship programmes. Ofsted described this as 'an extremely well-considered outreach programme' and one external examiner highlights as an area for commendation. The local very diverse demographic enables the Institution to reach out to communities who do not have high participation rates in drama schools and it works with the Students' Union, who now have officers for BAME and LGBTQ+. From initial encounters with Mountview students during their Shakespeare in Schools theatre-in-education project, through engagement in Saturday schools, summer schools and scouting activities with partners, talented individuals are identified, encouraged to apply and, if needed, financially supported through the audition process to enrolment. Regional auditions mean travel is not a barrier. The admissions and selection process, itself identified as an area of good practice (see Expectation B2) is conducted fairly so that talented and committed students get the opportunity of a Mountview education. The process has been enhanced by the appointment of the Head of Short Courses, who pulls together all the outreach activities.

4.11     Students are supported through the thorough induction (see the good practice in selection and admissions detailed in Expectation B2), the strong personal tutoring system and associated learning action plans, the relatively new post of Welfare Officer and the small group sizes - all aspects of the good practice in student support identified in Expectation B4. Students have been tracked from engagement in secondary school and Saturday schools and from the scouting programme through to successful engagement with the programmes of study; and those met by the team spoke positively about the process and support they had received. The team considers these comprehensive outreach activities and support systems for students from diverse backgrounds to be **good practice**.

4.12     Overall, the Institution's vision for its medium and longer term future is clear and underpinned by careful planning to ensure that enhancements are sustainable going forward. It has demonstrated that it can build on areas of strength linked to its mission to enhance its provision further. The LTAS has provided a structure to articulate a coherent set of enhancement projects and the LTAS group effectively oversees their implementation. The good NSS scores, retention, progression and sector employment statistics indicate that the enhancement strategy continues to bear fruit. The team considers this strategy for enhancement, and its implementation, which has enabled significant improvements to the student experience to be **good practice**.

4.13     The Institution's understanding of enhancement is clear and well-developed. It is strongly committed to improving student learning opportunities and establishing a culture of excellence for its area. The team commends the Institution for this sustained and well-developed institutional approach to enhancement. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

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

# The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

4.15     The single Expectation in this judgement area is met, with an associated low level of risk. There are no recommendations or affirmations.

4.16     There are two areas of good practice in this area: the strategy for enhancement, and its implementation, which has enabled significant improvements to the student experience; and the comprehensive outreach activities and support systems for students from diverse backgrounds.

4.17     There are also related areas of good practice in Expectation B4 concerning the systematic approach to developing employability skills and industry-readiness and the well-developed systems and resources for academic and pastoral support.

4.18     The two examples of good practice identified, and the two related features of good practice in Expectation B4, recognise the effective approach to the enhancement of learning opportunities. The commitment to enhancement of learning opportunities is well embedded and there are plans to continue and further develop the enhancement process. The strategy for enhancement has a clear focus on improving student learning opportunities, and students are engaged and supported in the processes for enhancement.

4.19     The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities is **commended**.

# Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 21-24 of the Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) handbook.

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality.

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer Glossary on the QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**e-learning**
See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Technology enhanced or enabled learning** (or **e-learning**)
Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

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

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

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

QAA2058 - R9738 - Jan 18

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