

Learning, Teaching and Student Support Strategy 2018-21



Higher Education Programmes

1. Background and Purpose of the Strategy

ArtsEd's current Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy runs to 2020. Much has been achieved since it was introduced three years ago. Our continuing success, and the quality and standards of our higher education provision, have been confirmed in many ways, including the Higher Education Review by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in October 2017 and – of particular relevance for this strategy – the Gold rating which we received in the 2018 Teaching Excellence Framework.

Our Action Plan for QAA, compiled following the QAA review, states our intention to bring forward the development of a new learning and teaching strategy rather than waiting until the original end point of 2020. The rationale for this is that it enables us to reflect recent changes both internally and in the wider HE sector.

The recognition of our distinctive approach, by industry, external examiners, QAA and others, is a cause for celebration. We intend to build strategically on this, and have agreed that this new strategy should encompass student support as well as teaching and learning. This reflects the importance attached to student support in the HE student experience at ArtsEd, and its recognition in the QAA review. The purpose of this new Learning, Teaching and Student Support Strategy is therefore to set out the strategic aims and priorities for these areas, together with milestones which we will use in 2020 to assess our progress with implementation of the strategy.

The new Learning, Teaching and Student Support Strategy is shorter and simpler than the one it supersedes. For example, it does not encompass areas which were addressed in the previous one, such as curriculum design, part-time learning and outreach, international policy, and information, advice and guidance. These and other areas will be addressed in the new ArtsEd Strategic Plan.

The new Learning, Teaching and Student Support Strategy (LTSS) will run for three years from 2018 to 2021. This will enable us to take forward our priorities for learning, teaching and student support over an initial 3-year period, at the end of which there will be the opportunity to review and refresh the direction of travel in the light of the new Strategic Plan for the institution, which will come into effect from 2020.

Above all, the new LTSS reflects and responds to the aims and priorities which are under development in the institution's new Strategic Plan. It also creates opportunities for us to consider learning and teaching, research and scholarship, and student support, in the context of the criteria and evidence requirements for Degree-Awarding Powers (DAPs). This in turn will enable us to take stock and reflect, and to consolidate our growing confidence and maturity as an HE provider.

2. Development of the Strategy

The new LTSS has been developed following discussions in March-April 2018 with the Principal, Deputy Principal, and members of the Acting and Musical Theatre Executives. It will be presented for approval by the Executives and the Board of Trustees in June 2018 and the Board of Studies in November 2018. Progress towards the milestones will be reviewed in July 2019 and July 2020. As noted above, the next

Learning, Teaching and Student Support Strategy will be developed following the implementation of the new ArtsEd Strategic Plan in 2020.

Key reference points for the development of the new LTSS have included:

- ArtsEd Strategic Plan 2015-20
- Draft of strategic priorities for new ArtsEd Strategic Plan
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2015-20
- ArtsEd QAA Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) Report, October 2017
- ArtsEd QAA UK Quality Code Action Plan, April 2018
- OfS Regulatory Framework, February 2018 - Annex C Guidance on the criteria for the authorisation for DAPs
- Key ArtsEd policies, including: Learning and Teaching Policy, Staff Learning and Development Policy

3. ArtsEd's Learning, Teaching and Student Support Policy - Undergraduate and Postgraduate Vocational Training Programmes

The Learning and Teaching Policy – Undergraduate and Postgraduate Vocational Training Programmes (which was approved by the Acting and Musical Theatre Executives in January 2016 and reviewed by the Principal and Academic Manager in January 2017) has been reviewed and updated to give more equal emphasis to student support. The revised policy has been named the Learning, Teaching and Student Support Policy – Higher Education Programmes, and it now forms the opening section of the new Learning, Teaching and Student Support Strategy 2018-21:

Learning, Teaching and Student Support Policy – Higher Education Programmes

Training at ArtsEd is intensive and challenging. It is characterised by specialist technical teaching, small class sizes, a high proportion of one-to-one teaching, a curriculum enhanced by the involvement of contemporary practitioners, industry-standard facilities and high levels of student support. Employment preparation is integral to the training. Students are focused towards understanding how to find work and how to operate as a working professional.

Staff have consistently high expectations of what each student can achieve, and a strong ethos of the training is that students are enabled to take responsibility for their own learning.

Courses involve a minimum 36 hours per week of supervised contact and a teaching year of at least 33 weeks. ArtsEd employs highly skilled and expert practitioners with a wealth of relevant subject knowledge to teach at ArtsEd, both as regular tutors and visiting creatives. The level of support given to students is high, and extra specialist support provided includes counselling, fitness instruction and access to physiotherapists and vocal consultants.

The courses require critical thinking and involve the training of the mind as well as the body. Students are encouraged to become reflective and proactive creative practitioners, able to identify their strengths, equipped with a range of transferable skills and ready for entry into the acting and musical theatre professions.

Performance plays a crucial role throughout the training. All of our students, from Level 5 upwards, work with a range of directors, music directors and choreographers, from emerging artists to established names, often collaborating on new projects. They are also given a range of opportunities to develop their skills and promote themselves to the industry.

ArtsEd's policy is to ensure that the training responds to the changing needs of the industry, ensuring that students are prepared for all the opportunities afforded them in both live and recorded media.

4. Learning, Teaching and Student Support as a reflection of ArtsEd's Values

In addition to detailed discussion of our strategic aims in preparation for the Strategic Plan for 2020-25, we have also been engaging with groups of students, staff, Trustees and external advisers to identify our core values. A key focus of discussions has been the nurturing and supportive ethos of ArtsEd, and the vibrant atmosphere created by our lively and diverse community of students and staff. These discussions have led us to identify these core values:

- Integrity
- Inclusivity
- Passion
- Professionalism

The new LTSS Strategy has these values at its heart, with the over-arching aim of using learning, teaching and student support as mechanisms or vehicles through which ArtsEd's values are instilled and nurtured in students.

5. ArtsEd's Strategic Plans

This new Learning, Teaching and Student Support Strategy responds to ArtsEd's current and new Strategic Plans.

The Core Aims of the 2015-20 Strategic Plan state that ArtsEd will

1. Provide outstanding education and training
2. Widen participation and encourage a diverse student intake
3. Exploit our growing reputation
4. Increase our emphasis on staff development and engagement
5. Foster a culture of philanthropy
6. Develop the building and its facilities to enhance the student experience
7. Sustain the financial health of the Schools while allowing for investment in new initiatives

As noted above in the opening section of this LTSS, a new ArtsEd Strategic Plan is currently under development.

OUR VISION

To nurture the finest creative talent, igniting each individual's passion for performance and enabling them to build enriching careers in the arts through exceptional teaching and outstanding pastoral care.

Our strategic plan is rooted in our core values and across all that we do we will:-

- Pursue **excellence**
- Promote and practice **inclusivity**
- Foster **resilience**
- Be **thoughtful** and **responsive** and
- Act with **integrity**

Our priorities for 2020-25 are to:

- ENABLE EXCELLENCE
- PROMOTE AND CELEBRATE INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY
- BUILD FOR THE FUTURE
- WIDEN HORIZONS
- FLY THE FLAG
- OPEN OUR DOORS

6. Strategic Aims and Priorities for Learning, Teaching and Student Support, 2018-21

Strategic Aims for Learning, Teaching and Student Support, 2018-21

- a. To further strengthen our holistic approach, in which learning, teaching and student support combine to provide a high quality student experience
- b. To promote and nurture in students our values of integrity, inclusivity, passion and professionalism, producing graduates with the talent, knowledge, skills and outlook to succeed in their chosen careers
- c. To advance and deepen our higher education culture, with a focus on learning and teaching which are informed by the professional practices and research of staff

Strategic Priorities for Learning, Teaching and Student Support, 2018-21

Based on these strategic aims, our priorities during the next 3 years centre upon the continuing development of learning, teaching and student support which are:

- Student-centred
- Holistic
- Future-focused
- And which reflect our growing confidence as “A self-critical, cohesive academic community with a proven commitment to the assurance of standards supported by effective quality systems.”¹

Our priorities for Learning, Teaching and Student Support will therefore be to:

1. Develop our practices in learning, teaching and student support to maximise the quality of the student experience

¹ OfS Regulatory Framework, February 2018 - Annex C Guidance on the criteria for the authorisation for DAPs, p148

2. Continue to develop the “strong integration of industry expertise and practice in the curriculum and delivery to support the development of students as professional practitioners” (QAA Report October 2017 – Feature of Good Practice 2)
3. Strengthen our programme of continuing professional development in HE learning, teaching and student support
4. Develop our approaches to, and understanding of, research and practice, through internal and external dialogues.

For each of our strategic priorities for Learning, Teaching and Student Support, there is a set of milestones which we aim to meet by July 2020. These are designed to enable us to deliver the strategy, advance our agenda for learning, teaching and student support, and position ArtsEd for the next stage on its journey.

The priorities and milestones are set out in the table which follows.

7. Learning, Teaching and Student Support Strategy 2018-21: Priorities and Milestones

Priority		Milestones	
1	Develop our practices in learning, teaching and student support to maximise the quality of the student experience	<i>By July 2020 we will have:</i>	
		1.1	Introduced a broader and more inclusive range of texts and contextual reference points at all levels of the curriculum
		1.2	Considered the potential of a new Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to support student learning, and embarked upon its development
		1.3	Further developed our approaches to assessment and feedback, including assessment workshops for students
		1.4	Considered our practices in learning, teaching and student support in relation to the DAPs criteria and evidence requirements, using this as a stimulus for internal debate and development
		1.5	Further strengthened the relationships between learning, teaching and student support, ensuring that they enhance the development of the individual as well as the industry professional
2	Continue to develop the “strong integration of industry expertise and practice in the curriculum and delivery to support the development of students as professional practitioners” (QAA Report October 2017 – Feature of Good Practice 2)	<i>By July 2020 we will have:</i>	
		2.1	Reviewed and refreshed our curriculum to ensure that, at the end of Levels 6 and 7, students are ready for their next steps and able to operate in their chosen part of the industry (see 2.4 below)
		2.2	Developed an induction pack for visiting creatives, providing them with clear guidelines to ensure greater consistency in the quality and format of written feedback to students
		2.3	Identified and implemented strategies to develop and nurture students as both individuals and contributors to the theatre, film and television community

	Priority	Milestones	
		2.4	Introduced a Mentor Scheme, pairing graduates with recent alumni for individual careers support and guidance
		2.5	Developed students' transferable skills by providing direct employment opportunities for students and recent graduates in ArtsEd Extra, production, front of house and other support departments
3	Strengthen our programme of continuing professional development in HE learning, teaching and student support	<i>By July 2020 we will have:</i>	
		3.1	Established a programme of opportunities for staff to identify, share and embed good practice through dialogue both internally and with their peers in other HE institutions and the industry
		3.2	Reviewed and refreshed our system of peer observation of teaching, ensuring that it creates opportunities for reflection, exploration, and the sharing of good practice
		3.3	Embedded a structured approach for staff to gain professional recognition through sector accreditation programmes (e.g. HEA, AUA)
		3.4	Considered our approaches to continuing professional development in relation to the DAPs criteria and evidence requirements, using this as a stimulus for internal debate and development
		3.5	Established a programme of professional development to promote the wellbeing of students and staff
		3.6	Reviewed our learning support and counselling services to ensure that students and staff are equipped with skills, confidence and resilience

4	Develop our approaches to, and understanding of, research and practice, through internal and external dialogues	<i>By July 2020 we will have:</i>	
		4.1	Established a programme of staff seminars for staff to share/discuss their research and practice, and which includes presentations by colleagues from other institutions and the industry
		4.2	Developed a shared understanding of what we mean by “cutting edge” or “research-informed” or “research-led” teaching and learning, recognising the rich mix of staff research and practice which underpins the student experience
		4.3	In addition to monitoring and reflecting the industry, identified opportunities for innovation, and channels through which we, in turn, can influence and lead the industry.