

Interim Head of the School of Acting

Contract: Fixed-term, 6 months

Reports to: Interim Exec Lead for Higher Education

Location: Chiswick

Start date: Jan 2026

Purpose of the Role

To ensure the smooth day-to-day academic and training operations in the School of Acting, overseeing Course leaders and Heads of Subject during a six-month interim period. The Interim Head of School will oversee teaching, learning and assessment, coordinate teaching staff, support student progression and wellbeing, and maintain quality processes already in place. The focus of the role is operational continuity, problem-solving, and effective running of the department, providing management support to staff and students to ensure an excellence student experience.

Key Responsibilities

Operational Leadership

- Manage the daily operational running of the School of Acting.
- Ensure timetables, teaching cover and room allocations are delivered accurately and efficiently.
- Act as the first point of contact for escalated staffing or student issues, resolving them promptly.

- Ensure handbooks, module guides and assessment briefs are issued and updated as required.
- Ensure creative choices for repertoire and productions are appropriately supportive of the aims and objectives of the institution and promote the institutional values.
- Line manage the Deputy Director and the Heads of Department.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

- Support academic staff to deliver high-quality teaching and assessment to agreed standards.
- Monitor assessment deadlines, marking progress and feedback return rates.
- Coordinate moderation, external examiner requests and mitigating circumstances processes.
- Support students needing advice on progress or course expectations.
- Contribute to teaching and assessment delivery in a specialist area relevant to the School of Acting's curriculum.

People and Resource Coordination

- Line-manage teaching staff within the school on an interim basis.
- Arrange sessional staff recruitment or teaching cover where necessary.
- Conduct triage-style performance support for tutors where delivery issues arise.

Quality and Compliance

- Manage the School of Acting's contribution to the preparation for partnership and revalidation activities.
- Maintain delivery in line with existing quality frameworks, including:
    - attendance monitoring
    - student feedback mechanisms
    - assessment regulations
    - safeguarding and wellbeing requirements

Student Experience

- Oversee student communications relating to course delivery, assessments, or timetable changes.
- Hold regular open-door / drop-in sessions for students.
- Participate in relevant student-facing events (inductions, showcases, results weeks, open days).

Person Specification

Essential

- Extensive teaching experience in the discipline of Acting or an associated subject area (HE or vocational conservatoire sector)
- Experience coordinating teams, leading academic delivery and overseeing creative teams.
- Experience of supporting students in their preparation for public productions.
- Strong organisational and problem-solving capability
- Ability to manage workload and competing priorities
- Excellent communication and pastoral sensitivity

Desirable

- Fellowship of Advance HE or equivalent
- Understanding of vocational training models and managing teams in that context
- Experience of higher education regulation
- Experience of leading teaching staff performance management

Background to ArtsEd

ArtsEd originated from two schools, one founded in 1919 by Grace Cone and one founded in 1922 by Olive Ripman. These two educational pioneers believed passionately in the value of combining a general academic education with specialised training in dance, drama, music and art. They were committed to preparing young people for professional careers in or related to the theatre. In 1939, Grace and Olive joined forces to create the Cone Ripman School, subsequently named the Arts Educational Schools. Dame Alicia Markova and Sir Anton Dolin drew almost exclusively on ArtsEd students to help them create their revolutionary company London Festival Ballet, which eventually became the English National Ballet. Ballerina Dame Beryl Grey became Director of the Schools in the 1960s.

ArtsEd continued to innovate, introducing both professional acting and musical theatre courses and in I986 moved to its present home in Chiswick. In 2007, Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber became President, heralding an auspicious new era for ArtsEd. The Day School and Sixth Form remains the leading school of its kind in the UK with all students possessing outstanding creativity and dedication. Academic results and vocational success are significant, and our Value-Added return is in the top 1% nationally. The School of Musical Theatre and School of Acting offer full-time BA and MA courses. Our Musical Theatre course is recognised as the best in the UK, while the Acting course is praised for its innovative 50:50 split between stage and screen acting. Our outstanding record of graduate success sees nearly every one of our Musical Theatre graduates and over three-quarters of our Acting graduates make their professional debuts within six months of graduating.

In additional to vocational training and significant success in the creative arts, each year a number of ArtsEd students move on to Russell Group universities where they study a range of more traditional academic subjects, including English.