
**QAA INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW
SELF EVALUATION DOCUMENT**

CONTENTS

Preface	4
SECTION 1: CENTRAL: CONTEXT AND ENVIRONMENT. AN INTRODUCTION	5
Mission, values and aims	6
Organisational Structure	7
Approach to Quality Assurance and Enhancement	8
Portfolio of courses	9
Academic Strategies	10
Research	11
Challenges being faced by the School going forward	12
SECTION 2: HOW THE SCHOOL RESPONDED TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREVIOUS AUDIT	13
Actions taken by the institution in response to the audit report	13
Actions taken in response to other QAA reports	17
Any major strategic changes since the last audit	17
Any significant changes in collaborative arrangements since the last audit	19
SECTION 3: STANDARDS	20
(1) Each qualification (including those awarded under collaborative arrangements) is allocated to the appropriate level in the FHEQ.	20
(2) Use of external examiners is strong and scrupulous.	20
(3) Design, approval, monitoring and review of assessment strategies is effective in ensuring that students have the opportunity to demonstrate learning outcomes of the award.	21
(4) Design, approval, monitoring and review of programmes enables standards to be set and maintained and allows students to demonstrate learning outcomes of the award.	23
(5) Subject benchmark statements and qualification statements are used effectively in programme design, approval, delivery and review to inform standards of awards.	25
SECTION 4: THE QUALITY OF STUDENTS' LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES (TEACHING AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT)	26
(1) Professional standards for teaching and support of learning are supported.	26
(2) Learning resources are appropriate to allow students to achieve the learning outcomes of their programmes.	27
(3) There is an effective contribution of students to quality assurance.	29
(4) There is effective use of management information to safeguard quality and standards and to promote enhancement of student learning opportunities.	31
(5) Policies and procedures used to admit students are clear, fair, explicit and consistently applied.	31
(6) There are effective complaints and appeals procedures.	32
(7) There is an approach to career education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) that is adequately quality assured.	33
(8) The quality of learning opportunities is managed to enable the entitlements of disabled students to be met.	34
(9) The quality of learning opportunities for international students is appropriate.	35
(10) Appropriate support and guidance are provided to enable postgraduate research students to complete their programmes and to enable staff involved in research programmes to fulfil their responsibilities.	36
(11) The quality of learning opportunities delivered as part of collaborative arrangements is managed effectively to enable students to achieve their awards.	37
(13) The quality of learning opportunities delivered through work-based and placement learning is effective.	38
(14) A student charter, or equivalent document, setting out the mutual expectations of the institution and its students, is available.	39
SECTION 5: THE QUALITY OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED, INCLUDING THAT PRODUCED FOR PROSPECTIVE AND CURRENT STUDENTS	39

SECTION 6: ENHANCEMENT	41
(1) Deliberate steps are being taken at institutional level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.	41
SECTION 7: THEMATIC ELEMENT – THE FIRST YEAR UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE	43

Preface

The following document was drafted by the Deputy Academic Registrar (Quality) with contributions from a variety of staff. It was received by the Academic Board, Academic Management Committee and the Executive Management Group for comments and discussion. It was shared throughout the drafting process with the Student Union and was received by the Union's Student Council. The draft document was also circulated to all staff and students for comment.

Evidence is accessed via hyperlinks in the appropriate footnote. The evidence is held on the School's virtual learning environment and does not require a password. Most hyperlinks will open up a specific document at the appropriate page referred to in the text. Some hyperlinks will open a folder in order to view a larger set of documents under a given theme, such as annual monitoring reports, periodic review and validation reports.

A full list of all documentation provided as the key and wider information set, standard documentation and SED cross-referenced material is provided at the back of this document.

Files uploaded that contain multiple documents such as the minutes and papers of committee meetings include a cover sheet at the front of the document containing links to the start of the papers for each meeting.

SECTION 1: CENTRAL: CONTEXT AND ENVIRONMENT. AN INTRODUCTION

The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (hereafter known as 'Central') is a specialist institution of higher education. It is a hybrid institution, a 'university conservatoire' encompassing conservatoire models of training together with conventional higher education, industry engagement, and a research environment of active staff research coupled with a research degree programme. It is widely known as one of the UK's oldest drama schools, with household names such as Laurence Olivier, Harold Pinter and Judi Dench among its alumni. From its origins it has grown and diversified to cover a full range of production, design and craft disciplines, specialist social and community applications of drama and theatre, and specialist pedagogical practices (the training of acting and voice coaches, movement directors, and teachers). It is a member of the federal University of London, with its own taught degree awarding powers¹, and was one of the first drama schools to situate rigorous, practice-based vocational training and learning, within higher education frameworks and benchmarks and best assessment practice. At present, c. 923 student FTEs are taught across three undergraduate programmes and a portfolio of specialist postgraduate programmes extending from PGCE Drama provision to taught Masters' courses and MPhil/PhD degrees. Postgraduate programmes (c. 276 student FTEs) constitute the largest platform of specialist drama-related PG provision in the UK.

As a conservatoire, Central produces specialist expertise through continuous practical work, undertaken to industrial standards, and has resulting high employability statistics. Graduates are matched to employers through industry showcases, placements, mentoring, partnerships and productions, administered by a dedicated infrastructure; as a highly selective institution it produced 21.1% (sector 16.9%) first-class students in 2011-2012. It provides professionally accredited actor craft and technical training, offers learning in master-classes with professionals such as Vanessa Redgrave, Andrew Garfield, Christopher Eccleston and Mike Leigh, and houses production facilities comparable with a multi-venue producing theatre (with facility to produce and edit broadcast quality video and automated live-event lighting and projection).

It operates as a licensed public venue, with 20 public productions per year, and produces public touring work: this completes the training in real-world conditions, assesses students in professional circumstances, and involves students in licensing and health and safety issues. Visiting professionals work in role alongside students, and industry experts routinely advise on curriculum development. Its expertise is shared with industry through staff and student collaboration. Puppetry students collaborated with Handspring and the National Theatre to develop *Warhorse*, for example, with students then joining the professional company as trainers and performers after graduation. Students collaborate with industry in modelling new work (e.g. Royal Court scripts/ [Complicite](#) movement laboratory).

But Central distinctively does much more than the traditional drama conservatoire. Its research-led teaching produces graduates who challenge the parameters of the discipline and make new art. It was HEFCE's only designated whole-institution CETL in the field (the Centre for Excellence in Training for Theatre), and offers the widest range of small vocational BA and MA courses in the specialist sector, with some subjects only available at Central. It has the largest faculty of permanently contracted, specialist scholars in either the specialist HEI or university drama department sectors, extensively supplemented by visiting lecturers and professional practitioners. It delivers its teaching in diverse modes and levels of instruction appropriate to the specialist curricula, including placement learning and research-informed teaching. Applied Theatre training is delivered through community productions, placements and collaborative outreach, with students assessed while on placement or in collaboration with industry partners. Through industry-related and research seminars it provides a forum for professional and academic peers to engage with pedagogical and research discourses and practices from the UK and beyond.

¹ Currently, all awards are that of the University of London.

In doing all of this, Central is continuing and developing the precepts established over a century² ago, by its founder Elsie Fogerty. These were revolutionary for their time, building on experimental work in the combination of movement, voice and speech, and shifting the training of an actor from a preoccupation with manner and style to involvement with matter and content. She wanted the training of actor craft to be framed as diploma study and was the first to suggest that drama should be a university subject. But Fogerty also trained teachers and she pioneered outreach work in the theatre arts by engaging students with children from deprived areas of London. It is in this continuing spirit that Central has modelled a new sort of specialist institution, a 'university conservatoire' of theatre.

Mission, values and aims

The School's strategic objectives for the period 2008 to 2013 are detailed in the School's Corporate Plan³. A new version of the plan is currently in development for the end of 2013 with key priorities for 2013 to 2018 identified⁴.

Mission⁵

'Placing students at the centre of its work, Central develops practitioners and researchers who shape the future of theatre and performance across the UK and beyond.'

Values

The School is committed to:

- maintaining our distinctive ethos as an HE conservatoire at the crossing-point of HE, industry and community. This consists of a fluid combination of scholarship and research, industry-related vocational training and research-informed teaching;
- recognition that enhancement of learning is a project for staff and students alike, and that it takes many forms and relationships;
- active encouragement of diversity as a basis not only for an enriched learning experience but also for an enhanced working environment;
- opening doors to our disciplines for new thinkers, makers and practitioners in dispersed and diverse communities and seeking to lead participation in varied but interrelated communities of interest and study.

The School's three strategic aims are:

Strategic Aim 1: Academic profile

To maintain, articulate and further develop the School's unique position in its subject as a 'University Conservatoire'; to provide high quality opportunities for students across the full range of higher education awards and through outreach to new participant communities; to build on and gain benefits from a recognised leading role.

Strategic Aim 2: Jobs, partners, opportunities

To produce graduates appropriate for a range of employment opportunities; to draw benefit from diverse partnerships; to increase our impact in an always-extending range of communities and businesses; to cultivate an ethos of continual enquiry and improvement.

Strategic Aim 3: Culture and identity

To strengthen the School's profile within and beyond its constituencies, both as a leader in specialist education, training and research and as a culturally rich and diverse, innovative,

² [050: Timeline of Central](#)

³ [006: Corporate Plan](#)

⁴ [051: Key Planning Priorities 2013-2018 for revised Corporate Plan](#)

⁵ [005: Mission Statement](#)

supportive and well managed learning environment; to secure growing recognition as an example of what can be best about the discipline and its study.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Management and Organisational Structure

The Principal who is the head of the organisation is supported by two **Deputy Principals** with the responsibility for corporate and academic management respectively. The Deputy Principal (Corporate) has oversight of finance and estates, human resources, IT Services and corporate planning and, from 2012-2013 onwards, learning resources and environment. The Director of Development and External Affairs reports directly to the Principal.

The Deputy Principal (Academic) has oversight of all the core academic activity⁶ of the School. The School operates as a broadly single-discipline academic community. The Deputy Principal (Academic) is supported by the Dean of Studies (with responsibility for taught programmes), the Pro-Dean (Programmes) and Pro-Dean (Students), the Director of Research, Academic Registrar and the Head of Central Connects (formerly the School of Professional and Community Development). Up to 2012-2013 this portfolio also included Library Services and the Technical Support Department (TSD) (now under the oversight of the new post of Director of Operations, line-managed by Deputy Principal (Corporate) but also a member of Academic Management Committee). Central currently employs (as of January 2013) 154 staff: 69 Academic staff and 85 Specialist, Professional and Administrative staff. The staff size has increased 20.25% since August 2007. As a specialist HEI, Central's academic staffing consists of a single Faculty. In 2011-2012 370 visiting lecturers were employed as well as a large number of visiting professionals. Staff often contribute to more than one course, and may be involved with both undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses as well as research degree supervision.

Central Connects

Working in parallel with the Faculty is Central Connects⁷ which currently provides a range of non credit-bearing short courses and the School's teacher training programmes: PGCE Media and PGCE Drama. It is currently preparing a new business plan, which will include a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Strategy, to develop consultancy as well as explore potential partnerships with both home and overseas organisations.

Committees

The remit of Academic Board⁸, reporting to the Board of Governors, is specifically the academic governance of the School. The Executive Management Group⁹ (of Principal, Deputy Principals, Dean, Academic Registrar, Head of Human Resources, Director of Operations, Director of Finance and the Director of Development and External Affairs¹⁰) is concerned with School-wide matters of policy, staffing, estates, learning resources, finance and corporate planning. The School's quality assurance processes operate under the oversight of the Academic Board, which has two main sub-committees with responsibilities in different ways relevant to standards and the quality of students' learning opportunities. These are the Faculty Board and the Academic Management Committee.

Faculty Board¹¹ is, in effect, the quality assurance committee and oversees the annual course monitoring process, the course-level follow-up of external examiner reports, the findings of student

⁶ [052: Management of Academic Area Chart](#)

⁷ [053: Central Connects Chart](#)

⁸ [054: Academic Board Terms of Reference and Membership \(Committee Handbook\)](#)

⁹ [055: Executive Management Group Structure Chart](#)

¹⁰ The post of Director of Development and External Affairs is currently vacant.

¹¹ [054: Faculty Board Terms of Reference and Membership \(Committee Handbook\)](#)

surveys and course and unit modifications. The Academic Management Committee's remit is School-wide academic strategy, policies, systems and initiatives¹². A Committees Handbook is published annually, providing terms of reference and membership details of all the sub-committees of Academic Board and the Executive Management Group¹³.

APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

Many of the School's QA systems are long established. The School aims to embed quality assurance and enhancement within the academic community, and to ensure that systems are fit for purpose in relation to the character and portfolio of a small specialist institution. The systems aim to incorporate internal and external peer involvement as fully as possible, and to operate throughout the daily life of the institution.

The School's Academic Board, chaired by the Principal, is the senior academic body of the institution and as such has responsibility and authority over academic standards in the institution, receiving periodic review and validation reports as well as approving changes to the Handbook of Academic Regulations for example. Authority is, however, delegated to a number of its sub-committees, most notably the Faculty Board, Academic Management Committee, the Research Degrees Committee and the Research and Ethics Committee¹⁴.

Under the auspices of the Board, the Deputy Principal (Academic) reporting to the Principal has overall responsibility for the quality assurance and enhancement of the institution. The Deputy Principal is chair of the Academic Management Committee (AMC). Reporting to the Deputy Principal (Academic), the Dean of Studies oversees the taught HE programmes of the School, chairing the Faculty Board and Examination Board.

The Pro-Dean (Programmes) has academic oversight of the development of all HE course specifications and their delivery. She acts as a liaison between Course Leaders and the Academic Administration on quality assurance providing guidance and advice on the course specific implications of quality assurance such as the development of aims and learning outcomes and the ways in which generic principles translate into pedagogically appropriate practices. She supports course staff in the writing of self-evaluation documents for course periodic reviews and advises on the choice of External Examiner nominations and appropriate external peers for periodic review. She also champions and leads on quality enhancement within Faculty.

The Deputy Academic Registrar (Quality) manages and administers quality assurance and enhancement processes as well as providing guidance and advice on quality assurance issues generally. He draws together oversight of taught and research programmes, and acts as Secretary to the Executive Management Group¹⁵ so that QAE issues may be considered at the highest level of college planning when necessary.

The Pro-Dean (Programmes) and Deputy Academic Registrar together oversee the cascade down of QAE information, advice and systems through a structure of committees and briefing sessions¹⁶. The Pro-Dean leads the programme of internal sessions on learning, teaching and assessment (ISTLA).

¹² [054: Academic Management Committee Terms of Reference and Membership \(Committee Handbook\)](#)

¹³ [054: Committees Handbook 2012-2013](#)

¹⁴ [054: Research and Ethics Committee Terms of Reference and Membership \(Committee Handbook\)](#)

¹⁵ For 2012-2013, the Secretary for EMG has temporarily changed to enable the Deputy Academic Registrar to concentrate on the QAA Institutional Review and the School's Research Excellence Framework submission.

¹⁶ [042: Chart of the management of quality and standards](#)

PORTFOLIO OF COURSES

Undergraduate provision

The School has three undergraduate courses:

- BA (Hons) Acting (BA AC);
- BA (Hons) Drama, Applied Theatre and Education (BA DATE);
- BA (Hons) Theatre Practice (BA TP).

These courses each became H-level programmes at different times in the 1990s, having been developments of earlier diploma or B Ed courses, and this had resulted in different methods of calculating the classification of award. In response to the last QAA audit report, however, the School has now agreed a common method of calculating the classification for all three undergraduate courses. This is now being implemented, having been incorporated into the course specifications for BA Theatre Practice¹⁷ and BA Acting¹⁸ with BA DATE¹⁹ to follow for a 2013-2014 start.

As well as offering traditional acting and musical theatre pathways, the BA Acting course allows for a whole degree in acting within collaborative and devised contexts. Central is the only specialist drama school to provide intensively practical, placement-based degrees in Applied Theatre, training professional drama practitioners to work in community settings (e.g. criminal justice system), collaborative industry outreach and health professions. Through BA Theatre Practice, the School sustains teaching of traditional minority crafts too costly to be supported by regular funding means but essential to industry (e.g. scenic painting and flying, prop-making and puppetry).

At postgraduate level there are three general areas of provision: PGCE, taught postgraduate (MA, MFA and PG Cert courses) and postgraduate research.

PGCE provision

The School currently operates two PGCE courses: Drama and Media Studies. It was inspected by the Teaching Agency (formerly Teacher Training Agency) in 2011 and achieved five outstanding (grade 1) assessments in the report²⁰.

Taught Postgraduate

It is a distinctive dimension of the School's specialist role that by comparison to drama schools and to university drama departments, it offers extensive, specialist M level training and study. It has 14 MA courses covering a diverse range of specialist areas within the School's subject area. From 2012-2013, the School has introduced a MFA route within three PG programmes: Creative Producing, Voice Studies and Writing for Stage and Broadcast Media.

Postgraduate Research provision

The School's research degrees programme is also crucial to its identity as a specialist college, making it distinctive within the drama conservatoire sector. Entry to the federal University of London as a constituent college allowed for the award of research degrees. Because of its expertise in and facilities for specialist practice, the School became attractive to those wishing to undertake practice-based research, and the postgraduate research programme grew fairly rapidly from 2005-2006 to 2011-2012. The programme's first PhD was awarded in 2010.

¹⁷ [016: BA Theatre Practice course specification 2012-2013](#)

¹⁸ [014: BA Acting course specification 2012-2013](#)

¹⁹ [161: Draft BA Drama, Applied Theatre and Education course specification 2013-2014](#)

²⁰ [056: Ofsted Inspection Report 2011, pg 10.](#)

ACADEMIC STRATEGIES

The School's four main academic strategies are: the Academic Plan; Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, Research Strategy and the Widening Participation Strategy together with the Access Agreement.

The Academic Plan²¹ governs and directs the School's work in teaching, research, continuing professional development (including business engagement), academic administration and learning support. It is organised under three main commitments:

- sustain the quality of all teaching, research, academic administration and learning support, and develop clear mechanisms for enhancement;
- continue to diversify the range of educational activity and
- extend modes of engagement outside the college.

The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy²² aims to reflect current live issues in pedagogical debates in our field and promote principles of integrating assessment as an important part of a cyclical learning process, and seeks to promote a heterogeneous approach to pedagogy, ensuring that methods are appropriate to disciplines while deriving additional value from the dialectical notion of the 'university conservatoire'.

The Research Strategy²³ aims for the School to be recognised internationally as a leading role in theatre and performance research, undertaking research activities that engage with important artistic, scholarly, social, cultural and economic developments in the fields of theatre, drama and performance. It also aims to develop alliances with key national and international partners to maximise opportunities for Central's researchers in interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral and collaborative environments.

The Widening Participation Strategy (WP) 2009-2012²⁴ sets out current priorities, including the increase of the proportion of applicants from the most underrepresented constituencies, especially in terms of ethnicity and social class. The School currently awaits advice from HEFCE on the preferred relationship between WP strategies and Access Agreements before embarking on a replacement Widening Participation strategy. In terms of current delivery, the School has developed a range of outreach activities largely overseen by Central Connects such as:

- On-site visits and tours
- On-site workshops / audition workshops
- Workshops/ audition workshops in schools
- Student mentoring
- Student ambassador scheme²⁵
- Master-classes, including subject enrichment or revision sessions (planned for spring 2013)
- Information, advice and guidance (IAG) events for teachers (planned for spring 2013)
- Easter /Summer schools (Shakespeare Camp planned for Easter 2013 targeting partnership schools)
- Partnerships with Talawa Theatre Company/ Dream Arts / Weekend Arts College (WAC) and the Shakespeare Schools Festival.

Community-based work has always featured within the curriculum on many courses and this has served as an effective way of attracting students from some of those communities over the years. For example, the Directed Production unit as part of BA DATE in 2011-2012 delivered:

- '[Peter Pan](#)' at the [Minack Theatre](#), Cornwall.

²¹ [057: Academic Plan](#)

²² [008: Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy](#)

²³ [058: Research Strategy](#)

²⁴ [059: Widening Participation Strategy](#)

²⁵ [061: Access Student Experience](#)

- '[Wolfy](#)' - a tour for the under 5s using rural venues in Cornwall.
- '[Whatever Floats your Boat](#)' - working with local artists from the Medway towns, a touring show about the history of the river Medway which was part of the [Fuse festival](#).

In this course and the MA Applied Theatre course, Leverhulme Trust and Foundation Bay funding supports a further range of workshop and outreach activities in the curriculum taking place in London, around the UK, Africa, South America and other regions usually with vulnerable groups.

The Academic Plan and the Access Agreement commit to the development of relationships with a number of specific schools and colleges. These relationships, e.g. with Liverpool Community College, are intended to lay the foundation for new progression routes into the School. Their geographical reach is intentionally wide.

RESEARCH

Over the period of the previous Corporate Plan 2003-2008, the School sought to develop its role as a research active HEI. A period of culture change in this regard has included further exploration of the nature of practice-based research and extension of the dialogue with industry practice, including the place of research in the recruitment of staff, and focusing more staff development and information on the role of research in the School's work. This development was recognised by the Research Assessment Exercise sub-panel report in 2008²⁶ which noted the '*emergence of a new kind of research institution in the performing arts, bridging the creative industries and the academy.*'

As a constituent college of the University of London, Central supports a dynamic research community of staff and [postgraduate research students](#) (PGRs). Because of the institution's history in theatre and performance training, it is appropriate that much of the research undertaken at Central is based in practices. Central's research activity is located in a [Practitioner-Researcher Network](#) (PRN) with nodes in: acting, movement & voice; applied theatre; concepts & contexts; contemporary dramaturgies; intermediality; music theatre & sound; puppetry & object theatre.

Some thirty members of the [teaching staff](#) are research active and there is a [MPhil/PhD](#) community numbering c.40, in addition to the c.230 students undertaking one of a range of taught Masters programmes preparing postgraduates for higher research or professional practice in the industry. Much of the work undertaken is interdisciplinary and staff researchers may be located at more than one of the PRN nodes, operating on a project basis rather than confined within a domain. However, the nodes afford points around which colleagues with shared interests can gravitate and where they can find practical support for their work. 55% of the submitted outputs in the 2008 RAE were judged to be 'world leading' or 'internationally excellent'. The School is currently preparing for its Research Excellence Framework submission in 2013 after which the School will revise its Research Strategy. The School's Research Office provides a range of support to staff and students including: research events, advice and support for external grant application, advice on research ethics (which has recently been revised to include research ethics at all levels of the School) and support in the development of research policy, sabbatical and internal small grants, support to the research centres and the administration of the research degrees programme.

Research Centres

Since 2009-2010 points of intensive research activity were formalised into a [Research Centre](#) in order to foreground and support the work. Currently Central has Research Centres as follows:

- **THEATRE APPLIED: Centre for Research in [Performance and Social Practice](#).**
- **CROPP: the Centre for Research into [Objects and Puppets in Performance](#).**
- **The Centre for Research for [Intermediality in Performance](#).**
- **[International Centre for Voice](#) (ICV).**

²⁶ [062: RAE 2008 sub panel report](#)

CHALLENGES BEING FACED BY THE SCHOOL GOING FORWARD

The School faces a number of challenges moving forward, some of which are internal, others as a result of the changing HE environment. These challenges can be summarised as:

a. Reconciling the demands of teaching-intensive courses with development of research activity. Particularly since the School joined the University of London, the development of research does create challenges in maintaining the intensive, high quality nature of the School's courses whilst enabling time for staff involved in those courses to undertake research. The School provides a combination of sabbatical and small grants to assist staff in creating opportunities for research alongside intensive teaching.

b. Keeping abreast of relevant developments in learning resources within a limited infrastructure.

c. Maintaining appropriate recruitment levels for all courses and widening participation within this specific subject area, especially following from the impacts of any remodeling of the National Curriculum in schools as well as the impact of increasing undergraduate debt on postgraduate courses.

d. Increasing PgR supervisory capacity. Analysis has shown that the number of staff who have supervised to completion will markedly increase over the next two years as a number of research students reach the end of the programme. However, supervisory capacity is kept under scrutiny by the Research Degrees Committee.

e. New tuition fee regime. The advent of higher tuition fees and their resulting impact on both undergraduate and postgraduate recruitment will be seen over time. To that end the School closely monitors recruitment figures and will need to keep its portfolio of courses under review.

f. Level of specialist funding. The School receives additional funding from HEFCE on top of its teaching grant. This additional funding was the subject of the Review of Institution Specific Targeted Allocations (RISTA) to which the School made a submission.²⁷ Reporting at the end of 2012 the review resulted in the maintenance of specialist funding for the short-term, until 2015-2016²⁸. In the medium to long term it is expected the consultation will continue with the sector by HEFCE and that in due course changes may be made to specialist funding for which the School will continue to make its representations. Without specialist funding the School would face a significant challenge in reconciling the cost of delivering its programmes with income.

g. Maintaining and developing the School's taught courses portfolio in the light of increasing competition and in an increasingly global market place.

h. Space. Whilst the School has access to sufficient space for its current portfolio of HE award programmes and has processes to manage space²⁹, it is conscious of the need to increase space in order to develop that portfolio both qualitatively and in terms of the breadth of its remit to provide appropriately specialist graduates to an ever-evolving industry. In addition there is a need to supplement the space for other key areas of the School's activity such as research or the work undertaken in continuing professional development in Central Connects. The main solution to such problems is a combination of efficient space usage and development of more spaces as needed. The latter involves the high costs associated with new building projects, and therefore it is always a lengthy process, particularly during recession, to create new buildings and fundamentally alter the extent of space provision.

As measures to address space issues, the School secured a 999 year lease tenure of the Studio 1 site land from Camden Council and acquired the lease of St Peter's Studios for the medium term pending further development on the Swiss Cottage campus. The next development of the Estate ('Phase 5' – the development of the Studio One site) is now at early planning stage³⁰ to determine the overall volume of space available for development.

²⁷ [063: School RISTA submission](#)

²⁸ [064: Institution specific funding outcome](#)

²⁹ [065: Deloitte Internal Audit Report: Space management March 2011](#)

³⁰ [066: Board of Governors 2011-2012 February, minute 975.2.2f \(final para\)](#)

SECTION 2: HOW THE SCHOOL RESPONDED TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREVIOUS AUDIT.

Actions taken by the institution in response to the audit report

The last institutional audit occurred in June 2008³¹. The QAA made the following recommendations:

To affirm the institutional leadership of both quality assurance and enhancement activities and the roles of those supporting them, to ensure clarity and vision and to overcome the current institutional shortcomings in swiftly expediting change (paragraphs 10, 15, 25, 91)

Since the audit report the School has appointed a Deputy Academic Registrar with specific responsibility for quality assurance processes. This role oversees the quality assurance and enhancement functions of the institution and ensures that quality assurance matters can be addressed quickly through the Department of Academic Administration.

All the formal committees of the School (below Board of Governors' level) are now serviced by one committee secretariat under a new post, the Secretariat Manager, who works closely with the Deputy Academic Registrar to ensure that QA matters progress efficiently through the School. The Dean of Studies (on behalf of the Academic Board) has oversight of standards and quality across H and M levels as Chair of Faculty Board and the Examination Board. He sits on the senior management committee of the School (EMG, see below) and is currently in his second term as an Academic Board Staff Governor. Working to the Dean, the Pro-Dean (Programmes) has specific responsibility for liaison between the Faculty academic staff and the Deputy Academic Registrar in the Academic Administration ensuring that there is also a senior academic member of staff able to address assurance and enhancement items directly with academic staff. This has thus created a tightening of the centralisation of quality assurance within the School.

The School has expanded the membership of the Executive Management Group in order to ensure that all the main areas of the School are represented. As such, the Group now comprises: the Principal (Chair), Deputy Principal (Academic), Deputy Principal (Corporate), Dean of Studies, Academic Registrar, Director of Finance, Director of Operations (Estates and Learning Resources), Director of Development and External Affairs (currently vacant) and the Head of Human Resources. The Deputy Academic Registrar acts as Secretary³². The Group meets every two weeks during term-time so that it is able to expedite change and respond to changing circumstances quickly, should the need arise.

The committee system of the School, which at the time of audit had recently been amended, has now had sufficient time to become embedded within the institution. However the Academic Registrar's Office and the Executive Management Group continue to monitor the committee structure in order to ensure that it is efficient and effective for the needs of a small, specialist institution. The School is aware of the value of committees as a mechanism for developing inclusivity in the processes of management and decision-making while at the same time being conscious of the demands on time, particularly in an institution with a small staffing base and intensive teaching schedule. It is also aware that due to its small size it enjoys the opportunity for informal collegial communications unusual on larger campuses. It tries always to assure itself of the value and function of its extant committees, is alert to the comparative values of formality and informality, and of changing committee and meeting structures as a way of refreshing discourses

³¹ [067: QAA Institutional Audit report June 2008](#)

³² For 2012-2013, the Secretary for EMG has temporarily changed to enable the Deputy Academic Registrar to concentrate on the QAA Institutional Review and the School's Research Excellence Framework submission.

and managing change. As priorities change and as the School changes organisationally, so too does the committee system that supports it. For example, the previous informal Academic Management Group has become a formal committee, taking on and extending the remit of the Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee. This change, taken together with the expansion of the Executive Management Group, meant that the College Management Group was no longer required. The Buildings, Estates and Accommodation Committee (BEAC) came into existence to deal with changes in the management of the estate. This has now been superseded by the new office of Director of Operations. A previously formal sub-committee of Faculty Board – Faculty Management Group, has been deformalized and replaced by the more discursive ‘Wednesday Forum’. A new Secretariat Manager has been appointed for the 2012-2013 academic session not only to support the work of committees but to take an overview of the committee structure and its business.

To ensure clear minimum expectations in the communication of assessment activities and criteria, to minimise the current variability and inconsistencies within and across courses, levels and their supporting documentation (paragraphs 29, 42, 46, 47, 50, 57, and 142)

Handbook of Academic Regulations

Previously the School had an annually updated Assessment Handbook; this was replaced for the 2010-2011 academic session with a Handbook of Academic Regulations³³. This new publication includes greater detail on the areas of assessment and conferment but also includes new areas relating to enrolment and registration, as well as research degree regulations. It provides a considerable amount of additional information to staff and students that was not previously readily available, creating a more transparent and equitable basis for academic decision-making in relation to students. A Quality Assurance Handbook has also been developed, drawing together all quality assurance policies and processes and guidance into one document.

Masters Framework

The School has now fully implemented its Masters Framework³⁴. The Framework itself was validated in 2009 and consequently courses were modified to comply with the Framework either at the point of periodic review or through the School’s modification process. All Masters degrees are now in the Framework and new courses are developed in line with the policy. The development has meant that all Masters awards have a common unit-credit size. The contribution of credit to the final degree mark is also uniform and in proportion. All courses continue to take a common research methods unit (Performing Research) and now take a common sustained independent project as a final unit. In addition, each degree has a ‘Practices’ unit³⁵, signifying Central’s commitment to practical modes of study. The structure enables greater scope for the sharing of learning across courses, as well as optionality in unit choice for students and provides a basis for parity in developing learning outcomes and modes of assessment. Closer alignment has helped facilitate conversations between courses about learning, teaching and assessment, sharing concerns and successes.

Common classification and credit structure

Following the audit report discussions have been held with undergraduate course teams regarding the credit structure and classification method of the awards on offer at undergraduate level. Following the discussion of a paper³⁶ prepared for the Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee³⁷ (a predecessor of Academic Management Committee), a working group was formed comprising representatives of each of the three undergraduate degree programmes, Deputy Academic Registrar (Quality) and a Deputy Dean of Studies, now Pro-Dean (Programmes). The working group agreed a scheme for a common approach to the determination of the classification.

³³ [068: Handbook of Academic Regulations](#)

³⁴ [069: Masters Framework Handbook](#)

³⁵ [069: Masters Framework Handbook, pg 26](#)

³⁶ [046: ASEC paper on UG credit and classification \(17/11/2010\)](#)

³⁷ [046: ASEC meeting 17/11/2010 minutes 1.6.1-1.6.3](#)

This scheme entails all credits (120) at level 6 and 60 specified credits at level 5 being used as part of the classification, meaning that all undergraduate programmes use the same number of credits from the same levels. In addition the weighting that is given to these credits will be common across the programmes in determining the final degree mark. The 120 credits at level 6 comprise 75% of the final mark and the 60 credits at level 5 comprise the remaining 25%. Modifications have been implemented to two courses with the final course (BA Drama, Applied Theatre and Education) to follow for the next academic session (2013-2014) after its periodic review in 2012-2013.

Common assessment criteria for BA degrees

As with the credit and classification (above), a working group considered the assessment criteria across the undergraduate awards. It has been agreed that all three degrees will use common criteria and assessment descriptors as the basis for assessment which have been implemented immediately after each of the five-yearly reviews. BA DATE will be the last to implement these in 2013-2014.

To initiate, at the earliest opportunity, development of a strategic approach to learning resources which links explicitly to other strategies, policies and statements of intent (paragraphs 95, 96, 99, 100).

Since the audit of 2008 there have been three strategic initiatives in this area. These include the development of a School intranet (which will be superseded by the development of a portal as part of the development of the School's website) and virtual learning environment, creation of a digital repository for research outputs and restructuring to establish a coherent management portfolio overseeing learning resources.

The discussion and evaluation of appropriate means of delivering a VLE were undertaken in the Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee. This led to a pilot project in 2009-2010 using Moodle and Mahara. Each course now has its own 'zone' on the VLE (called Learnzone) and the School recruited a permanent 0.4FTE Learning Skills (Media) Tutor who oversees the VLE development and the ways that staff and students engage with it.

Alongside this development, the creation of the digital repository has produced a new resource both for PhD students and for staff. Still in the early stages of development, such a resource will help to underpin the ongoing commitment to delivering research-informed teaching.

The major strategic development in the area of learning resources has been the assimilation of Library, Technical Support and IT Services into a unit of single management oversight, which is held by a new role, the Director of Operations (Estates and Learning Resources³⁸). This role is positioned at a senior level and thus joins the Executive Management Group. This deliberately enables consideration of learning resource issues within the context of strategic decision-making about the institution as a whole. At the same time the Director of Operations is also an ex officio member of the Academic Management Committee and therefore can speak for learning resource matters within the specific context of, and in relation to, the academic strategies which are the business of AMC.

The School continues to invest in its learning resources which have included recently, for example, the refurbishment of its wardrobe department as well as the refitting of Studio One. The School remains committed to the further development of the estate through its phase 5 and phase 6 developments as economic and financial circumstances permit. The School is currently in the process of determining the extent of development that can occur on the Studio One part of the campus (Phase 5).

³⁸ [162: Directorate of Operations Chart](#)

To consider means by which the School can engage better with the broader higher education community, thus increasing its awareness and understanding of debates and practices within the sector (paragraphs 89, 90, 100, 116, 119).

The School is confident that it engages with the HE community and its practices in a variety of ways.

Academic staff are encouraged to participate in external examining at other institutions and also as subject specialists both for internal reviews and for validation events. Since 2008, 24 members of staff members have acted as External Examiners on taught courses in other institutions, 10 members of staff have acted as Examiners for 20 research degrees examinations and 10 staff been involved in 14 reviews or validations at other institutions.

The School is a member college of the University of London, a relationship which the School highly values in enabling it to engage with other higher education institutions outside of our specialist area. Attesting our engagement with the University is the School's Deputy Principal (Academic) who acts as Chair of the University's Academic Quality Advisory Committee, led working parties on University-wide academic reporting processes and collaborative arrangements, and was a member of the steering group for the University's institutional audit in 2011. The School is also an active member of London Higher, participating for example in the Europe Group. More specifically the School is a partner in the University's HEFCE-funded [Centre for Creative Collaboration](#) (alongside Goldsmiths and Royal Holloway and Complexity Partners LLP). More informally, and at a personal level, staff engage in lateral dialogue, for example about QA processes, with colleagues in sister colleges.

The School is a member of the [Standing Conference of University Drama Departments](#) (SCUDD), [Drama UK](#), the [European League of Institutes of the Arts](#), [Performance Studies International](#), the Association of University Administrators. The School is also a member of various subject specific networks such as [UKADIA](#), [VASTA](#), [ECARTE](#) and the [Society of British Theatre Designers](#). Many individual staff are members of the Theatre and Performance Research Association ([TaPRA](#)). These memberships enable the School to remain up-to-date with issues both in the university drama sector and in the conservatoire sector. It is also heavily involved in [OISTAT/Scenofest](#) (an international HE subject network). It participates in the Higher Education Academy liaison scheme and has also participated in the 'Back on Course' project on student withdrawal run by the Open University.

The School has hosted a number of conferences, symposia and seminars which continue to engage staff and postgraduates with the sector in general and with the academic discipline in particular, and bring the sector into the School. Similarly staff are encouraged and supported in attendance at conferences and events ranging from academic conferences to those concerned with sector-wide developmental and policy issues. These include major international and national subject-related conferences (such as the International Federation of Theatre Research, Performance Studies International, the [Prague Quadrennial](#) and TAPRA as well as those relating to policy such as admissions and widening participation, equality in higher education, student records and student support services. Administrative staff of the School themselves engage with the wider sector through membership of the Association of University Administrators as well as the Academic Registrar's Council membership whilst the Dean of Studies' Office are members of [DASSH](#) (Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities. The Deputy Principal (Academic) is a member of the Pro-Vice Chancellors network. The School is a member of [MASHEIN](#) (Management of Small Higher Institutions Network) and several senior staff including the Principal, both Deputy Principals, Dean and several other senior academic staff have undertaken development and networking residential programmes. Finally, the internal seminars on teaching, learning and assessment (ISTLA) often host external speakers from the sector on a range of issues.³⁹

³⁹ [070: Internal Staff Development and Training 2008-2013](#)

Actions taken in response to other QAA reports

The School routinely refers to QAA reports in the development of policy and strategy e.g. the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, Academic Regulations or procedures for quality assurance and enhancement. From 2012-2013, new or revised chapters of the UK Quality Code are received at the Academic Management Committee and other fora as appropriate; for example, chapter B11: Research Degrees was disseminated, after AMC discussion, to the research supervisors' meeting⁴⁰ and Research Degrees Committee⁴¹ and used in the self-evaluation document produced for the review of the postgraduate research programme⁴² (January 2013). It will also inform revisions to the programme handbook and specification in advance of the next academic session.

Any major strategic changes since the last audit

Strategies

Since the last audit the School has further embedded its distinctive 'University Conservatoire' model which seeks not to homogenise, but to create a new kind of institution, from the dialectic between two distinct academic cultures. Informed as much by research as by its industries, and with the largest taught MA portfolio in the UK drama sector, PhD study and intensive, specialist conservatoire training, the School is unique within the University of London and perhaps nationally. The current Academic Plan⁴³ proposes not simply maintenance of this level of specialist quality but also diversification of the academic offer, both in terms of subject and qualification. This has included the development of MFAs, exploratory talks with the University's International Academy and its distance-learning provision, and new forms of CPD. It has led to the development of relationships with the Skills sector, which has taken the form of meetings with representatives of industry employers, skills councils and BECTU as well as attendance at National Skills Academy (NSA) events. This general engagement has led to specific engagements with selected founder colleges of the NSA, in particular Liverpool Community College and Stoke College. This drive for diversification has involved consideration of geographical reach, both in the UK and abroad, leading to dialogue and sometimes formal relationships with a range of European institutions and beyond, including in Chicago and Singapore. The School is also developing more formalised working relationships with its industries in order to enhance student learning outcomes and research impact. These include, for example, the Cultural Camden partnership (see below), which has enabled the development of the Accidental Festival as a learning opportunity at the Roundhouse, and a formalised relationship with the freelance sound industry through the Association of Sound Designers – a professional body whose formation was facilitated by a TQEF-funded staff secondment and with whom the School now shares an internship and is developing an on-going colloquium.

As a result of these potential diversifications as well as the Browne Report and the comprehensive spending review the School developed a new Academic Plan, approved in 2011. In addition, the Academic Board of the School in December 2010 approved a new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy⁴⁴.

In autumn 2008 there was a thorough review of general institutional strategy which resulted in a revised Corporate Plan⁴⁵, amended Mission and revised Strategic Aims and KPIs. The Memorandum and Articles of Association were also modernised to permit a wider remit of operation.

⁴⁰ [071: PhD Supervisors Meeting 2012-2013, October meeting, minute 4.1](#)

⁴¹ [047: Research Degrees Committee, November 2012, minute 1.9](#)

⁴² [100: Research Degrees Programme Self Evaluation Document for Periodic Review](#)

⁴³ [057: Academic Plan](#)

⁴⁴ [008: Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy](#)

⁴⁵ [006: Corporate Plan](#)

To support the new institutional strategy the School remodelled the administrative structure. This resulted in the creation of the Academic Registrar's Office and an additional 2.64 FTE in academic administration. The Department of Development and External Affairs was established to enhance promotion of profile and introduce professional fundraising in order to reduce the reliance on HEFCE grant income and increase bursary and scholarship support for students.

Restructure

Most recently in the summer term, 2012, catalysed, in part, by the Government's white paper (Putting Students at the Heart of the System), the School consulted on a restructure of various areas within the Academic Administration by way of further enhancing student experience⁴⁶. The restructure created a new Student Centre, providing a one-stop shop for student support. The Student Centre was also created with explicit connection to the Student Union, providing for the first time administrative support for the Student Union. A separate Learning Centre was also created to provide enhanced learning support for students with and without specific learning differences, as well as new study skills tuition and support for writing and the use of media. It is still early in the implementation of the restructure but informal indications so far show that it has been well received and is a clear enhancement on the support provided previously⁴⁷.

Alongside these structural arrangements the School has sought to involve students formally in the governance arrangements by incorporating and extending student representation at all levels of committee, leading to a proposed extension of student membership of the Governing Body⁴⁸, termly attendance at Executive Management Group by the SU President, and regular attendance at most other committees.

Following the RAE 2008 a new Research Strategy was developed, introducing *inter alia* a more effective research infrastructure and a formal sabbatical programme. Capacity in the area of research grants has been slowly developed, although not as fast or substantially as the School would wish, although the School has received a number of grant awards (including amongst others two AHRC collaborative doctorates, two AHRC creative fellows as well as AHRC, Wellcome and Palatine awards and an EU Marie Curie award).

Research Degrees

Since the last audit the School has strategically developed its research degrees, in tandem with the developing research staff base and Research Centres. In 2007-2008 there were 14 registered research students; in 2012-2013 the School has 43, a 163% increase. Recognising that there was very little institutional experience of, and expertise in, research supervision, planning for this increase included scheduled supervisor-training by external agencies (King's College London, the Missenden Centre); regular supervisors' meetings to share knowledge and experience; a Research Degrees Committee with representation from KCL⁴⁹; a system of mentoring where supervisory teams needed experienced support specifically in the area of supervisory practice (as opposed to disciplinary expertise). A mechanism was created to compensate teaching budgets for the new call on academic staff time. Furthermore there was conscious effort to create an appropriate research culture which explicitly included the MPhil/PhD cohort: research seminars and events with both internal and external speakers; training events and programmes; a festival of work in progress (*Collisions*); appointment of Visiting Professors and a PGR conference curated by students. Over this period the administration of MPhil/PhD examination arrangements moved from the University to its constituent colleges. The School benefitted from membership of the University's Research Degrees Committee, which was subsumed into the Academic Quality Advisory Committee in 2012. Successful application for AHRC funding led to awards for 5 MA students each year for the next three years plus funding for a new doctoral student in 2012-2013. By December 2012, 11

⁴⁶ [049: Putting the Student at the Heart of the System Consultation](#)

⁴⁷ [045: Academic Management Committee minutes March 2013, 4.13.1](#)

⁴⁸ This change is currently being considered by the Privy Council.

⁴⁹ External representation by KCL until end 2009-2010

supervisors have now supervised to completion and award. This is projected to increase to 19 by the end of 2013 and 29 by the end of 2015.

CETT AND CULTURAL CAMDEN

During this period a major funded project came to an end, the CETT, and one came into being, Cultural Camden. CETT provided capital funds for learning resources (such as an object theatre studio) as well as providing many opportunities for interdisciplinary projects not only between courses within the organisation but externally as well⁵⁰.

Initiated by HEFCE's Leading Transformational Change project, Cultural Camden⁵¹ is cross-sector collaboration between Central, the [Roundhouse](#) and the [Hampstead Theatre](#). Although this was conceived, in the terms of the funding, as a management-enhancement project, there have been pedagogic and curricular benefits. There is an ongoing relationship with the Hampstead Theatre, particularly involving teaching activity and in 2012 the Roundhouse hosted the student-curated [Accidental Festival](#).

Any significant changes in collaborative arrangements since the last audit

The School does not have any collaborative arrangements with other higher education institutions within the UK nor does it deliver in partnership its degrees with other institutions abroad. It does, however, have placements with many external organisations, which are included in the QAA's new chapter on Managing Higher Education Provision with others as modes of collaboration.

There is an exchange agreement with the De Paul institution in the United States of America for the BA (Hons) Theatre Practice course whereby a small number of students (6 in 2009-2010; 2 in 2010-2011, 5 in 2011-2012 and 7 in 2012-2013) from the De Paul institution attend for the winter term of the third year of the programme. The overall award is retained by the De Paul institution.

The School also has a partnership with the following organisations:

- PG Cert Applied Theatre with Young People – National Theatre⁵² and Almeida Theatre⁵³ companies. This course is delivered in part by these theatre companies. Each theatre company represents a separate pathway on the programme, with a 40 credit unit delivered in partnership between the School and each company. A 20 credit unit is then delivered by the School to create a 60 credit postgraduate certificate.
- The School has also recently entered into a pilot agreement with Singapore Polytechnic to recognise their diploma as satisfying the entry requirement directly into the second year of the School's BA DATE course and also to provide an existing unit of the course as a summer school to prospective direct entry students from Singapore Polytechnic.
- MA Drama and Movement Therapy (Sesame) with the Sesame Institute.⁵⁴ This is an agreement concerning the content of the programme and the use of the 'Sesame' approach. The course remains delivered by the School.

⁵⁰ [072: CETT Final evaluation report](#)

⁵¹ [073: 'What is Cultural Camden?' document](#)

⁵² A formal memorandum of agreement will be initiated in 2013-2014

⁵³ [009: Almeida Theatre Memorandum of Agreement](#)

⁵⁴ [011: Sesame Institute Memorandum of Agreement](#)

SECTION 3: STANDARDS

(1) Each qualification (including those awarded under collaborative arrangements) is allocated to the appropriate level in the FHEQ.

Guidelines for course teams preparing for validation advise on use of the FHEQ and (for undergraduate programmes) subject benchmark statements^{55 56} and the School is confident of both the appropriateness of the level of the awards and adherence to the FHEQ and descriptors such as the Master's degree descriptor.

The most recent new taught postgraduate (MA Creative Producing) course was approved in 2011 and during 2011-2012 the School implemented new pathways in three PG courses for MFA awards. References at the point of periodic review tend to focus on verifying continuing adherence. The FHEQ descriptors were used closely in the development of the Master's framework where course design was commonly seeking to ensure a balance of advanced practice skills with outcomes demonstrably at Master's level.

PG and UG course teams are referred to the FHEQ and Master's degree descriptor in guidelines for monitoring whilst External Examiners also advise on the continuing adherence of courses to the FHEQ and comparability with other courses in the sector in their annual External Examiner reports⁵⁷. Course specifications also state to which cycle of the FQ-EHEA the course belongs and unit outlines also include the equivalent ECTS credits.

(2) Use of external examiners is strong and scrupulous.

The School's Quality Assurance Handbook states the role of External Examiner⁵⁸ and the process for nomination of new external examiners⁵⁹. The School values highly the role of the External Examiner as a 'critical' friend in not only assuring the standards of the School's courses but also providing advice and feedback, allowing the School continually to enhance the provision that it offers.

All new External Examiners are offered a meeting with the Deputy Academic Registrar to brief them on their role. When there are sufficient numbers of new External Examiners the School provides a larger briefing session prior to an annual External Examiner lunch. All new Examiners are sent information on their role together with course specifications and the Handbook of Academic Regulations. External Examiners can also have access to the virtual learning environment for their course if they so wish.

Via their annual reports, Examiners comment on whether standards are appropriate and whether the assessment process is rigorous, equitable, fair and good practice.⁶⁰ The reports are then scrutinised at both a course and institutional level and issues addressed as appropriate.

Reports are used by the institution in a number of ways. Reports are sent by External Examiners to the Deputy Academic Registrar who highlights areas requiring a response before forwarding them to the Course Leader and Pro-Dean (Programmes). The reports are used by the course teams in developing their courses. The reports are then also received and discussed at the School's Faculty Board^{61,62 63} (which includes student representation) to create an overview of

⁵⁵ [007: QA Handbook, pg 13, 2.1.7](#)

⁵⁶ [007: QA Handbook, pg 15, 2.2.1](#)

⁵⁷ [074: External Examiner Report Template \(word version\)](#)

⁵⁸ [007: QA Handbook, pg 88](#)

⁵⁹ [007: QA Handbook, pg 95, 6.8](#)

⁶⁰ [074: External Examiner Report Template \(word version\)](#)

⁶¹ [044: Faculty Board 2012-2013 November, minute 1.6.2](#)

⁶² [044: Faculty Board 2011-2012 December, minute 1.6.2](#)

⁶³ [044: Faculty Board 2010-2011 December, minutes 1.5.2-1.5.3](#)

External Examining across the School. Comments in the reports can inform developments at course level but also at institutional level, such as the creation of guidance for the marking of group work, which resulted directly from suggestions made in an External Examiner report⁶⁴. The reports then also form part of the evidence used by course teams in annual monitoring submissions⁶⁵ as well as in developing their self-evaluation documents (SED) for the five-yearly periodic review⁶⁶. External Examiner reports are available to students and are received at the relevant course committee^{67 68 69} for discussion between the course team and student representatives. Comments made by Examiners verbally at the Examination Board are now minuted and received at the Academic Board^{70 71} and a summary⁷² is provided to the Faculty Board⁷³.

The reports form part of an overall QA report⁷⁴ made annually to the School's Academic Board^{75 76}. Summarising the results of QA processes and the themes that have arisen, this report provides the assurance and confidence to the School's senior academic body of the quality of its provision.

A response to the report is made by the School to the External Examiners. Previously this has been undertaken at course level between the course teams and the Examiners. However from July 2012 onwards, the Academic Registrar's Office (ARO) now responds on behalf of the School, having liaised with, and collated responses from the, course team and Dean of Studies' Office.

External examiners are appointed by Faculty Board for a maximum of four years. The Board receives a nomination form⁷⁷ for approval and monitors tenure.^{78 79} External Examiners are appointed to entire courses, or pairs of courses, or, as in the case of the Performing Research unit, to shared units across a level of provision.

An annual PG Examiner lunch preceding the main PG Examination board in November, allows Examiners to meet not only with the relevant course team but also course teams and Examiners from across the School's provision as well as senior staff. A similar event for UG Examiners is planned to precede the main UG Examination Board in July 2013. Overall, the School believes the External Examiner system functions well and the recent formalisation of responses to reports has benefitted the system.

(3) Design, approval, monitoring and review of assessment strategies is effective in ensuring that students have the opportunity to demonstrate learning outcomes of the award.

The School aims for assessment to be integral to the development of a student's learning as well as for it to be conducted in a transparent, equitable and fair manner.

⁶⁴ [046: ASEC minutes 2009-2010, February 2010, minute 7](#)

⁶⁵ [007: QA Handbook, 3.2.19 pg 38](#)

⁶⁶ [007: QA Handbook, 3.3.40, pg 44](#)

⁶⁷ [075-083: Course Committee Minutes 2012-2013; e.g. BA Theatre Practice course committee minute 1.7](#)

⁶⁸ [075-083: Course Committee Minutes 2011-2012; e.g. BA DATE course committee minute 1.7.1](#)

⁶⁹ [075-083: Course Committee Minutes 2010-2011; e.g. PG Applied Practices course committee minute 2.7.1](#)

⁷⁰ [043: Academic Board minutes December 2012, minute 2.10.2](#)

⁷¹ [043: Academic Board Papers December 2012, AB/1213/2/10](#)

⁷² [044: Faculty Board papers - November 2013 - Summary of External Examiner Comments](#)

⁷³ [044: Faculty Board minutes 2012-2013 December, minute 1.10.2](#)

⁷⁴ [043: Academic Board papers, Annual Quality Assurance Report 2010-2011; 2009-2010](#)

⁷⁵ [043: Academic Board minutes 2011-2012 June, minute 4.6.8](#)

⁷⁶ [043: Academic Board minutes 2010-2011 June, minute 4.7.8](#)

⁷⁷ [084: External Examiner Nomination Form](#)

⁷⁸ [044: Faculty Board 2011-2012, June, minutes 3.6.1-3.6.2](#)

⁷⁹ [044: Faculty Board 2010-2011 October minute 1.5.1](#)

The design, approval and review of assessment strategies are dealt with primarily through the School's Handbook of Academic Regulations, Quality Assurance Handbook⁸⁰ and the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy⁸¹. Quality and standards in assessment are set out in a Handbook of Academic Regulations and the Handbook of Quality Assurance (replacing the previous Assessment Handbook), which are issued to External Examiners. The Handbooks, updated annually, incorporate protocols (for example) for setting assessment tasks, moderation, assessment of ephemeral work, and alternative assessment. Assessment criteria and grading descriptors operate across undergraduate⁸² and postgraduate⁸³ level to ensure commonality between courses at that level. The Handbook of Academic Regulations is available on the website and VLE for staff and students as well as being linked via the Students' Charter and provided to External Examiners.

The assessment strategy of each course is initially approved via the validation process. This process includes peer review through the presence of both internal and external academic panel members. Further changes to assessment may only occur via the formal modification process through the School's Faculty Board⁸⁴. This process also typically invites comment from the course's External Examiner on the changes proposed as well as from students.

The operation of the Examination Board and its terms of reference are included in the Handbook of Quality Assurance⁸⁵. The basis on which the Board makes decisions is the Handbook of Academic Regulations⁸⁶ which sets the regulatory framework for assessment in the School. The Chair of the Board of Examiners is the Dean of Studies, supported by the Course Support Manager as Secretary to the Exam Board. The Deputy Academic Registrar (Quality) also attends the Board to advise on the application of the School's regulations in assessment.

The School's Handbook of Academic Regulations stipulates the process in relation to academic misconduct⁸⁷ which is also highlighted in the Student Handbook⁸⁸ as well as in course induction. Cases of academic misconduct are low (see table below).

Table 1: Number of academic misconduct cases over time

	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012
UG	0	7 ⁸⁹	3
PG	1	0	1

The School uses the anti-plagiarism software, Turnitin, via the School's VLE, Learnzone. As part of the introduction to the course, students are advised on academic misconduct and academic referencing. The guide to academic referencing⁹⁰ is available to students via the Student Handbook as well as being on each course area of Learnzone. Learning Skills sessions which focus on academic referencing are delivered by the Learning Centre.

The School's modification process allows for changes in assessment, both type and amount⁹¹. Course teams keep the amount of assessment and its timing under review, using comments from External Examiners, course committees and student surveys to help inform on-going

⁸⁰ [007: QA Handbook](#)

⁸¹ [008: Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy](#)

⁸² [007: QA Handbook, pg 71-74](#)

⁸³ [007: QA Handbook, pg 74-76](#)

⁸⁴ [007: QA Handbook, pg 31, 2.3](#)

⁸⁵ [007: QA Handbook, pg 100, 7.0](#)

⁸⁶ [068: Handbook of Academic Regulations 2012](#)

⁸⁷ [068: Handbook of Academic Regulations 2012, pg 42, section 18](#)

⁸⁸ [085: Student Handbook 2012-2013, pg 11](#)

⁸⁹ Of the 7 cases in 2010-2011, 4 were by the same student and dealt with concurrently.

⁹⁰ [086: Academic Referencing. Guidance for students in 2012/13](#)

⁹¹ [007: QA Handbook, pg 31, 2.3.3](#)

developments in individual courses' assessment strategies. For example, most recently the assessment strategy on the MA Acting course was modified⁹² via Faculty Board⁹³. With the development of a common approach at both UG and PG levels regarding credit structure, greater comparability has evolved within courses (particularly at PG level) regarding the amount of assessment from one unit to another both within and between courses.

Marking and grading policies and guidance are included in the Quality Assurance Handbook⁹⁴. The School has implemented common assessment criteria and descriptors at UG and PG levels and has introduced guidance about marking group work⁹⁵ following a recommendation in an External Examiner's report on determining an individual mark from group work.

Feedback to students on assessment can be provided in a number of ways. The method of feedback (e.g. written or verbal) is stipulated in the course specification⁹⁶. The School's policy on feedback is provided in the Handbook of Academic Regulations⁹⁷, stipulating that it should be within six weeks of the assessment (not including the Christmas and Easter holiday periods) and should be sufficiently timely for the feedback to impact on the next equivalent assessment. As stated, the School has recently implemented a common assessment feedback form^{98,99} to ensure commonality of approach across all courses in assessment feedback. Students understand, also, that because of the nature of the pedagogies at Central (e.g. studio teaching, rehearsals, one-to-one coaching, workshop practices) on-going feedback is given within sessions and is not reserved for formal assessment elements only.

Periodically throughout each academic year the Dean of Studies Office organises sessions for staff development including sessions on assessment as necessary (ISTLA "Internal seminars on Teaching, Learning and Assessment"). This programme of staff development, introduced in 2008, has included induction sessions for staff on key quality assurance and enhancement processes as well as sessions on current developments in the wider sector such as inclusive assessment.

The School's MA Drama and Movement Therapy (Sesame) course is recognised/validated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). As well as the School's own quality assurance mechanisms the course also follows those of the HCPC, ensuring that the course not only complies with the FHEQ but also the requirements of the Council via their Standards of Education and Training (SETS).

The School has a student code of conduct¹⁰⁰ which defines the behaviour that is expected from students. This is linked via the Student Charter and Student Handbook and aims to provide a safe, inclusive environment for all. The Student Charter is introduced to students as part of the induction at the commencement of the course.

(4) Design, approval, monitoring and review of programmes enables standards to be set and maintained and allows students to demonstrate learning outcomes of the award.

The School's Academic Board is the senior academic body of the institution and as such has responsibility for and authority over academic standards in the institution, receiving periodic review and validation reports as well as approving changes to the Handbook of Academic Regulations.

⁹² [044: Faculty Board Papers June 2012 - MA Acting modification coversheet](#)

⁹³ [044: Faculty Board minutes 2011-2012 June, minutes 3.5.5-3.5.6](#)

⁹⁴ [007: QA Handbook, pg 83, 5.7](#)

⁹⁵ [007: QA Handbook, pg 79, 5.6](#)

⁹⁶ Stipulated in summary assessment table of each specification

⁹⁷ [068: Handbook of Academic Regulations, pg 41, 17.6](#)

⁹⁸ [157: UG Assessment Feedback Form template](#)

⁹⁹ [156: PG Assessment Feedback Form template](#)

¹⁰⁰ [087: Student Code of Conduct](#)

Authority is delegated, however, to a number of its sub-committees, most notably the Faculty Board, Academic Management Committee and the Research Degrees Committee.

Validation and Periodic Review Panels all involve external panel members^{101 102}. Panels will usually comprise two external panel members in addition to internal staff not associated with the course(s) under review or validation. Modifications to existing courses also involve externality through the presence of the External Examiner who is invited to comment on proposals to amend courses¹⁰³.

The School's Handbooks of Academic Regulations and Quality Assurance stipulate the framework in which courses should be designed and offers guidance to those involved in the development of new programmes. There is a standard format for the course specification. This will be reviewed by the Academic Registrar's Office in conjunction with the Dean of Studies' Office in the summer 2013 to revise the format and identify areas where students may benefit from the inclusion of further detail. A new course will usually stem from portfolio discussions within the Dean of Studies' Office but ideas from staff may also be mooted through the Dean of Studies' Office to Faculty Board. The resulting feasibility study assessing the aims, rationale, market and resources for the course is then circulated to all heads of departments for comment. A decision on whether to proceed to validation is then taken by the Executive Management Group (replacing the function of the previous College Management Group). If the feasibility study is approved, a course specification is designed by the prospective course leaders in conjunction with the Pro-Dean (Programmes) and Academic Registrar's Office.

Programme approval (validation) is documented in the Handbook of Quality Assurance^{104 105}. Approval of new courses involves a feasibility study (above) followed by the scrutiny of the course specification by a Validation Panel on behalf of the Academic Board¹⁰⁶. The panel will normally include two external members and the resulting validation report will make recommendations on the implementation of the course specification. Approval of changes to existing courses is via the Faculty and Academic Boards¹⁰⁷. The process, which is documented in the Handbook of Quality Assurance, includes External Examiner and student involvement where appropriate. Programmes are normally validated indefinitely unless the Validation Panel recommends that a programme should be validated for a period of time.

All courses undergo a periodic review every five years¹⁰⁸. Courses are reviewed individually (in the case, typically, of the UG courses) or, as with many Masters courses, grouped together in pairs for review. The review comprises a self-evaluation document¹⁰⁹ (SED) and enhancement plan developed in conjunction with the Dean of Studies' Office. The enhancement plan is then tracked through annual monitoring. Periodic review, as with validation, involves discussions with a panel including School staff not involved with the course or development in question and also external members from outside the School with relevant academic and/or professional expertise. The Panel will always meet a selection of present and former students of the course as part of the review day and the Panel will usually have a student member. Periodic review is documented in the School's Handbook of Quality Assurance¹¹⁰. A briefing session for course teams undergoing

¹⁰¹ [007: QA Handbook pg 12, 2.1.6](#)

¹⁰² [007: QA Handbook, pg 42, 3.3.27](#)

¹⁰³ [007: QA Handbook, pg 31, 2.3.6](#)

¹⁰⁴ [007: QA Handbook pg 12, 2.1](#)

¹⁰⁵ The most recent new programme is the School's MA Creative Producing course, validated in 2011

¹⁰⁶ [088-089: Validation Reports](#)

¹⁰⁷ [007: QA Handbook, pg 31-32, 2.3](#)

¹⁰⁸ [090-099: Periodic Review Reports](#)

¹⁰⁹ [100-109: Self-evaluation documents 2009-2010 to 2012-2013](#)

¹¹⁰ [007: Quality Assurance Handbook, 3.3.18 pg 41](#)

review/validation as well as for staff that form the Review or Validation Panel is held at the commencement of the academic session by the Deputy Academic Registrar.

Each course prepares a reflective annual monitoring report¹¹¹, to a template produced using the Bristol on-line survey software¹¹². Focussing on the previous academic session, the reports are a staff reflection on that year and are informed by a range of evidence including applicant and progression data, survey findings, External Examiner reports and course committee minutes. The Pro-Dean (Programmes) and Deputy Academic Registrar review the questions for annual monitoring each year, updating them as relevant with matters of current interest (e.g. from the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy). The report has also been amended for the current round of annual monitoring more systematically to report back updates on actions from periodic review and validation. The reports seek to identify matters for attention (immediate or longer term) and also for celebration. They are the means by which the Academic Board may be assured, annually, of the health of courses, and may identify issues for School-wide action. They form part of the evidence used in the annual Quality Assurance Report¹¹³ made to Academic Board. Annual monitoring reports generally are very useful to the institution providing a very detailed reflection on the previous year.

In addition the School can also conduct a 'thematic' review, scrutinising a particular theme across several courses. During 2012-2013 the School will be conducting a review of the Performing Research unit which is a core part of all MA and MFA courses.

Annual monitoring, validation and periodic review processes and documentation are refined annually following feedback provided on the process from those involved. The processes are evaluated by the Academic Registrar's Office against revised chapters of the Quality Code on an on-going basis. With the development of the QAA Quality Code, all new or revised chapters of the code will be received by the School's Academic Management Committee^{114, 115}. Informal feedback from staff also informs the development of process and from 2012-2013 onwards, periodic review and validation panels will specifically be asked to feedback formally on the process¹¹⁶.

(5) Subject benchmark statements and qualification statements are used effectively in programme design, approval, delivery and review to inform standards of awards.

The relevant subject benchmark statements are Drama, Dance and Performance for BA Acting and BA Drama, Applied Theatre and Education and also Art and Design for BA Theatre Practice. These and other external reference points, such as the Framework of Higher Education Qualifications and Master's benchmarks statement, are used by course teams, Dean of Studies' Office and Academic Registrar's Office in the development of courses both at point of validation onwards and to inform on-going development of courses. The Masters Framework, validated in 2009, also used the Masters descriptor of the FHEQ as a reference point in its development.

The School's MA Drama and Movement Therapy (Sesame) course is recognised/validated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). As well as the School's own quality assurance mechanisms the course also follows those of the HCPC. This includes both periodic review visits by the council and annual monitoring¹¹⁷, ensuring that the course not only complies with the FHEQ but also the requirements of the Council via their standards in education and training (SETS). The

¹¹¹ [110-112: Annual Monitoring Reports 2009-2010 to 2011-2012](#)

¹¹² [113: Annual Monitoring template \(word version\)](#)

¹¹³ [043:Academic Board papers - Annual Quality Assurance Report 2011-2012, section 10, Annual Quality Assurance Report 2010-2011](#)

¹¹⁴ [045: Academic Management Committee minutes October 2012-2013, minutes 1.7.2, 1.7.3 & 1.7.4](#)

¹¹⁵ [045: Academic Management Committee minutes January 2012-2013, minutes 3.7.1- 3.7.2](#)

¹¹⁶ [162: Periodic Review and Validation Panel feedback form](#)

¹¹⁷ [115: HCPC Annual Monitoring submission for MA Drama and Movement Therapy \(Sesame\)](#)

Council most recently attested to the School's adherence in 2012¹¹⁸. Likewise, the PGCE Media and PGCE Drama courses also adhere to the requirements of the Teaching Agency.

SECTION 4: THE QUALITY OF STUDENTS' LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES (TEACHING AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT)

(1) Professional standards for teaching and support of learning are supported.

A number of academic staff (10.1%) have a formal teaching qualification¹¹⁹ and many have extensive links and experience with the industry. The School, through Central Connects, will (in time) offer a range of continuing professional development opportunities for all School staff. Central Connects will develop a CPD Framework that will include a PG Cert in Learning and Teaching for accreditation by the Higher Education Academy^{120 121}. The framework will also include the HEA fellowship and peer observation of teaching (POT) but also a series of CPD workshops and activities. A peer observation of teaching (POT) system is in operation, overseen from the Dean of Studies' Office.¹²²

Peer Observation of Teaching whilst part of Central's academic systems has had varying methods of approach. New academic members of staff are always observed as part of their probationary year and several other staff members have routinely continued with POT. All academic staff are to undergo POT this year with the request that, where useful, members from areas of the School other than the immediate discipline area or course team also undertake observation. As with the previous year, staff are being asked if they feel able to disseminate the POT for others to access, as desired.

New protocols have been developed in the spring of 2013 for proposed implementation for October 2013 as a bi-annual system. Staff will retain ownership of their POT but it will now also inform discussion when reviewing personal development in relation to teaching, learning and assessment at annual appraisal.

The School is confident of the above approach to the maintenance and enhancement of standards in teaching and student survey results continue to attest to the satisfaction of our students with the quality of teaching that is provided (see table below).

Table 2: % Student Satisfaction of Teaching

Survey	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
PTES ¹²³	70	78	89
NSS ¹²⁴	92	92	90
UG 2 nd Year ¹²⁵	82	81	88
UG 1 st Year ¹²⁶	83	86	85

The School places a high value on the incorporation of research, scholarship and professional practice into the teaching and support of its programmes. The School as a Higher Education

¹¹⁸ [116: HCPC annual monitoring confirmation letter](#)

¹¹⁹ 75.4% of Academic staff hold a Postgraduate Qualification and 21.7% have a PhD. Nearly 70% have an undergraduate qualification. 10.1% of Academic staff have a recognised teaching qualification.

¹²⁰ [044: Faculty Board minutes 2012-2013, December, minute 1.8.1](#)

¹²¹ The School previously had a PG Cert in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education.

¹²² [007: QA Handbook, pg 52-53, 4.9.2-4.9.14](#)

¹²³ [038: PTES - question on overall quality of teaching and learning](#)

¹²⁴ [037: NSS - 'teaching on my course' section result](#)

¹²⁵ [036: UG Second year survey - overall teaching section result](#)

¹²⁶ [035: UG First Year survey - overall teaching section result](#)

institution believes in the importance of research-informed teaching, and as an HEI with a unique 'university conservatoire' model, industry practice is equally important. In the annual monitoring submissions staff comment on the use of research in their course.¹²⁷ The School also commissioned a report on the inclusion of research-informed and research-led teaching in 2011¹²⁸. This highlighted a number of examples of the incorporation of research into teaching, and also indicated that the teaching of the majority of respondents in the report's survey was informed by professional practice and developments in the industry.

The School has recently formalised the arrangements for mentoring of new academic staff^{129 130}. In addition new members of staff have an induction period, via HR, the Dean of Studies' Office and their line manager, to introduce them to other personnel and offices at the School that they can benefit from, or must be aware of, in the course of their duties. The School provides a Visiting Lecturers¹³¹ Handbook for external staff. The on-going staff development sessions (ISTLA) contribute to the development of staff. Each member of staff has an experienced line manager who oversees their staff development. Annual staff appraisals provide mechanisms for identifying areas for staff development generally as well as in specific areas such as research or public engagement as well as learning and teaching.

(2) Learning resources are appropriate to allow students to achieve the learning outcomes of their programmes.

The School is confident that it has the resources for students to achieve the learning outcomes for their programmes. This includes the [staff resource](#) which the School believes to be a well-informed, up-to-date, academically rigorous and industry-engaged staff body. Probation review and then annual appraisals identify, monitor and support their progress in development. This is supported by a process by which staff may apply for staff development support in order to continue to develop their skills, experience and expertise. Staff development funding enables staff to pursue activities and events in aid of teaching, scholarship and research (e.g. workshops or conference attendance¹³²). The number of staff applying for staff development funding has increased by 55% from 2007-2008 to 2011-2012¹³³. In addition the number of female staff making an application for academic title is over 50%. Staff development activity is often related to an appraisal target. The short reports on staff development activity include an indication of whether and how the individual has been able to share with colleagues the information or experience gained. The School also has a series throughout the year of staff development sessions focussing on teaching, learning and assessment (ISTLA) and Practice-as-Research.

The School is confident that it has a range of excellent technical and administrative support available¹³⁴. As stated above, the School's learning resources have been brought together into a single department. We believe that this will continue to increase efficiency of provision, and therefore offer an enhancement to the student experience.

The Technical Support Department (TSD) supports practical learning and research activities across the School through, for example, the provision of a range of theatre-related equipment (e.g. sound and lighting rigging or media) and workshops (e.g. wardrobe, scenic construction) as well as instruction and advice. In addition, many of the organisations that the School engages with for student placement activities or other activities within courses have technical facilities, for example, the Minack Theatre, Cornwall, used as part of the Directed Production unit on BA DATE.

¹²⁷ [113: Annual Monitoring Template \(word version\) question 23](#)

¹²⁸ [117: Report on research informed and research led teaching](#)

¹²⁹ [007: QA Handbook, 4.9.15-4.9.17, pg 54](#)

¹³⁰ [045: Academic Management Committee November 2012 minute 2.6.1](#)

¹³¹ [118: Visiting Lecturers Handbook](#)

¹³² [120: List of staff development activities in teaching and scholarship](#)

¹³³ [121: Report on Staff Development Activity](#)

¹³⁴ [122: Learning Resources Information](#)

The School's specialised Library has over 38,000 items as well as access to a variety of digital resources. Students benefit also from access to the University of London's Senate House Library and proximity to the British Library. IT Services provides an IT suite as well as technical support via their help desk. The Library Services Team liaises annually with course teams regarding the provision of new publications for the Library and introduces new provision (e.g. Digital Theatre Plus) to academic staff at Faculty meetings. The effectiveness of the Library and appropriateness of its holdings may also be commented upon by students both through student surveys and course committees.

Supporting both students and staff in the provision of courses is the department of Academic Administration. The Department comprises 5 sections: Admissions and Student Recruitment, Course Support Office, the Student Centre, Academic Registrar's Office and the Research Office, all overseen by the Academic Registrar¹³⁵. During summer 2012 the department underwent partial restructure as a result of the School's response to the Government's White Paper. The restructure, noted above, was entitled 'Putting the students at the heart of the system' and it remodelled the support provision, creating a Student Centre and managed by the Dean of Studies' Office, a Learning Centre.

The Student Centre complements the pastoral support offered by academic tutors and additionally provides a wide range of general information and advice for students. The services include:

- Counselling - the Service is by appointment and offers both short- and longer-term help according to student need.
- Financial information, scholarships and bursaries in support of students suffering hardship or debt. Assistance with related issues such as tenancy, funding, legal and consumer rights is also provided.
- International advice: providing students with advice and support regarding immigration and visa issues.
- Accommodation assistance – throughout the year, Central students can make use of the University of London's Student Housing Service. There is also a limited number of places available in University of London halls of residences (approximately 25), some of them reserved for postgraduate international students. During the summer vacation an on-site Accommodation Office assists students to find accommodation (when desired with fellow CSSD students). Students can make use of an online 'Sharers' List' through the bespoke website '[Accommodation Central](#)'.
- General Advice: the Student Centre is the student-facing part of Academic Administration providing information and advice on a range of issues relating to a student's 'life' at the School.

The Course Support Office is the main point of administrative contact for students throughout their period of registration, and the main source of support for taught courses. The Course Support Manager reports to the Academic Registrar and liaises closely with the Dean of Studies and Pro-Deans.

PhD administration for the 2012-2013 session onwards has transferred to the Research Office in order to create a more integrated research environment that encompasses both staff and student research. The Research Office administration has also transferred organisationally into the department of Academic Administration.

The Academic Registrar's Office provides a committee secretariat; manages and administers quality assurance processes; manages the student record system; provides management information data and statutory returns; organises the annual Graduation ceremony; and deals with academic regulations and policy.

¹³⁵ [123: Management of Academic Administration Chart](#)

The Learning Centre provides enhanced learning support for all students including those with specific learning difficulties as well as new study skills tuition and support for writing and the use of media. The Centre, under the management of the Pro-Dean (Students), comprises the Disability Co-ordinator, Dyslexia Coordinator, Learning Centre Administrator, Learning Skills (Media) Tutor as well as additional peripatetic staff providing a range of learning skills sessions, learning skills one-to-one tutoring, dyslexia one-to-one tutoring, mentoring, advice and guidance.

All new courses undergo a feasibility study¹³⁶ before progressing to validation stage in order to ascertain the provision of resources for the course¹³⁷ (for example MA Creative Producing¹³⁸ and MA Scenography¹³⁹). Where existing courses propose modifications that would substantially change their resources, then a feasibility study is also used as part of the modification process (e.g. modification to MA Music Theatre¹⁴⁰). In addition, course leaders may comment on the provision of resources as part of their annual self-evaluation of the course (annual monitoring). Other QA feedback mechanisms such as student surveys and course committees also feed in comments on the provision of resources for the School's portfolio. IT and Estates Help desks provide on-going, immediate feedback on any issues arising.

The School is confident of the standard of accommodation which includes a variety of studio and performance spaces, including a fully-equipped proscenium training theatre. Since the School transferred to the present site in 1957 the estate has continually evolved to create the facilities which the School has today. Given its central London location, campus size and demands of its discipline, the School has always faced challenges in relation to provision of space. While the School believes it has an efficient space management mechanism and has over the years productively enhanced its estate, it recognises that estate development is a major undertaking. The current accommodation is some of the best that is available in the sector, and is managed efficiently, but the School is once again exploring options for and costs of further redevelopment of the estate to provide additional accommodation.

Provision and management of teaching accommodation are overseen by the Head of Academic Facilities who works closely with course teams and now too with the Director of Operations, in order to meet needs as fully and efficiently as possible. A Space Code outlines the principles involved in the allocation of space for teaching¹⁴¹. In addition, the Head of Academic Facilities oversees ad hoc bookings for such activities as student rehearsal or PhD and staff practice-as-research. Course teams can comment on space allocation as with other learning resources via the annual monitoring process¹⁴² and students can feed back comments on space via student surveys or course committees or the Estates Help Desk.

(3) There is an effective contribution of students to quality assurance.

The School values highly the contribution that students can make to the assurance and enhancement of the quality of its activities. This is achieved through three main areas: representation, feedback and the open sharing of information. In terms of student representation, all courses elect or nominate student representatives for the School's system of Course Committees comprising staff and student membership. Each course either has its own Course Committee or forms part of a 'cluster' of courses forming a committee. Meeting termly, these Committees provide ongoing opportunities for staff-student dialogue. Together with staff, student representatives attend an induction on their role in course committees and the student representation process. This is delivered jointly by the Deputy Academic Registrar, Pro-Dean (Programmes) and the Student Union President, the latter highlighting the interaction with the

¹³⁶ [124: Feasibility Study Template](#)

¹³⁷ [007: QA Handbook, pg 12, 2.1.2-2.1.3](#)

¹³⁸ [125: MA Creative Producing Feasibility Study](#)

¹³⁹ [126: MA Scenography Feasibility Study](#)

¹⁴⁰ [127: MA Music Theatre Feasibility Study](#)

¹⁴¹ [128: Space Code](#)

¹⁴² [113: Annual Monitoring template \(word version\), question 20.f](#)

Union where representatives are also members of the Union Council. A guide to student representation 'Using your Voice' is also published annually and distributed to all student representatives¹⁴³.

There are three undergraduate committees, one for each of the undergraduate courses. Taught Masters' courses belong to one of three PG Course Committees: Applied Practices, Performance and Production¹⁴⁴. In addition there are PGCE and Research Student Course Committees.

Student representatives feature as part of the membership of the Academic Board¹⁴⁵, Faculty Board¹⁴⁶ and Academic Management Committee¹⁴⁷. Research students are represented on the Research and Ethics Committee¹⁴⁸ and on the Research Degrees Committee¹⁴⁹.

The Student Union is represented on the Academic Board, Board of Governors, Health and Safety Management Committee, Governors' Health and Safety Assurance Committee and the Equality and Diversity Committee. The SU President is invited to attend specific meetings of the Executive Management Group and School Planning Days and speaks at admissions Open Days as well as the Course Committee induction and the National Student Survey briefing for students.

Students are invited to attend periodic review panel meetings¹⁵⁰. All periodic reviews have a meeting with a selection of current and former students of the course(s) under review. The School has also implemented use of a Student Panel member for periodic reviews in 2011-2012 which has continued into 2012-2013¹⁵¹. The new Access Agreement¹⁵² included input from the Student Union.

Feedback is integral to the contribution of students to quality assurance and is achieved not only through representation at course committees and other fora but also via student surveys. The School participates in the National Student Survey, Postgraduate Taught and Research Experience Surveys (PTES and PRES) and additionally provides a first- and second-year undergraduate survey and a new students' questionnaire. Further, course level feedback occurs through unit level surveys on certain courses or via regular meetings as part of the course, such as 'diary' meetings. Such feedback assists in the management and development of the course by the course team.

Quality assurance processes involve the sharing and dissemination of information in an open and transparent way. Course Committees^{153 154 155} therefore receive External Examiner reports, student survey results and annual monitoring reports, facilitating the engagement of the Student Representatives in these important QA mechanisms.

¹⁴³ [129: Using Your Voice - guide to student representation](#)

¹⁴⁴ Prior to 2012-2013 Performance and Production clusters comprised one committee.

¹⁴⁵ [054: Academic Board Terms of Reference and Membership \(Committee Handbook\)](#)

¹⁴⁶ [054: Faculty Board Terms of Reference and Membership \(Committee Handbook\)](#)

¹⁴⁷ [054: Academic Management Committee Terms of Reference and Membership \(Committee Handbook\)](#)

¹⁴⁸ [054: Research and Ethics Committee Terms of Reference and Membership \(Committee Handbook\)](#)

¹⁴⁹ [054: Research Degrees Committee Terms of Reference and Membership \(Committee Handbook\)](#)

¹⁵⁰ [007: QA Handbook, 3.3.18, pg 41](#)

¹⁵¹ [007: QA Handbook, 3.3.28, pg 42](#)

¹⁵² [060: Access Agreement](#)

¹⁵³ [075-083: Course Committee minutes 2012-2013](#)

¹⁵⁴ [075-083: Course Committee minutes 2011-2012](#)

¹⁵⁵ [075-083: Course Committee minutes 2010-2011](#)

(4) There is effective use of management information to safeguard quality and standards and to promote enhancement of student learning opportunities.

Management information is integral to QA processes as well as the forward planning of the institution generally. The ARO manages the Student Records System and produces reports for use in QA and other systems. Statistical reports on the previous year are used for annual course monitoring, whilst periodic review uses data from the previous five years. Data sets include enrolments, applications, suspensions and withdrawals as well as completions. In addition, a breakdown of the cohort via ethnicity, disability and nationality is provided as well as information on employment statistics from the Destination of Leavers' survey.

Further management information reports are also used by committees in the overall management of the institution. Admissions and enrolment reports are received regularly at the School's Executive Management Group. A set of academic key performance indicators¹⁵⁶ is monitored by the Academic Management Committee.¹⁵⁷

Following an internal audit recommendation, the Academic Registrar's Office will be developing a Data Management Strategy for the institution which will not only articulate more formally the information above but also encompass the use of data by other governance processes and fora such as the Board of Governors. The Academic Registrar's Office is also in the process of developing new management information reports using Microsoft SQL Studio and Visual Studio as well as investigating the use of Business Intelligence Software in reporting.

(5) Policies and procedures used to admit students are clear, fair, explicit and consistently applied.

Central's policies and procedures for admission aim to identify applicants who are able to benefit from the School's combination of intellectual engagement and professional preparation. It operates within a context of openness, transparency and equity. The aim is to make sure that there is a good match between the abilities and aptitudes of the students and the demands of the course, such that those who begin the course can reasonably expect to achieve a qualification. Indeed completion data for courses show overwhelmingly that students achieve their target qualification.

The School is committed to opening up opportunities for applicants from varied educational backgrounds who can demonstrate that they have the capacity to study in this way, to benefit and to succeed. The process of selecting applicants therefore draws on a variety of evidence of aptitude and ability. Evidence about aptitude for a course is sought through the admissions process and places are usually offered only after an interview or audition. Central is relatively unusual in HE terms in that it interviews or auditions all applicants who might be reasonably expected to meet the entry requirements, which routinely number in the 4000s plus. This policy in part derives from the standard practice of the fields of art and design and acting. It has been reviewed at several points, the principle extended and the policy confirmed as it is regarded not only as apt to Central's specialist nature, but also to its widening participation ethos. While entry qualifications are specified for all its programmes they are not the only determining factor. For undergraduate entry, it is recognised that the general nature of A level (and equivalent) qualifications does not in itself provide sufficient indication of the qualities and level of specialist commitment required to succeed on Central's undergraduate programmes, and the ability to pass exams does not relate to Central's assessment methodology and a candidate's potential to succeed. A level grade requirements are therefore deliberately kept relatively low for a selecting institution. Interview or audition days are structured in order to provide a representative experience of the pedagogical mode of the course, and are intended to be formative as well as summative.

¹⁵⁶ [045: Academic Management Committee papers: AMC/1213/2/2 - Academic Key Performance Indicators](#)

¹⁵⁷ [045: Academic Management Committee 2012-2013, November, minute 2.4.1](#)

Feedback is given to all applicants upon request. This was presented to and accepted by HEFCE as part of the rationale for exemption from the recent AAB+ (now ABB+) student number control system.

All applicants who disclose a disability on application are sent information about the Disability and Dyslexia Service, part of the new Learning Centre. Applicants with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Disability Services Co-ordinator or Dyslexia Service Co-ordinator to discuss any needs for 'reasonable adjustment' or more general concerns. This includes reviewing any aspect of a course and its curriculum, auditions, interviews or other specialist resources/facilities, where adjustments might be needed to remove barriers to participating and learning. In addition students are placed in contact with the School's new Student Centre to receive advice and support on financial and accommodation issues.

For courses involving placements with children or vulnerable adults, or where required by a professional regulatory body, the School requires successful applicants to complete the Criminal Records disclosure process. The School's Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Policy¹⁵⁸ defines this process and the basis on which a prospective or current student's registration may continue with a disclosure.

The School has three principal documents that govern the admission of students: the Handbook of Academic Regulations¹⁵⁹, Admissions Handbook¹⁶⁰ and the course specification itself. Information on the process and principles of admissions is also placed on the website for applicants; this includes the admissions criteria for each course. A Panellists Handbook has also been devised to assist panels involved in undergraduate Acting auditions.¹⁶¹ The Board of Governors operates a number of internal audits in the School which has included an audit of admissions providing further assurance on the processing of applications.¹⁶² The School is confident of its admissions processes; applications levels are kept under review by the Executive Management Group and the Admissions and Recruitment Group (comprising Head of Admissions and Student Recruitment Office, Pro-Dean (Programmes) and the Student Recruitment Marketing Manager) and course teams comment on admissions via periodic review self-evaluation documents as well as annual course monitoring.

In contrast with some other drama schools offering vocational programmes in Acting and Stage Management, the School recruits to its undergraduate courses through UCAS. Auditions or interviews are held, normally in the UK but with provision for auditions in the USA and increasingly in other parts of the world, including Singapore, Chile and Sydney. Protocols for audition and interviews are outlined in the Admissions Handbook. Entry to the BA (Hons) Acting is particularly competitive (4339 applicants for 53 places for the 2012 start). All are auditioned, with successful candidates completing a three stage process. Clear applicant information and protocols for audition panels are an essential part of the process. BA DATE and BA Theatre Practice interview all their applicants as standard policy, with students undertaking workshop exercises to assess their aptitude for collaborative, interdisciplinary teamwork.

(6) There are effective complaints and appeals procedures.

The School has complaints¹⁶³ and appeals¹⁶⁴ procedures which follow the general principles of openness, transparency and equity. In the first instance, the School encourages students to raise issues informally before pursuing the formal route. The information on the School's procedures is

¹⁵⁸ [130: Criminal Records Bureau Policy](#)

¹⁵⁹ [068: Handbook of Academic Regulations, pg 8, section 1](#)

¹⁶⁰ [131: Admissions Handbook](#)

¹⁶¹ [160: Panellist Handbook](#)

¹⁶² [132: Deloitte Internal Audit Report on Admissions](#)

¹⁶³ [040: Complaints Process](#)

¹⁶⁴ [041: Appeals process](#)

provided to students via the Student Handbook¹⁶⁵ and the School's virtual learning environment (VLE), Learnzone. This is introduced as part of the student induction and further signposted for student representatives at the annual course committee induction.

Students can obtain general advice and guidance on the process of submitting a complaint or appeal via the Student Centre. Support in making an application is provided by the Student Union.

The table below shows the number of appeals and complaints received by the School over the past five years:

Table 3: No of Appeals and Complaints over time.

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Appeals	8	4	6
Complaints	5	3	4

The Academic Registrar's Office keeps a log of all formal complaints and appeals received by the School as a resource towards enhancing not only the complaints and appeals procedures but also the provision of the School generally. A summary of complaints and appeals¹⁶⁶ received in the previous year is received annually by the School's Academic Board^{167 168}. The complaints procedure is reviewed annually by the Academic Registrar and has also been recently updated following guidance from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

In addition to the formal complaints and appeals procedures, students can raise issues with staff informally, in many instances resolving any issues without the need for use of a formal complaint or appeal route.

(7) There is an approach to career education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) that is adequately quality assured.

As an institution closely connected to its industry, career education information, advice and guidance are very important for the students of the School and the School is pleased that so many of its students attain employment (as evidenced by the School's destination of leavers in higher education survey, DLHE).

Table 4: Destination of Leavers Survey results:

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Leavers in employment	71.9%	81.5%	83.8%

The DLHE survey assists the School in the on-going monitoring of the effectiveness of its courses in delivering CEIAG and employability for its graduates. However, unlike some larger institutions the School does not provide a general careers advisory service. Since Central is in the main a highly vocational institution, whose courses train students for entry into specific professional roles, CEIAG is devolved to course level where it is embedded within the curriculum. Course teams under the direction of the Dean of Studies' Office therefore have responsibility for CEIAG.

Within the curriculum, employability is developed through key competencies, skills development and professional preparation, with teaching delivery frequently undertaken by industry professionals. A number of courses have specific events to which members of the industry are invited such as showcases, festivals, exhibitions, 'live' industry projects, conferences and productions. The majority of unit outline templates include a section on transferable skills developed as part of the unit and all courses contain learning outcomes that enable students to

¹⁶⁵ [085: Student Handbook, pg 15](#)

¹⁶⁶ [043: Academic Board papers: Appeals and Complaints Report 2011-2012](#)

¹⁶⁷ [043: Academic Board minutes 2011-2012, December minute 2.6.1](#)

¹⁶⁸ [043: Academic Board minutes 2010-2011, December minute 2.6.5](#)

develop broader workplace skills. Opportunities exist in many courses to undertake work experience and placements and, in the MFA pathways, attachments. These are supported by the School's Placements Co-ordinator.

Validation of new courses will, where possible, include an external subject specialist that is a practitioner from the industry. An employers' partnership group for the BA DATE course enables input from employers (placement professional hosts) to the course. Annual Monitoring includes a section on career education and employment.¹⁶⁹

Personal development planning is integrated within the curriculum, with many students benefitting from personal E-portfolio and CV development, self-employment and career-planning workshops. Performance-based courses actively publicise students' achievement through the School's [website](#) using on-line CVs. Opportunities to enhance employability are offered by a range of mechanisms: community and study-based projects, mentoring of youth-theatre students, travelling to international drama schools through Central Connects. Central was a recipient of HEFCE funding in 2011 for a summer vacation Graduate Internship scheme. The School's active Student Union allows students to become involved in many interesting and diverse extra-curricular activities that can further aid employability. The Union is also planning to launch a series of 'skills sessions' for students, staff and external guests who can share their skills on a broad range of areas.

The Alumni Office retains post-graduation contact records for thousands of Central alumni throughout the world, thereby aiding networking with peers and industry specialists. The Alumni Office can help publicise graduates' work within Central and the alumni community.

Whilst confident in its approach to CEIAG, which achieves high graduate employability results, the School will revisit this when the appropriate revised chapter of the UK Quality Code is published in due course.

(8) The quality of learning opportunities is managed to enable the entitlements of disabled students to be met.

The School's Equality and Diversity Committee¹⁷⁰ oversees equality policy within the School and a representative of the Learning Centre is a member of the Committee. The Committee is chaired by the Pro-Dean (Students) who is also responsible for the Learning Centre.

The Learning Centre (previously the Disability and Dyslexia Service as part of Student Support Services, S3) is a newly established unit (see above) providing support to all students in terms of their academic and learning needs. The Centre is in part a response to a growing area of perceived need, particularly in relation to students' confidence with academic writing. It acts as a focal point for co-ordinating a systematic disability and dyslexia service to ensure that students are assessed, diagnosed and supported professionally in relation to their disability. A number of specialist support services are available to all students who meet the criteria under the Disability Discrimination Act (2005). The service assists all eligible students with applications for funding via the Disabled Student Allowance (DSA). The School has a high number of students in receipt of DSA funding (average of 25% at undergraduate level¹⁷¹). A specialist educational psychologist is contracted in for dyslexia assessment testing, alongside additional peripatetic dyslexia tutors as needed.

As part of the admissions process, prospective students who declare disability at point of application are contacted by the Disability Co-ordinator to establish their needs. This forms the start of an on-going relationship between the School and the student that makes appropriate adjustments to enable their full participation in the learning experience which the School offers. The formal record of this relationship is the Internal Guidance Report for Academic Staff (IGRAS)

¹⁶⁹ [113: Annual Monitoring Template, pg 9, question 31](#)

¹⁷⁰ [054: Equality and Diversity Terms of Reference and Membership \(Committee Handbook\)](#)

¹⁷¹ [119:HESA data - Table 7: participation of students in higher education who are in receipt of DSA](#)

form¹⁷² which stipulates adjustments that should be made to which the student is entitled, such as additional time, modifications to resources or the provision of equipment or facilities, etc.

All new students are sent comprehensive information packs¹⁷³ with information about services and an accommodation guide. In addition, the Learning Centre's Disability Service and Dyslexia Service Learnzone pages contain specific advice and guidance.

At the January 2013 Academic Management Committee meeting an update¹⁷⁴ on the Learning Centre was received attesting to the range of support delivered to students across the School, including those with a disability.

(9) The quality of learning opportunities for international students is appropriate.

The School has in 2012-2013 a total of 147 international students with 56 at UG, 83 at PG taught and 8 at MPhil/PhD levels. The previous Academic Plan aimed to increase the number of international students and the School has now also increased the areas in which it conducts overseas auditions which now include New York, San Francisco, Santiago, Sydney and Singapore.

Table 5: Overseas (fee status) enrolled students over time

	2006-2006	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
UG	17	16	20	25	35	44
PGT	39	51	59	82	75	87
PGR	5	3	3	2	4	6
Total	61	70	82	109	114	137

The School welcomes international students and in particular the experiences and diversity that they bring, believing these add positively to our community. Being a small specialist institution, unlike larger multi-faculty institutions, the School does not have a languages department that provides substantial additional support, particularly with regard to academic English. Tutorial support is nevertheless available through the Learning Centre, for international students to enhance their English language skills. As an institution based in the performing arts a high level of spoken English (IELTS 7 or equivalent) is not only expected but required for entry onto courses.

International students are supported by the Student Centre with regard to visas, accommodation and financial support (e.g. US Federal loans) etc. The School also provides an International Student Handbook, sent electronically to all new international students.¹⁷⁵ In addition the new Learning Centre provides academic and pastoral-related support in the form of a one week pre-course for International students¹⁷⁶, a welcome day held in the main registration week, workshop support sessions for non-UK students¹⁷⁷ and one-to-one tutorials for students for whom English is a second or other language.

International student feedback is specifically sought via student surveys which includes a section for international students. In 2011-2012 the School acted on feedback from surveys and initiated a series of focus groups for international students to provide further feedback on issues that had arisen. In addition, Learning Centre workshops and sessions, as well as the one week pre-course, obtain a combination of formal and informal feedback from those participating, assisting in the assurance of the effectiveness of the sessions as well as their enhancement. The Learning Centre's Learnzone pages contain specific information and advice for international students.

¹⁷² [133: Internal Guidance Report for Academic Staff \(IGRAS\) Form](#)

¹⁷³ [134: Learning Centre Information for prospective students](#)

¹⁷⁴ [045: Academic Management Committee papers - Learning Centre update for AMC](#)

¹⁷⁵ [135: International Student Handbook](#)

¹⁷⁶ [136: International Student Pre-course Timetable](#)

¹⁷⁷ [137: International Workshop sessions](#)

(10) Appropriate support and guidance are provided to enable postgraduate research students to complete their programmes and to enable staff involved in research programmes to fulfil their responsibilities.

The MPhil/PhD programme operates within a dynamic and growing research environment and community that comprises over thirty research-active teaching staff now organised into a Practitioner-Researcher Network ([see above](#)).

The Research Degrees programme is formally monitored and reports to the Research Degrees Committee. As with the other colleges of the federal University, the School is now responsible for the administration and management of the programme including the examination. Administration of the research degree programme was part of the Course Support Office up until the commencement of the 2012-2013 session. For the start of the current academic year, administration of the programme has transferred to the Research Office in order further to strengthen the integration of the research students with the research environment of the School generally. The Programme is overseen by the Programme Convenor who reports academically to the Deputy Principal (Academic) in matters relating to the programme.

The Research Degrees Programme undergoes periodic review (its first review was undertaken in January 2013). When not being reviewed, the programme submits an annual monitoring report^{178,179,180}. The Research Student Committee reports in to the Research Degrees Committee. The School participates in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) undertaken by the Higher Education Academy.

The School holds two major annual events for the PhD programme: the annual [conference](#) and the annual practice-based event, the [Collisions Festival](#), providing the opportunity for students to present their work to an environment of peers. During the spring and summer terms the research degree programme also operates a research seminar series for students to present their work in an informal way amongst peers.

Students are admitted to start either in October or January. To date 52% of research students have previously completed a taught postgraduate degree at the School. Applications are often preceded by fairly extended exploratory exchanges, mainly by e-mail, discussing the general nature of the proposal and leading to the identification of possible supervisors, who will usually be involved at point of interview. Where a specific technical issue arises in a proposal, the project will be discussed with Central's Technical Support Department. The intended supervisory team is usually detailed in the letter of offer to the applicant, and formally approved by RDC when the student is registered.

Each student is assigned a primary and second supervisor who will usually between them have expertise and experience in the appropriate field. As the MPhil/PhD programme is relatively new the supervisory capability of the School is still growing. As such, supervisory teams that have neither completed doctoral study nor supervised to completion are assigned a mentor with experience of supervising a research student to completion in order to provide support and guidance to the supervision team. Where necessary, additional external advice is brought in to support the supervision team. Supervisor roles are outlined in the Research Degrees Handbook¹⁸¹ and the Handbook of Doctoral Supervision¹⁸². The MPhil/PhD Supervisors' meetings provide a forum for support to supervisors.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁸ [138: Research degrees 2008-2009 annual monitoring report](#)

¹⁷⁹ [139: Research degrees 2009-2010 annual monitoring report](#)

¹⁸⁰ [140: Research degrees 2010-2011 annual monitoring report](#)

¹⁸¹ [141: Research Degrees Programme Handbook 2012-2013, pg 32](#)

¹⁸² [142: Handbook of Doctoral Supervision, pg 15](#)

¹⁸³ [071: PhD Supervisor meetings minutes](#)

The School's progress and review arrangements are articulated in the Handbook of Academic Regulations¹⁸⁴ and the Research Degrees Handbook¹⁸⁵. All research students must undergo an upgrade review from MPhil to PhD status normally at either 12 or 18 months into the programme. Students will also have a review at around every six months of the programme. Review and upgrade reports are received at the Research Degrees Committee^{186 187 188} which formally monitors the progress of all the students on the programme. Upgrade reviews comprise the supervision team and a member of staff that is 'external' to the team.

The programme aids the development of research and other skills through a number of means. Research students receive a two-day induction programme¹⁸⁹ and on-going professional preparation enables a variety of sessions to assist in professional development¹⁹⁰. In the research skills training programme¹⁹¹ students follow the intensive taught element of the Performing Research unit¹⁹² shared with all of Central's taught MA students, with additional classes tailored to their own needs¹⁹³. It is possible for students to opt out of this element if they demonstrate to the satisfaction of the supervisor that they have undertaken similar training elsewhere. At present students are not required to accumulate credit for research training nor formally pass a 'unit', but research competencies and training activities and needs are addressed in Progress Reviews and upgrade interviews. Following review of the MPhil/PhD programme, the School will explore implementing a requirement to accumulate training credits¹⁹⁴.

Students are assigned a one-off allocation of £300 per annum each for additional training appropriate to individual need (which might take the form of an external seminar series, master class, specialist consultancy, specific IT training or conference attendance), agreed in advance with the supervisor. In addition students can attend a series of research seminars and presentations from established researchers and practitioners.

Feedback from students to the School occurs via the Research Student Course Committee and the School's participation in the Higher Education Academy's postgraduate research experience survey (PRES). In addition research students are represented on the Research Degrees Committee, Research and Ethics Committee and the Academic Board. The programme operates in an open and transparent manner with a healthy interaction between the student representatives and those managing the course to mutual benefit. Research students are very involved in the running of the programme and take on responsibility for organising the annual conference and festival.

(11) The quality of learning opportunities delivered as part of collaborative arrangements is managed effectively to enable students to achieve their awards.

The School only has one programme where part of the programme is delivered in collaboration with other organisations. The PG Cert Applied Theatre with Young People¹⁹⁵ has two strands where one 40 credit unit is delivered in collaboration with the National Theatre (for the Directing Text strand) and the Almeida Theatre (for the Facilitation strand). This programme follows the

¹⁸⁴ [068: Handbook of Academic Regulations, pg 78, section 36](#)

¹⁸⁵ [141: Research Degrees Programme Handbook 2012-2013, pg 20](#)

¹⁸⁶ [047: Research Degrees Committee 2012-2013, October meeting minute 1.5.2](#)

¹⁸⁷ [047: Research Degrees Committee Minutes 2011-2012, February meeting minute 5.2](#)

¹⁸⁸ [047: Research Degrees Committee Minutes 2010-2011, May meeting minute 5](#)

¹⁸⁹ [141: Research Degrees Programme Handbook 2012-2013, pg 14](#)

¹⁹⁰ [141: Research Degrees Handbook 2012-2013, pg 16](#)

¹⁹¹ [141: Research Degrees Handbook 2012-2013, pg 15](#)

¹⁹² [143: Performing Research Unit Outline](#)

¹⁹³ [144: Autumn 2012-2013 Research Skills Programme](#)

¹⁹⁴ [100: MPhil/PhD Periodic Review Report January 2013](#)

¹⁹⁵ [019: PG Cert Applied Theatre Course Specification](#)

same QA processes as other programmes; however a memorandum of agreement¹⁹⁶ articulates the collaboration with the Almeida Theatre. The Course Leader liaises with the organisations and attends a number of sessions to observe in order to maintain a continued assurance on the quality of teaching delivered. Assessment is undertaken by Central staff.

(12) The quality of learning opportunities delivered through flexible and distributed arrangements, including e-learning, is managed effectively.

The School has discussed distributed arrangements with the International Academy (IA) of the University of London. After careful consideration and market research by the IA, it was felt that, currently, the market for non-practice based provision in Central's distinctively specialist subject domains was non-viable and because of the 'liveness' implicit in the practice-based curricula and their intensive nature, this form of delivery could not appropriately or cost-effectively be delivered at distance. However the School may revisit this in the future and, as evidenced in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy¹⁹⁷, remains interested in ways of expanding some of the School's activities beyond the constraints of a campus.

In relation to e-learning, the School initiated an e-learning steering group during 2009-2010¹⁹⁸. The group explored the possibilities of integrating e-learning within Central¹⁹⁹. Having started as a pilot project involving assessments from a selection of courses during 2009-2010 the School has now begun to develop the use of the VLE on all courses. In 2011-2012 all courses were able to use the VLE, with all MA courses having a set format for each course zone. In 2012-2013 this has continued and been extended to undergraduate provision. The Learning Skills (Media) Tutor provides an induction on Learnzone to all students and briefings on the use of Mahara (e-portfolio software) for students who are required to use the platform to complete assessments. The tutor also provides one-to-one tutorial support and group sessions throughout the academic year on a variety of topics including how to set up a word press blog, how to use Google for organisation and refresher workshops on using Learnzone or Mahara. In addition the Learning Skills (Media) Learnzone page provides additional information and tips on assistive technology and a range of media within learning.

The School's Handbook of Quality Assurance specifies the model to be employed for the provision of each course's VLE in order to ensure consistency and commonality across all programmes²⁰⁰. At its core, this is the provision of information to students and thus each VLE will include the current course specification, unit outlines, link to the Student Charter and Handbook of Academic Regulations as well as information on academic referencing, ethics and timetabling information.

(13) The quality of learning opportunities delivered through work-based and placement learning is effective.

The School has eight courses²⁰¹ where placement²⁰² activity is part of its provision. In 2011-2012 this represented over 200 external placement hosts. All courses using placements must articulate this in the course specification and appropriate unit outline. A Placements Co-ordinator, based in the Course Support Office, supports the administration of the School's range of placement opportunities²⁰³. The Placements Co-ordinator, working in conjunction with the course teams,

¹⁹⁶ [009: Memorandum of Agreement with Almeida Theatre](#)

¹⁹⁷ [008: Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, aim 3, objective 1](#)

¹⁹⁸ [145: E-Learning Steering Group minutes](#)

¹⁹⁹ [046: ASEC Papers: E-Learning Group Final Report](#)

²⁰⁰ [007: QA Handbook, pg 63, 4.13](#)

²⁰¹ BA DATE, BA Theatre Practice, PGCE, MA Actor Training & Coaching, MA Applied Theatre, MA Drama & Movement Therapy (Sesame), MA Movement Studies and MA Voice Studies.

²⁰² Within the broader term of placements, the School also uses 'attachment' to signify a more autonomous and independent period of placement as part of the MFA courses (2nd year).

²⁰³ [146: List of Placements](#)

ensures that students and hosts receive the appropriate information on the placement including information on roles and responsibilities of both host and student. A Placement Handbook, currently being revised, is also provided for students and hosts and the Handbook of Academic Regulations²⁰⁴ and Quality Assurance Handbook further support and document the processes and principles involved that govern and continue to assure the quality of the placement experience.

The School obtains feedback from students and placement organisations across some of the courses with placements to assist in enhancing and developing the quality of the School's placement provision and associated policy and procedures. It is envisaged that there will be a common feedback survey for all students returning from a placement in the near future. In addition, for the PGCE courses there is a Partnerships Group²⁰⁵ for hosts of teacher-training placements. On this model the School has also initiated from 2012-2013 onwards a Placement Group for placements in the wider School, which will report to Faculty Board to enable its oversight of the enhancement of the placement experience.

(14) A student charter, or equivalent document, setting out the mutual expectations of the institution and its students, is available.

The School introduced a Student Charter for the 2011-2012²⁰⁶ academic session. The Charter is applicable to the whole student community. This has since been renewed for the 2012-2013²⁰⁷ academic session. The Charter is approved annually by the Academic Board^{208 209} which includes student representatives as well as the President of the Student Union. It is available to all students and contains hyperlinks, linking the different clauses of the Charter to further supporting information. The Charter is introduced as part of course induction.

SECTION 5: THE QUALITY OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED, INCLUDING THAT PRODUCED FOR PROSPECTIVE AND CURRENT STUDENTS

(1) Higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

The School takes seriously the provision of information that is accurate, accessible and fit for purpose to both current and prospective students. The School's mission, values and strategies are all available via the School's [website](#) and VLE and are frequently cited and referenced in a range of documents.

The School ensures that the current course specification for each course is available to prospective students on its website. The course specification then remains available to students via the School's VLE (Learnzone) for the duration of their studies. Applicants can also easily access information on the application process via the School's website.

As stated above, the School has developed and published a Student Charter which articulates what students can expect from the School and what the institution expects from its students. This document outlines those principles and links to other more detailed supporting documents. It is available on the website and on every course's VLE and is highlighted as part of the induction to

²⁰⁴ [068: Handbook of Academic Regulations, pg 36, section 12.36-12.38](#)

²⁰⁵ [147: PGCE Partnership Group minutes 2010-2011 TO 2012-2013](#)

²⁰⁶ [148: Student Charter 2011-2012](#)

²⁰⁷ [149: Student Charter 2012-2013](#)

²⁰⁸ [043: Academic Board minutes 2011-2012 July, minute 4.6.14](#)

²⁰⁹ [043: Academic Board minutes 2010-2011 July, minute 4.7.10-4.7.12](#)

students. Much information is available to students through the Student Handbook²¹⁰, providing a range of information including processes for making appeals and complaints.

Over the past few years, the School has been in the process of redesigning its website. After an initial unsuccessful redesign and launch coupled with staffing problems in the Department of Development and External Affairs, the website is currently due to be re-launched during 2013-2014. A project board is overseeing the development of the new website.²¹¹ Following a successful re-launch of the external website, an internal portal will be developed to replace the now dated intranet. In the interim, information that would have been placed on a portal is held on the VLE to ensure that information relating to current students is held in one place. The School acknowledges that development of the external website and portal has not proceeded to plan but the effect on the provision of information to current students has been mitigated by the development of the VLE.

At the end of their studies all students receive an official transcript from the School providing their final unit marks and course result. A diploma certificate is provided separately by the University of London. The School is currently investigating systems to record further information in line with those recommended in the HEAR and for them to be provided on an enhanced transcript.

The School publishes annually a prospectus²¹² for the forthcoming recruitment round which articulates the experience that the School offers. The prospectus is developed by the Department of Development and External Affairs in conjunction with the Dean of Studies' Office as well as other departments of the School.

Responsibility for the provision of a large proportion of information rests with the Academic Registrar's Office, which oversees transcript production and course specification approval as well as assisting in the development of academic policy. The office is also responsible for the Key Information Sets (KIS). The School submitted a KIS for each of the three UG courses for the KIS launch in 2012²¹³ and the KIS was included as part of an internal audit on data quality²¹⁴. It is envisaged that the 2013-2014 survey for new students (held in the winter term) will include a question on the importance and use of the KIS by those enrolling at the School.

The School recognises that it is essential to student attainment and retention that students are accurately informed what to expect of the courses and the student experience it offers. This is true in all HEIs, but in Central's specialist environment, where many of its subjects are either rare, or else come loaded with particular cultural preconceptions (attached to the archetypal 'drama school' – which Central is not), it is a matter of particular importance. The School uses, *inter alia*, Open Events and Course Information days, outreach activities and audition workshops, the format of audition and interview days, institutional social media outputs, VLE fora and personal contact with course teams as mechanisms to ensure accurate expectations of its courses. The Pro-Dean (Programmes) is responsible for ensuring that Open Days and admissions activities accurately represent the 'Central Experience', and with the Dean and the Pro-Deans ensure that prospectus and web copy are reviewed annually. Staff are vigilant to ensure that students do not expect that which is unrealistic nor misinterpret what the School offers through course information and briefing papers, and through personal contact. Feedback from students via course committees and student surveys as well as information from the complaints and appeals processes contribute to a continuing updating of School documentation.

²¹⁰ [085: Student Handbook 2012-2013](#)

²¹¹ [158: Website Project Board minutes](#)

²¹² [013: Prospectus](#)

²¹³ [001 BA Acting Key Information Set](#), [002 BA DATE Key Information Set](#), [003 BA TP Key Information Set](#)

²¹⁴ [150: Internal audit on Data Quality](#)

SECTION 6: ENHANCEMENT

(1) Deliberate steps are being taken at institutional level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

Actions to improve the quality of learning opportunities can occur at a number of levels throughout the institution and through various processes. As noted above, at the highest level, the Executive Management Group initiated a [restructure](#) to enhance the student experience, creating a Student Centre and a Learning Centre. The School also usually holds a School Planning Day each year which, in addition to assisting in the development of the Corporate Planning Statement for the year ahead, which can in itself include enhancements, enables strategic discussion. The Executive Management Group has most recently introduced the new position of Director of Operations (Estates and Learning Resources) which now has responsibility for Estates, IT Services, Library Services and the Technical Support Department. This has brought all those areas under one line management for the first time enabling a greater coordination of those areas particularly as they relate to the student experience and learning opportunities. Deliberate steps are thus taken at the highest level to improve the quality of learning opportunities.

Strategies embed enhancement. In particular, one of the aims of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy is to 'enhance Central's current learning, teaching and assessment processes, ensuring best possible practice'²¹⁵; courses report and reflect on their engagement with the strategy through the annual monitoring process. The strategy is monitored by the Faculty Board.

Developments at a more operational level may also occur via the committee or organisational structure or through QA process. Validation, periodic review, External Examiners, course committees and student surveys all contribute to the on-going development of opportunities. The Pro-Dean (Programmes) liaises with course teams regarding course level actions in response to feedback from student surveys. As part of the periodic review process courses must develop an enhancement plan for course level enhancements.

At committee-level, the former Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee (ASEC) initiated the development of Learnzone, the School's virtual learning environment (VLE) as well as conducting working groups on course committees leading to changes in the course committee system²¹⁶; student induction, leading to revisions in the induction of students at the start of the year; and tutoring, leading to the development of the personal and academic tutoring guide^{217,218}. As noted above, its successor, the Academic Management Committee, will also receive revised and new QAA Quality Code chapters and evaluate changes to processes to continue to assure standards and enhance learning opportunities. In addition, thematic reviews can be convened to review specific issues, and the School is reviewing the core unit across all MA courses, Performing Research, in 2012-2013 for example.

The institution embedded an academic structure in 2008 as a machine to initiate and enhance student learning. Taught courses were brought into one management area (the Dean of Studies' Office) rather than operating as undergraduate and postgraduate departments. The culture of the institution changed such that this office oversees all the taught courses. Developments have included: whole staff development days and sessions, a Masters' Framework, 'Wednesday Forum' meetings with course and cluster leaders. This Office takes responsibility for major areas of enhancement such as planning and initiating new courses at Central and responds to smaller matters such as curricular issues that arise from student surveys. The Dean, Pro-Deans and

²¹⁵ [008: Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, aim 1](#)

²¹⁶ [163: ASEC Working Party Report on Course Committees](#)

²¹⁷ [159: Guide to Personal Tutoring](#)

²¹⁸ [164: ASEC Working Party Report on Tutorial Provision](#)

Deputy Dean are all ex officio members of Academic Management Committee and report on their enhancement plans in that forum.

Through this office, since 2010, the School has initiated a scheme called 'Sitting in'²¹⁹ permitting students to broaden their experience by being able to attend sessions that form a part of other courses. This is one small example of finding creative ways of adding to students' learning opportunities. Further opportunities for enhancement stem from other areas of the School such as through Central Connects, the School has recently partnered with the [Shakespeare School's Festival](#), which will enable other ways for its specialist students to engage in a national network of school drama production. In addition the collaboration with [Julie's Bicycle](#) is another example of a cross-School initiative. This initiative²²⁰ feeds into the development of the curriculum, and enables sustainable student projects as well as responding to a better learning environment. The School's recent production of 'Cabaret' is an example of enabling environmental sustainability at course level. The Director of Operations works with courses in embedding environmental sustainability.

²¹⁹ [085: Student Handbook 2012-2013, pg 13](#)

²²⁰ [151: Julie's Bicycle initiative](#)

SECTION 7: THEMATIC ELEMENT – THE FIRST-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE

(1) Admission and Induction

All applicants who could be reasonably expected to meet the entry requirements are invited to interview and/or audition. This includes a programme of overseas interviews and auditions, and when necessary the School conducts interviews with overseas applicants via Skype or telephone. Many sessions take the format of a practical workshop (for BA Acting and BA DATE). The workshops can be developmental and provide a ‘taster’ of the experience and format of teaching which the School offers. For BA Theatre Practice these are most commonly small group sessions. The BA DATE course also provides a student-run Q&A session in which applicants can ask questions of current second-year students or recent graduates.

Both home and overseas models of BA Acting audition are ‘progressional’, in that the successful candidates in each round are selected to progress to the next round and finally onto the course itself. The home model involves three rounds, the first two of which are held on one day, and the third a few weeks later. The overseas model condenses all three rounds into one day, thereby sparing overseas applicants with limited financial resources the need to audition twice. However, the progressional model in all cases allows applicants ample opportunity to demonstrate their potential. This is particularly important for widening participation.

The School distributes vouchers allowing free audition to applicants as part of the School’s Access Agreement to aid the participation of those from underrepresented backgrounds in higher education. The School is also involved with the [‘IntoUniversity’](#) charity. All courses work in external settings to promote their course. For example, the BA Acting course works with the [Mousetrap](#) Organisation as well as Kent Schools’ Forum, Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Derby Live facilitating ‘encounter/experience’ events as tasters of the HE experience. A number of students also have led workshops in schools and colleges. The Admissions and Student Recruitment Office has developed a Facebook page giving successful applicants the opportunity to meet via social media in advance of the course. There is an accommodation website allowing those in need of a room, or with a room to share, to post information.

During registration week there is a welcome event hosted by the Principal for all new undergraduates, who also receive an introduction to the Library, IT Services²²¹ and the virtual learning environment with supporting information provided on the School’s VLE. The Student Union organises a number of events during the first few weeks of the term including the annual Freshers’ Fair, providing a number of opportunities for students across all courses to meet. Indeed, the participation of the Student Union during registration week in introducing the new students to, and guiding them around, the campus is integral to its smooth running. Courses have also operated an informal buddy system which enables new students to be paired up with those from other years.

The School operates a generic course induction for all students, provided at course level but encompassing School-wide areas such as an introduction to the Student Charter, codes of conduct and health and safety²²². Induction then continues throughout the opening weeks of the first term, introducing the structure of the course, attendance, tutoring, contacts and support. The first few weeks of the term also involve introductions to study skills and ‘how to learn’ as well as academic referencing.

There is an optional one week pre-term course for international students²²³ as well as a number of follow-up sessions²²⁴ in the opening few weeks of the first term.

²²¹ [152: IT Services Induction Guide](#)

²²² [007: QA Handbook, pg 48, 4.2](#)

²²³ [136: International Student Pre-course Timetable](#)

²²⁴ [137: International Workshop sessions](#)

At course level, different courses operate a variety of means to introduce the course as well as to build a sense of community in the new cohort. Many sessions are practice-based, foregrounding the situating of practice within a rigorous framework that will be the basis of the course for the following years. BA Theatre Practice, for example, works as a year group in the first few weeks of the course, before breaking into its constituent strands, in order to foster the course as a community. During those initial weeks the course as a whole visits six London productions as a cohort. BA DATE explores London in groups, with some sessions introduced by recent graduates, as well as convening a welcome event that includes second- and third- year students.

The Learning Centre provides an induction in the initial weeks of the year as well as providing invitations for dyslexia screenings or for meetings for IGRAS/disability needs assessments. There is a session on returning to study for those such as mature students who do not have recent experience of higher education.

For those students that put themselves forward to be student representatives, the School provides an induction to the course committee and student representative process as well as providing a guide to student representation²²⁵.

The School operates a survey for new students of undergraduate programmes in the first term, providing feedback on the admissions process, induction and the early weeks of the student experience. This is discussed in course teams and often at Wednesday Forum.

(2) Information for first-year students

The School sends an offer pack²²⁶ to all applicants that have been made an offer. In addition to the offer letter and acceptance forms, this includes financial information, term dates and information from the Student Centre and Learning Centre (previously Student Support Services). On receipt of acceptance, the School sends a registration pack²²⁷ with information on registration and enrolment, together with welcome letters from the course teams and timetables in advance of registration and enrolment to ensure that new students know ahead of arriving what to expect, particularly over the first few weeks of the course. During Open Days and interviews/auditions, staff will already have spent time explaining the format of study at the School, in particular the amount of time students should expect to devote to their study.

The School also facilitates information for students on accommodation with five 'sharers' days' over the summer period as well as an accommodation blog for students with rooms available for sharing or those in need of a room.

The virtual learning environment, Learnzone, provides a range of information about the student's individual course, School-wide information and Learning Centre information (on disability, dyslexia and learning skills). At course level this includes the full course specification. Each course has its own zone which is divided into a number of topics e.g. assessment (providing information on mitigating circumstances, assessment regulations and deadlines, etc) and for each unit (including the unit outline and any supporting texts or documentation). BA TP, for example, provides unit briefing packs at the start of each academic year so that students are aware at the outset what they will be working on in the coming year. There are also sections on research and ethics as well as health and safety: the student information and learning support areas have a large amount of information in support of students and their experience generally. Learnzone also supports on-line submission of written assessments.

(3) Academic advice and guidance

²²⁵ [129: Using Your Voice – guide to student representation](#)

²²⁶ [153: Standard Offer Pack](#)

²²⁷ [154: Sample Registration Pack](#)

Academic advice and guidance come from personal and strand tutors: this is then picked up in relevant skills sessions in courses. For example, the BA DATE course has a skills element within the Key Concepts unit. BA Theatre Practice runs a generic assessment workshop whilst BA Acting provides students with a sound skills basis which is then amplified in further years. These sessions signal to the student what to expect and what will be expected of them. They orientate students to pedagogic methods, which may be new to them, or map the scope of their courses, providing a foundation for skills and understandings that are then developed as they progress. Over the previous five years there has been an institutional focus on assessment, emphasised in the School's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, which has resulted in an increase in progression and retention. Further academic support and guidance are provided via the virtual learning environment, Learnzone, which has a number of resources for download as well as video guides (for example 'how to maintain a working journal' and 'how to write a reflective essay'). In addition, the new Learning Centre provides support to students in the use of learning technology as well as providing a range of group workshops or one-to-one support on a number of academic support and guidance matters such as: 'How to use PowerPoint', 'How to create an accurate bibliography', 'How to structure paragraphs' and, for non-UK students, a range of subjects from understanding the academic language of assessment to support for academic writing in English. In addition, courses provide further course level skills sessions on topics such as academic referencing and plagiarism, writing styles, structuring as well as time/diary management.

(4) Learning support and access to resources

As noted above introductions to IT Services, the virtual learning environment and the Library are provided during registration week. These are then supplemented by further sessions throughout the first year, for example the Librarian will run discipline-specific sessions for the first year BA TP students within the strand seminar programme of the course. As noted above the School has a range of resources available to students in support of their learning including the Technical Support Department who run appropriate induction sessions for student groups using their facilities.

(5) Assessment arrangements.

The School has a system of pass/fail grades for assessment in the first year of undergraduate programmes. This is partly to ensure that students remain open to ideas and possibilities without the pressure of their performance being graded. They are encouraged to take risks and given licence to reflect on and experiment with their learning.

The range of assessments employed is probably greater than found on more traditional courses, with School courses in particular having significant practical components. Both on BA Acting and BA TP, students are assessed for closed skills or required competencies, which they have to pass to progress safely or because they form the foundation of more advanced techniques. On some units, briefing papers are provided at the outset of each assessment where needed, as supplements to the unit outline in the course specification, in order to make clear to students on what and how they are being assessed.

Some assessments occur very early in the first term, for example the Experience in Contexts unit tutor (BA DATE) provides feedback by week 7 of the first term and BA Theatre Practice undertake presentations by week 3 of the first term. This is to introduce to the students the value of assessment as a formative part of the learning process. In addition, BA TP students entering the course are keen to know that they are meeting the required level for their practical work: the first unit of the course therefore concentrates on the 'due requirement' (the practical work that has to be produced to undertake the project). This assessment is marked in a one-to-one tutorial with the relevant project tutor.

(6) Supporting students' transition

The School takes seriously the process of entering higher education for the first time or returning to it, recognising diversity of backgrounds. As well as Student Union activities, the inductions promote

a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. A number of events on diversity are held in collaboration with the Student Union. Personal tutors (or pathway/strand tutors) can assist in identifying quickly any matters arising with those new or returning to higher education. As noted above, the [Facebook](#) group further supports the transition from the status of applicant to student at the School. The School provides timetables and other information in advance of enrolment.

In 2012-2013, the Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC) is thematically focussing on the experience of older students particularly in the first years. The Learning Centre provides a number of 'Returning to Study' sessions focussed on addressing students' anxieties about returning to study in general and higher education in particular. Many students also interact with other years of the programmes through mentoring or buddy systems (e.g. BA Acting) which provide further means of support. Other courses such as BA DATE integrate and promote connections between first and second years through, for example, a cross-course welcome 'DATEfest' and in the Options units (delivered to both first- and second-year students) or through connections between the Directed Project (first year) and the second-year Collaborative Outreach Project.

For BA TP, the first two weeks of the course are an introduction; during this time the students undertake workshops as a whole-year group as well as sessions on journal keeping and assessment. The whole cohort attend together six performances including dance, opera, traditional acting and more contemporary performance work, visit art galleries, archives and exhibitions in an effort to discover more about London and its resources as well as the many forms of performance to be seen.

(7) Monitoring retention and progression.

Courses comment on retention and progression as part of their annual monitoring submissions: however, at a student level, monitoring of progression and retention is on-going via the course teams. The intensive nature of much of the School's provision coupled with assessments throughout the year and on-going feedback permit a close monitoring of students' progress on the course. This enables immediate intervention by course teams and support services when required.

Retention on programmes is generally high, although the BA TP course has found it more difficult in the past possibly because the disciplines included in the course are not part of under-18 education. However, the course addresses this via the provision of course information, Open Days and the invitation of secondary schools to BA TP events. However, in general the School is satisfied with retention, achieving a 97% continuation rate for those who started in 2010-2011 (sector benchmark: 90.7%).²²⁸ From 2012-2013, the School has initiated a student withdrawal survey to provide further feedback on the reasons for withdrawal.

(8) Involvement in Quality Assurance

First-year students are involved in quality assurance through a variety of means. As well as the course-level new student survey in the first term there is an end-of-year first-year survey. First-year students are represented via their student representatives at course committee and at the Student Union Council. First year representatives are trained by means of the institutional induction which also includes the Student Union.

Course committees receive and discuss a variety of information resulting from QA processes (e.g. external examiner reports) and first-year students, through the course committee process, can be consulted on changes to courses. Course committees have dealt successfully with a variety of issues, for example the BA Acting course committee regarding liaison and collaboration with marketing. Courses can also obtain unit-level feedback: the Academic Registrar's and Dean of Studies' offices are currently considering ways of ensuring greater commonality across unit-level feedback.

²²⁸ [155: HESA Data Table 3a](#)

In addition to these formal mechanisms, there is an on-going dialogue of informal feedback and consultation between course teams and students. For example, BA DATE first-year students feed back to the course team on the course induction week and the course team are revisiting and re-planning it as a result, with the involvement of current first years.

The end-of-year (first-year) student survey attests to the satisfaction of students with their first-year experience. In the 2012 survey, 85% of respondents to the survey said that overall they were satisfied with the quality of their course²²⁹. This, coupled with a low withdrawal rate and good progression rates into the second year of the programmes, gives assurance as to the overall first-year experience provided by the School.

The School has found the compilation of the thematic section of this review very useful. The School as a result plans to return to the issue of the Undergraduate First-Year Experience in due course in order to document the School's approach to the experience more fully, cohering good practices, and to ensure that the minimum components of the experience are maintained through all undergraduate courses.

²²⁹ [035: First Year Undergraduate Student Survey Results](#)

LIST OF DOCUMENTATION UPLOADED OR WEB ADDRESS FOR INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

001 RCSSD Self-evaluation document

HEFCE 2011/18 table 1: Key Information Sets

Key Information Sets:

- 002 BA Acting <http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/Subjects/Overview/10007816-BAAC>
003 BA Drama, Applied Theatre and Education
<http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/Subjects/Overview/10007816-BADATE>
004 BA Theatre Practice <http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/Subjects/Overview/10007816-BATP>

HEFCE 2011/18 Table 2: Wider Information Set

- 005 Mission Statement <http://cssd.ac.uk/node/685/centrals-mission>
006 Corporate Plan
http://cssd.ac.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/corp_plan_2009-13_28nov08_final_0.pdf
007 Quality Assurance Policies and Processes: the QA Handbook
008 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
009 Partnerships: PG CERT Applied Theatre with Almeida memorandum of agreement
010 Partnerships: Singapore Polytechnic memorandum of agreement
011 Partnerships: Sesame Institute memorandum of agreement
012 Employability Statement
013 Prospectus

Course Specifications

- 014 BA Acting
015 BA Drama, Applied Theatre and Education
016 BA Theatre Practice
017 PGCE Drama
018 PGCE Media
019 PG Cert Applied Theatre and Young People
020 MA Acting
021 MA Acting for Screen
022 MA Actor Training and Coaching
023 MA Advanced Theatre Practice
024 MA Applied Theatre
025 MA/MFA Creative Producing
026 MA Drama and Movement Therapy (Sesame)
027 MA Movement Studies
028 MA Music Theatre
029 MA Performance Practice and Research
030 MA Scenography
031 MA Theatre Studies (Performance and the City)
032 MA/MFA Voice Studies
033 MA/MFA Writing for Stage and Broadcast Media
034 Research Degrees Programme

Results of Internal Student Surveys

- 035 First year UG survey
036 Second Year UG survey
037 NSS

- 038 PTES
- 039 PRES
- 007 Programme Approval, monitoring and review: QA Handbook
- 007 External Examination Procedures: QA Handbook
- 040 Student Complaints Procedure
- 041 Student Appeals Procedure

Standard Documentation, not contained above

- 042 Diagram of structure of main bodies responsible for QA management

Minutes and papers of institutional level QA bodies for last two years

- 043 Academic Board
- 044 Faculty Board
- 045 Academic Management Committee
- 046 Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee
- 047 Research Degrees Committee
- 008 Description of School's plans to enhance student learning opportunities (LTA strategy)
- 048 List of programmes accredited by PSRB, date of last visit and accreditation status

Additional documentation, cross referenced in 001 RCSSD Self-evaluation Document not above.

- 049 Putting the Student at the Heart of the System Consultation
- 050 Timeline of Central
- 051 Key Planning Priorities 2013-2018 for revised Corporate Plan
- 052 Management of Academic Area Chart
- 053 Central Connects Chart
- 054 Committee Handbook
- 055 Executive Management Group Chart
- 056 Ofsted Inspection Report 2011
- 057 Academic Plan
- 058 Research Strategy
- 059 Widening Participation Strategy
- 060 Access Agreement
- 061 Access Student Experience
- 062 RAE 2008 sub panel report
- 063 School RISTA submission
- 064 Institution specific funding outcome
- 065 Deloitte Audit Report: Space Management March 2011
- 066 Board of Governors 2011/2012 February minutes
- 067 QAA Institutional Audit Report June 2008
- 068 Handbook of Academic Regulations
- 069 Masters Framework Handbook
- 070 Internal Staff Development and Training 2008-2013
- 071 PhD supervisors meetings minutes
- 072 CETT Final Evaluation Report
- 073 'What is Cultural Camden' document
- 074 External Examiner report (word template)

Course Committee Minutes

- 075 BA Acting Course Committee minutes 2009-2010 to 2012-2013
- 076 BA DATE Course Committee minutes 2009-2010 to 2012-2013
- 077 BA Theatre Practice Course Committee minutes 2009-2010 to 2012-2013

- 078 PGCE Course Committee minutes 2009-2010 to 2012-2013
- 079 PG Applied Practices Course Committee minutes 2009-2010 to 2012-2013
- 080 PG Performance and Production Course Committee minutes 2009-2010 to 2011-2012
- 081 PG Performance Course Committee minutes 2012-2013
- 082 PG production Course Committee minutes 2012-2013
- 083 Research Student Course Committee minutes 2009-2010 to 2012-2013

- 084 External Examiner Nomination Form
- 085 Student Handbook 2012-2013
- 086 Academic Referencing Guide for Students
- 087 Student Code of Conduct

Validation reports

- 088 MA Scenography
- 089 MA Creative Producing

Periodic review reports

- 090 Research Degrees Periodic Review (January 2013)
- 091 BA Theatre Practice Periodic Review Report (March 2012)
- 092 MA Actor Training & Coaching and MA Voice Studies Periodic Review Report (March 2012)
- 093 BA Acting Periodic Review Report (March 2011)
- 094 MA Drama and Movement Therapy (Sesame) (May 2010)
- 095 MA Acting for Screen and MA Writing for Stage and Broadcast Media Periodic Review Report (March 2010)
- 096 MA Acting Periodic Review Report (November 2009)
- 097 PGCE Media and Drama Periodic Review Report (November 2009)
- 098 MA Movement Studies and MA Applied Theatre Periodic Review Report (May 2009)
- 099 MA Performance Practice and Research and MA Theatre Studies Periodic Review Report (May 2009)

Periodic Review Self-evaluation documents

- 100 Research Degrees Periodic Review SED (January 2013)
- 101 BA Theatre Practice Periodic Review SED (March 2012)
- 102 MA Actor Training & Coaching and MA Voice Studies Periodic Review SED (March 2012)
- 103 BA Acting Periodic Review SED (March 2011)
- 104 MA Drama and Movement Therapy (Sesame) Periodic Review SED (May 2010)
- 105 MA Acting for Screen and MA Writing for Stage and Broadcast Media Periodic Review SED (March 2010)
- 106 MA Acting Periodic Review SED (November 2009)
- 107 PGCE Media and Drama Periodic Review SED (November 2009)
- 108 MA Movement Studies and MA Applied Theatre Periodic Review SED (May 2009)
- 109 MA Performance Practice and Research and MA Theatre Studies Periodic Review SED (May 2009)

Annual Monitoring Reports

- 110 Annual monitoring reports 2011-2012
- 111 Annual monitoring reports 2010-2011
- 112 Annual monitoring reports 2009-2010
- 113 Annual Monitoring template (word version)
- 114 Annual Quality Assurance Report 2010-2011
- 115 HCPC Annual monitoring submission for MA Drama and Movement Therapy (Sesame)
- 116 HCPC annual monitoring confirmation letter

117	Report on Informed and Research led teaching
118	Visiting Lecturers Handbook
119	HESA data - Table 7: participation of students in higher education who are in receipt of DSA
120	List of staff development activities in teaching and scholarship
121	Report on Staff Development Activity
122	Learning Resources Information
123	Management of Academic Administration Chart
124	Feasibility Study Template
125	MA Creative Producing Feasibility Study
126	MA Scenography Feasibility Study
127	MA Music Theatre Feasibility Study
128	Space Code
129	Using your voice – a guide to student representation
130	Criminal Records Bureau Policy
131	Admissions Handbook
132	Deloitte Internal Audit Report on Admissions
133	Internal Guidance Report for Academic Staff (IGRAS) form
134	Learner Centre Information for prospective students
135	International Student Handbook
136	International Student Pre course Timetable
137	International Workshop sessions
138	Research Degrees 2008-2009 annual monitoring report
139	Research Degrees 2009-2010 annual monitoring report
140	Research Degrees 2010-2011 annual monitoring report
141	Research Degrees Programme Handbook
142	Handbook of Doctoral Supervision
143	Performing Research Unit outline
144	Autumn 2012-2013 Research Skills Programme
145	E-Learning Steering Group minutes
146	List of Placements
147	PGCE Partnership Group minutes
148	Student Charter 2011-2012
149	Student Charter 2012-2013
150	Internal Audit Report on Data Quality
151	Julies Bicycle Initiative
152	IT Services Induction Guide
153	Standard Offer Pack
154	Sample Registration Pack
155	HESA data: table 3a: non-continuation following year of entry
156	PG Assessment Feedback Template
157	UG Assessment Feedback Template
158	Website Project Board minutes
159	Guide to Personal Tutoring
160	Panellist Handbook
161	Draft revised BA Drama, Applied Theatre and Education course specification
162	Validation and Periodic Review Evaluation Form
163	ASEC Working Party Report on Course Committees
164	ASEC Working Party Report on Tutorial Provision

Student Written submission and further evidence

165	Student Written Submission
166	Letter to Academic Registrar – Research Degrees Survey 2012