



Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy

1. Purpose of the Strategy

This Strategy sets out ArtsEd's priorities in teaching learning and assessment for 2015–20 and maps its expectations and ambitions regarding the quality of its higher and further educational provision. It establishes a framework for future developments to the curricula of ArtsEd's core programmes of study, their delivery, support and resourcing. In so doing, it amplifies a series of broad educational aims set out in the Strategic Plan for this period.

2. Background to the Strategy

This Strategy has been developed by the Principal and Academic Manager and approved by the Acting and Musical Theatre Executives. It will be reviewed every 5 years by the Execs, taking account the outcomes of the Annual Programme Evaluations; outcomes of revalidations; changes to government policy and legislation; and competition from other providers of vocational conservatoire training.

3. Strategic Aims

In furtherance of ArtsEd's mission to deliver successful and fulfilling careers for all our students and staff, its strategic aims in learning and teaching are to:

- provide exceptional learning opportunities that enable all students to realise their individual potential
- attract outstanding students
- develop knowledge, skills and professional values which are relevant at all stages of each student's career
- recruit, develop and retain outstanding academic and professional staff
- provide excellent pastoral care
- maintain and enhance student engagement through appropriate forums where their voice is respected and responded to
- provide varied public performance opportunities and links to professional networks
- produce graduates who have the potential to make a significant contribution to the profession and are highly sought after by employers
- protect and develop ArtsEd's reputation and 'brand'.

3.2 In support of these aims ArtsEd will, within the resources available:

- maintain the standard of its degrees and other qualifications at the highest internationally competitive level
- maintain and enhance the quality of student learning opportunities

- support students in reaching their full potential both professionally and academically
- encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning
- recruit the highest calibre of students and staff from diverse backgrounds
- maintain outstanding student retention and standards of achievement
- ensure teaching is informed by professional experience at the highest standards and, where appropriate, carried out by those engaged in creative work at a high level
- enhance and adapt programme content in response to the changing needs of the industry
- provide departmental autonomy in the delivery of relevant areas of provision, balanced by proportionate central mechanisms to assure the quality of provision
- enhance standards through scrutiny of External Examiners' reports, student feedback, annual monitoring processes and other internal quality assurance mechanisms

3.3 ArtsEd will aim to enhance the learning experience of its HE and FE students by:

- enhancing opportunities across programmes for a greater degree of reflective, critical thinking
- continuing to improve feedback mechanisms
- enhancing student support systems and improving the student experience
- regularly updating the information, advice and guidance given to students
- developing online resources to support their learning
- continuing to seek strategies for providing financial support to students.

3.4 ArtsEd will continue to build on its current successful retention and completion rates by developing the information, advice and guidance to applicants and students at the start of the programme, thereby improving the management of expectations with regard to workloads, standards and professional discipline.

4. **Curriculum Design**

ArtsEd believes that the most important influences on curriculum design are:

- The professional expertise of leading practitioners and academic expertise of leading teachers in the field, thereby ensuring reciprocity between high-quality practice and and high-quality teaching
- The changing demands of the acting and musical theatre industry, thereby ensuring that students' educational experience is relevant to their chosen career

5. **Curriculum Delivery**

5.1 *Full time Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes*

ArtsEd believes that vocational training for the acting and musical theatre is best conducted on full time programmes of study delivered face-to-face.

These will include technique classes, workshops, rehearsals and performance, lectures, seminars and tutorials, and professional practice. ArtsEd recognises that some elements of the curriculum are effectively delivered to larger groups, such as large-ensemble projects, contextual studies lectures and professional practice seminars, and others are more effectively delivered through one-to-one or small group tuition. ArtsEd will continue to place emphasis on the educational and professional development value of masterclasses, workshops and professional practice seminars delivered by distinguished industry professionals.

5.2 *Part-time Undergraduate Programmes*

The nature of part-time programmes affords a more flexible approach. Currently the Post Diploma BA (Hons) Performance Studies is delivered one evening a week, face-to-face, over three teaching terms. There is scope for offering similar provision by distance learning, and this will be investigated over the five year period of this Learning and Teaching Strategy.

6. **Part-Time Learning and Outreach**

- 6.1 ArtsEd will continue to support the work of the School of Part-time Learning as a means of developing the potential of pre-HE learners and as an instrument of widening participation.
- 6.2 ArtsEd will develop an alumni network as a vehicle for promoting CPD opportunities to its graduates.
- 6.3 ArtsEd will build on its current Part-time offerings to offer a balanced programme of single events and series of events, with a view to widening access and enhancing our service to the local and wider community.
- 6.4 ArtsEd will develop links with potential feeder colleges and schools to attract as broad a cross section of students as possible to our courses.

7. **International policy**

- 7.1 ArtsEd has no plans to support opportunities for student and staff exchanges with overseas institutions, although it is willing to develop partnerships with overseas institutions as a means of sharing good practice.
- 7.2 Any future provision offered in collaboration with an overseas institution will need to meet ArtsEd's expectations for such arrangements, including

compliance with the precepts of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter B10 'Managing HE provision with others'.

- 7.3 Although we welcome talented applicants regardless of any protected characteristics (including nationality) ArtsEd does not recruit for students overseas. Students whose first language is not English language will not be accepted onto our programmes unless their spoken English is fluent. Applicants must have a TOEFL score of at least 6 to be accepted onto our courses.

8. **Information, Advice and Guidance**

- 8.1 The fundamental principles underpinning the provision of information, advice and guidance for ArtsEd students and staff will continue to be accuracy, currency, transparency, completeness, accessibility and comprehensibility.
- 8.2 ArtsEd will continue to review its handbooks with a view to making them clearer and more readily understood by students and staff.
- 8.3 The accessibility of online information about the programmes will be improved by the introduction of an online application system, by the development of an ArtsEd intranet, and by publication of policies on the website.

9. **Assessment strategies**

Assessments will be driven primarily by the need to demonstrate learning outcomes as specified in the programme and module descriptors. They will measure a student's knowledge, understanding and skills, so that they can demonstrably use that knowledge and apply those skills appropriately in any scenario. Assessment will also measure student performance and improve learning. All assessment should be reflected upon by teachers and by the student body and this reflection may lead to enhancements and improvements in assessment methods.

Assessment methods vary according to the type of programme. Full details of each assessment, including assessment criteria, can be found in the student handbooks.

10.1 Vocational undergraduate and postgraduate training programmes

Practical and professional skills are assessed through classwork, rehearsal, performance and end of year assessments. Students' written work is assessed through Project and Production Journals and Professional Practice Portfolios. Assessment panels include professional practitioners (external assessors), who bring experience of the professional world to the assessment

process and provide students with opportunities to present their work to a wider audience.

10.2 Part time undergraduate programmes

Students' knowledge and skills are assessed through seminar presentations, essays and a dissertation. All written work is double marked, and sample essays sent to the external examiner for moderation.

10. Supporting the Student Learning Experience

- 10.1 ArtsEd will ensure that students are supported by a personal tutor system, a pastoral and counselling service, and relevant careers support.
- 10.2 ArtsEd will continue to provide support for students with disabilities, consistent with its Equal Opportunities Policy.
- 10.3 ArtsEd will continue to provide support where possible to students in financial need through the hardship fund, by fundraising for student bursaries and by investigating alternative funding models.

11. Learning Resources

- 11.1 ArtsEd will ensure that the physical infrastructure for learning and teaching meets the needs of its students and teachers and takes account of best practice in the sector.
- 11.2 ArtsEd will continue to assess periodically the mechanisms in place to ensure that the use of available teaching space is optimised.
- 11.3 ArtsEd will continue to invest in its library and IT provision.
- 11.4 ArtsEd's IT Department will continue to support student learning through the following:
 - Providing suitable equipment and software to promote student learning
 - Maintaining and improving the wireless network
 - Developing an intranet

12. Student Engagement

ArtsEd believes that students should have a voice in shaping their learning experience. Students are involved in revalidation meetings and student representatives attend termly Boards of Study to discuss curriculum enhancements and receive annual programme evaluations and external examiner reports. Weekly tutorials and company meetings will continue to give

students the opportunity to voice concerns regarding academic and non-academic matters. Student evaluation of each module is used to improve programmes as necessary, and any action taken is reported back to students. Results of student satisfaction surveys are carefully analysed by the Executives in order to identify areas for action. These arrangements are designed to ensure that students' experiences are taken into account in the planning, delivery and review of programmes of study.

13. Staff

- 13.1 ArtsEd will seek to sustain the recruitment and retention of leading practitioners, scholars and teachers, supported by high-quality staff development and training opportunities, to maintain an environment in which excellent teaching can flourish.
- 13.2 ArtsEd acknowledges the need to ensure that staff workloads are managed appropriately to allow staff to perform their various teaching, student support and administrative duties.
- 13.3 Staff will be encouraged to pursue professional development to enhance their teaching.

14. Quality Assurance and Enhancement

- 14.1 ArtsEd remains committed to best practice in its quality assurance procedures, mechanisms, and their operation. We will continue, through close engagement with the HE sector and the acting and musical theatre industry, to seek systematically and strategically to improve the educational experience and professional training of our students.
- 14.2 ArtsEd will continue to engage with the HE and FE sectors, building strong links with the industry, with other institutions and with professional bodies in the UK and overseas. Senior staff, together with other managers and administrative staff, will regularly attend meetings and conferences organised by HEFCE, QAA, HESA, OIA or any other regulatory body. Teaching staff at ArtsEd will continue to be encouraged to act as external examiners and specialist external assessors at other UK institutions as a means of ensuring the quality of ArtsEd's standards. We will seek to develop these links so that our policies and operations are better informed – as appropriate – by good practice in the sector as a whole; so that we can benchmark our activities against the best in the sector; and so that we can represent and promote the views and issues affecting ArtsEd – and, generically, small specialist institutions – regionally, nationally and internationally.
- 14.3 ArtsEd will ensure an effective monitoring and academic audit process is in place across all of the elements which underpin the quality and

standards of its programmes of study. The Acting and Musical Theatre Executives will continue to monitor the effectiveness of our processes for the annual monitoring of our programmes of study. We aim to achieve an efficient system which is: informed by accurate and current management information; based on risk analysis and assessment; takes a light touch; results in viable action plans, carried out promptly. These are values that will also continue to underpin departmental review and planning processes.

<p>This policy approved by the Musical Theatre and Acting Executives in January 2016 and reviewed by the Principal and Academic Manager in January 2017.</p>
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