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## Performance review process report

### The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, Review Period 2021-23

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#### Executive summary

This is a report of the process to review the performance of the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. This report captures the process we have undertaken to consider the performance of the institution in delivering HCPC-approved programmes. This enables us to make risk-based decisions about how to engage with this provider in the future and to consider if there is any impact on our standards being met.

We have:

- Reviewed the institution's portfolio submission against quality themes and found that we needed to undertake further exploration of key themes through quality activities.
- Reviewed the institution's portfolio submission to consider which themes needed to be explored through quality activities.
- Undertaken quality activities to arrive at our judgement on performance, including when the institution should next be reviewed.
- Recommended when the institution should next be reviewed.

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The following area explore via a quality activity:
  - Exploring service user and carer involvement in the education provider's processes. We explored this further to determine how service user feedback is reflected and acted on. The education provider expanded on the information already available and their plans to expand on the existing SU&C feedback mechanisms. This includes the developments of their conversation forum and their programme-level 'placement in partnership' day. The visitors welcomed this expansion in information that addressed their questions.
- The education provider should next engage with monitoring in two years, the 2025-26 academic year, because: this will allow the area of ongoing development surrounding the programme review to be concluded. The developments from this can be enacted and concluded. This will allow time for reflections and data on these areas to be collected.
- This will also allow time for us to work with the education provider during the ongoing monitoring period to develop the supply of required data. The annual receipt of this data will enable the visitors to consider a longer ongoing monitoring period at their next performance review.

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[Previous consideration](#)    Not applicable

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**Decision** The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide:

- when the education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be
- whether issues identified for referral through this review should be reviewed, and if so how

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**Next steps** Outline next steps / future case work with the provider:

- Subject to the Panel's decision, the provider's next performance review will be in the 2025-26 academic year

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## Section 1: About this assessment

### About us

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

This is a report on the performance review process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the institution and practice areas(s) detailed in this report continue to meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the institution and programme(s) ongoing approval.

### Our standards

We approve education providers and programmes that meet our education standards. Individuals who complete approved programmes will meet proficiency standards, which set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

### Our regulatory approach

We are flexible, intelligent and data-led in our quality assurance of programme clusters and programmes. Through our processes, we:

- enable bespoke, proportionate and effective regulatory engagement with education providers;
- use data and intelligence to enable effective risk-based decision making; and
- engage at the organisation, profession and programme levels to enhance our ability to assess the impact of risks and issues on HCPC standards.

Providers and programmes are [approved on an open-ended basis](#), subject to ongoing monitoring. Programmes we have approved are listed [on our website](#).

### The performance review process

Once a programme institution is approved, we will take assurance it continues to meet standards through:

- regular assessment of key data points, supplied by the education provider and external organisations; and
- assessment of a self-reflective portfolio and evidence, supplied on a cyclical basis

Through monitoring, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess how an education provider is performing based on what we see, rather than by a one size fits all approach. We take this assurance at the provider level wherever possible, and will delve into programme / profession level detail where we need to.

This report focuses on the assessment of the self-reflective portfolio and evidence.

### **Thematic areas reviewed**

We normally focus on the following areas:

- Institution self-reflection, including resourcing, partnerships, quality, the input of others, and equality and diversity
- Thematic reflection, focusing on timely developments within the education sector
- Provider reflection on the assessment of other sector bodies, including professional bodies and systems regulators
- Provider reflection on developments linked to specific professions
- Stakeholder feedback and actions

### **How we make our decisions**

We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint [partner visitors](#) to design quality assurance assessments, and assess evidence and information relevant to the assessment. Visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make the decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee takes decisions through different levels depending on the routines and impact of the decision, and where appropriate meets in public. Their decisions are available to view [on our website](#).

### **The assessment panel for this review**

We appointed the following panel members to support a review of this education provider:

Robert MacKinnon	Lead visitor, Clinical scientist; Hearing aid dispenser
Rosie Axon	Lead visitor, Arts therapist
Rachel O'Connell	Service User Expert Advisor
Alistair Ward-Boughton-Leigh	Education Quality Officer
Jennifer French	Advisory visitor, Arts therapist

We encourage reflections through portfolios to be made at the institution level wherever possible. The performance review process does not always require profession level scrutiny which requires all professionals to be represented in the assessment panel. Rather, the process considers how the education provider has performed at institution level, linked to the themes defined in section 1. Lead visitors have the option to appoint additional advisory partners where this will benefit the assessment, and / or where they are not able to make judgements based on their own professional knowledge.

In this assessment, we considered we did not require professional expertise across all professional areas delivered by the education provider. We considered this because the lead and support visitors were satisfied they could assess performance and risk without needing to consider professional areas outside of their own.

## Section 2: About the education provider

### The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers one HCPC-approved programmes across one profession. It is a higher education institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 2016.

The education provider engaged with the annual monitoring declaration process in the legacy model of quality assurance in 2020.

### Practice areas delivered by the education provider

The education provider is approved to deliver training in the following professional areas. A detailed list of approved programme awards can be found in [Appendix 1](#) of this report.

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
<b>Pre-registration</b>	Arts therapist	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate	2016

### Institution performance data

Data is embedded into how we understand performance and risk. We capture data points in relation to provider performance, from a range of sources. We compare provider data points to benchmarks, and use this information to inform our risk based decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of institutions and programmes<sup>1</sup>.

Data Point	Benchmark	Value	Date of data point	Commentary
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<sup>1</sup> An explanation of the data we use, and how we use this data, is available [here](#)

Numbers of learners	40	26	20/12/2023	<p>The benchmark figure is data we have captured from previous interactions with the education provider, such as through initial programme approval, and / or through previous performance review assessments. Resources available for the benchmark number of learners was assessed and accepted through these processes. The value figure was presented by the education provider through this submission.</p> <p>The education provider is recruiting learners below the benchmark. The visitors were made aware of this ahead of their review and factored this into their assessment.</p>
Learner non continuation	3%	0%	2020-21	<p>This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke HESA data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects.</p> <p>The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 2%. This is a positive result and something to reflect on when completing our assessment. The visitors were made aware of this ahead of their review and factored this into their assessment.</p>

<p>Outcomes for those who complete programmes</p>	<p>93%</p>	<p>94%</p>	<p>2020-21</p>	<p>This data was sourced from summary data. This means the data is the provider-level public data.</p> <p>The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has improved by 1%. The visitors were made aware of this ahead of their review and factored this into their assessment.</p>
<p>Learner satisfaction</p>	<p>76.4%</p>	<p>60.8%</p>	<p>2023</p>	<p>This National Student Survey (NSS) positivity score data was sourced at the summary. This means the data is the provider-level public data.</p> <p>The data point is below the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms. It is worth remembering that the education provider only has post-graduate level HCPC approved provision. Which means that this data may not apply / be sourced from learners on HCPC programmes.</p> <p>When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has broadly been maintained. The visitors were made aware of this ahead of their review and factored this into their assessment.</p>

Section 3: Performance analysis and quality themes



## Portfolio submission

The education provider was asked to provide a self-reflective portfolio submission covering the broad topics referenced in the [thematic areas reviewed](#) section of this report.

The education provider's self-reflection was focused on challenges, developments, and successes related to each thematic area. They also supplied data, supporting evidence and information.

## Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided, and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their portfolio. Based on our understanding, we defined and undertook the following quality assurance activities linked to the quality themes referenced below. This allowed us to consider whether the education provider was performing well against our standards.

### Quality theme 1 – Service user and carer involvement in the education providers processes.

**Area for further exploration:** We note from the information supplied that the education provider has plans and ambitions to facilitate service user and carer (SU&C) involvement in their processes. However, they did not submit enough information about SU&C's involvement in their processes currently. Specifically, we would have expected to see details of SU&C's involvement in learner recruitment, such as in reviewing applications, attending interviews, etc. It is important that we understand how SU&C involvement works at the EP.

**Quality activities agreed to explore the theme further:** We asked the education provider to outline their plan for capturing and implementing the feedback from SU&Cs. Additionally, we asked them to supply information outlining their plan for centralising SU&C role and capturing impact. We asked the education provider to supply this through the submission of further documentation and allowed them the opportunity to supply further reflections via a narrative response. We determined that this was the best way to explore this further as it allowed the education provider the freedom to provide this information to us without being prescriptive about how they would provide this information.

**Outcomes of exploration:** The education provider supplied further information including an example of feedback they have received from SU&C's. They also submitted a narrative response where they detailed their approach to SU&C information and their plans to develop this going forward.

They stated how they are seeking to expand their SU&C feedback opportunities as part of the programme's revised structure. This will be primarily through the development of a 'conversation forum'. This event is aimed to encourage SU&Cs to reflect on elements of the education providers' approach to and their experience of

the dramatherapy provision. The minutes from these open discussions inform their ongoing review and enhancement of the programme.

They have also discussed how their feedback loops work. They have detailed how the SU&C completed feedback is shared with the learner, their supervisor and the placement host. Reflections on practice incorporated into ongoing development of the learner and (where applicable) their engagement in subsequent placement(s).

For the programme team, they discussed their 'placement in partnership' event, where SU&C feedback is shared and captured. Feedback is then incorporated into planning and activities for the following academic year. Key reflections inform quality assurance of the programme in the autumn term and any required curricular changes are proposed as modifications in the spring term.

This additional information has detailed for the visitors the system that is in place and how SU&Cs are involved in the processes. We can see how the feedback collected from SU&Cs is used to inform further development and thinking at the education provider. This is also a useful feedback mechanism to help in the development of learners and to inform learning.

## Section 4: Findings

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings for each portfolio area, focusing on the approach or approaches taken, developments, what this means for performance, and why. The section also includes a summary of risks, further areas to be followed up, and areas of good practice.

### Overall findings on performance

#### Quality theme: Institution self-reflection

#### Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Resourcing, including financial stability –**
  - The education provider has reflected that during the academic year 2022-23 they received fewer admissions / applications onto their programme than expected. They stated that the programme team predicts that this is a fluctuation rather than an emerging recruitment trend. They believe this is partly influenced by the sector-wide impact of Brexit meaning learners from the European Union (EU) are charged at the higher international student fee level. Furthermore, they noted the early 2023-24 recruitment cycle data indicates steady & consistent interest and application numbers. The programme team remains confident in their ability to recruit to sustainable targets and maintain the quality of their provision. Current learner's feedback also demonstrates the strength of their provision under the review period.
  - The education provider has reviewed their programme resourcing in part to reflect on the impact of Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic with the broader aim of developing a consistent resource allocation and budgeting model and process. This has led to the creation of a

centrally held budget and resourcing document. This details how programmes are funded, and is accessible by all programme leads

- In the autumn of 2023, they appointed a new Chief Financial Officer and commenced a Portfolio Review process to review the currency and shape of their provision, forming the basis of future planning.
  - The education provider also reports on how, during the review period, they were recognised by the Office for Students (OfS) as a World-leading specialist provider. An OfS model was awarded annual funding in recognition of this to support the faculty's specialist and intensive model of learning and teaching. This funding award followed similar recognition from the previous OfS Review of Institution-Specific Targeted Allocations, for which the school was also successful.
  - The visitors noted the detailed and full submission from the education provider. They agreed the reflections were detailed and provided a good observation of their performance in this section. The visitor found them to be performing well and want to recognise this as an area of good practice. We specifically want to recognise the level of work and details that was put into their reflections in this area.
- **Partnerships with other organisations –**
    - The education provider has reflected on challenges that have been presented in connection with Brexit. This had the potential to limit the programme's engagement with European Universities in relation to the development of Arts Therapies and potential research projects as part of schemes such as Erasmus. Their ongoing membership and work with the European Consortium of Arts Therapies Education (ECArTE) has enabled engagements and collaboration with European partners to continue despite these challenges.
    - The education provider have continued to work collaboratively with partner institutions and most of the partnerships are placement providers. These collaborations have been enhanced by the use of new software and systems (such as Microsoft Forms and Automations) and facilitated document sharing with placement hosts. The School's Placements Officer has redeveloped their database which collects, maintains, and organises key information about placements. This includes the 40 placement providers with whom learners engage during the second year of their studies.
    - The visitors found the education provider to be performing satisfactorily in this area. They have suggested that the education provider should expand on their reflections with a wider range of partners for their next performance review submission.
  - **Academic quality –**
    - The education provider has discussed the challenges presented in validating their academic quality. This centres around how their provision is not within the remit of a Teaching Excellence Framework or TEF assessment that is used across the higher education sector as an industry standard. Their non-HCPC-approved programmes, which sit within the faculty, were assessed by TEF in 2023 and achieved a silver award rating.
    - The education provider stated how most of their learners identify satisfaction with the levels of contact they receive as part of their

programme. They reflected on how this indicates a need for them to support and manage learner expectations regarding contact time. The education provider has a clear objective to sustain and, where possible, to improve satisfaction levels. This includes the need to maintain the high contact mode in place and plan to support this in future iterations of the programme.

- The reflected on how the revalidation of the programme will need to consider HCPC standards and subject benchmark statements. This will take place over 2023-24 and 2024-25 academic years, with the intention of having the revised suite of programmes validated or revalidated for delivery by September 2026.
- The education provider has discussed how they have mapped their existing processes against the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA's) External Examining Principles. This provided assurance that their practices were broadly in line with these principles and identified areas for development. This included the embedding of External Examiner (EE) processes within their new departmental structure and revisiting the training and ongoing support for appointed examiners.
- The visitors found the education provider's reflections and submission in this area to be thorough. They noted how where there are identified gaps or areas for improvement, there are clear strategies on how these would be addressed. They also positively highlighted the awarding of the silver TEF award and the maintaining of satisfactory levels of learner satisfaction. They have found the education provider to be performing well in this area.
- **Placement quality –**
  - The education provider has discussed the challenge they experienced as a result of the departure of the staff member responsible for ensuring placement quality. They explained how there is only one full-time permanent role to administer placements. The previous postholder left in February 2023, and their replacement was unable to continue in role. This resulted in the head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and programme leader providing cover while interim cover was found. A full-time permanent replacement had been appointed to the role at the time of their submission.
  - The education provider has reviewed their processes and procedures for supporting placement opportunity identification, allocation and delivery in the review period. They identified a need to develop systems for placement allocation of second-year placements, and continued monitoring and maintenance of placement partnerships with hosts.
  - They discuss how they have a database of over 40 placement hosts in the greater London area. These include NHS Trust placements, placements in schools and voluntary sector organisations. They have continued working to increase the range of client groups with whom learners work, including:
    - elderly clients with dementia,
    - NHS forensic units,
    - mental health settings,
    - mainstream and specialist provision schools,

- and refugee charities.
- A number of improvements are planned to support the process for placement allocation. This includes earlier communication with the placement providers, Developments to the Partnership in Practice Day, and Development of online resources for placement providers.
- The visitors found there to be clear reflections on the next steps needed in the developments for better placement practice. They noted there is some potential risk in only having one permanent full-time role for placements. They agreed that this is appropriate for a school of their size and that this was covered in the interim through another suitable member of staff. The visitors found the education provider to be performing satisfactorily in this area.
- **Interprofessional education –**
  - The education provider has discussed how interprofessional education (IPE) of their one profession area is facilitated primarily through placements. Learners are placed in a variety of different sectors, including the NHS, the voluntary sector and educational settings. Each of the placement providers is a partner institution. The education provider has a clear set of guidelines for the induction and the monitoring of the placement in terms of the student experience.
  - The education provider has formed a Department of Practice and is exploring the possibility of introducing IPE on an institutional basis. The mission of this new department is to strengthen the education provider's identity as an international leader for impactful education and research in the areas of contemporary theatre and performance-making. In line with their institutional strategy, the Department of Practice will become the premier destination for all those wishing to study and work in the arts to effect meaningful change in a dynamic and shifting world. At the heart of their mission is a genuine desire to do what is best their learners and facilitate a truly transformative teaching and learning experience. This would likely involve collaboration with the MA Applied Theatre programme. They are also working with Nordoff Robbins (HCPC-approved programme provider) to establish links with their music therapy programme for cross-programme IPE. This is being developed to be introduced in this academic year (2023-24) and will be reflected in their next performance review.
  - Through clarification, the education provider provided further information on how IPE is facilitated across their provision. They detailed how approximately 40% of their placement providers provide opportunities for learners to work in teams with arts therapists in multi- and / or interdisciplinary organisations. During the redevelopment and revalidation of the programme (as part of their wider Portfolio Review), they will be identifying and structuring opportunities to expand on. They shall also consider the kinds of exposure other AHP learners receive, including through guest lectures.
  - The visitors welcome the expansion in the information provided through the point of clarification. The visitors are satisfied with the education

providers' performance in this area, finding them to be performing satisfactorily.

- **Service users and carers –**

- The education provider reflected on how an ongoing dialogic relationship with service users is at the core of the aromatherapy approach to clinical dramatherapy practice in that the approach is client-led. Their programme team are reviewing how best to develop our existing processes and procedures. This includes assessments, applied work and evaluations all work from the principle of giving agency and voice to the client. This becomes more challenging when clients are not able to communicate consent verbally.
- The education provider has developed and enhanced their Partnership in Practice (PIP) day over the review period. This session included a performance and panel with service users. Here, the staff of the programme and learners, talk with service users about their performance, as well as what they found helpful or not in the dramatherapy process. This event was a success they reflect.
- The visitors agreed the education provider's reflections show that they are developing well in this area. However, more information is needed to demonstrate how SU&C involvement has developed and the impact that it has had on their ongoing developments. From the information reviewed in their submission, the education provider has plans and ambitions for deepening service user and carer involvement (SU&C). However, we do not gain a clear sense of SU&C's involvement in their processes or how this is planned to develop going forward. It is important we understand how SU&C involvement works at the education provider. We therefore explored this further via quality theme [one](#).
- Following the quality theme, the visitors had no further concerns. The education provider detailed how SU&C feedback is used to develop their internal processes and inform learners' progression. The visitors are satisfied with their response and found the education provider performing satisfactorily in this area.

- **Equality and diversity –**

- The education provider has stated that they are committed to the meaningful practice of equality and diversity, based on a foundation of respect and equity. They reflect that a number of activities have taken place at the institution and programme level to support them in delivering on this commitment. This is an ongoing process, requiring consultation with staff and learners as well as alumni to enable meaningful dialogue. Examples of activities include:
  - Mandatory inclusivity and anti-racism training for all staff and learners;
  - Mandatory safeguarding training for staff
  - Development of the curriculum in the Drama and Movement Therapy Practice unit (Sesame in Context), which teaches race theory.
  - The establishment of clearer guidelines for a range of assessments which consider both the clinical dramatherapy competencies and scholarship.

- The education provider has discussed how programme curriculum and pedagogic developments continue to align with institutional strategies for equality and diversity.
- The visitors were satisfied with the education providers' reflections in this area and are performing well. They found it helpful to see the training implementation that is planned. This helped them to understand that changes to the local programmes and development will come from developments with institutional strategies. They recommend that the education provider reflect on their internal programme review. Then provide feedback on how the work of curriculum development is going as part of their next performance review.
- **Horizon scanning –**
  - The education provider stated they continuously reflect on their approved programme's position within their portfolio and as part of wider dramatherapy training in the UK. Through this they have identified long-term challenges which can be managed through their existing management structure. These challenges include:
    - ensuring support is in place to maintain recruitment and enrolment numbers;
    - further embedding of procedures regarding Fitness to Practice alongside other institutional policies;
    - enhancing the dialogue between the professional association of the British Association of Dramatherapists (BADth) and the HCPC to consider the ongoing review and development of standards;
    - addressing prospective learner barriers to accessing the programme due to finances. They consider how they can minimise financial concerns as a deterrent to engaging in the programme.
  - The education provider has also reflected on changes they have made to their academic management and structure, and also a refocusing of their strategic objectives. These changes included the moving of the approved MA Drama and Movement Therapy programme to the Department of Practice. The aim of positioning of the programme here is to strengthen it by having a clearer focus on forms of social engagement through the arts. By moving to this programme, they aim to keep the staff-to-learner ratio consistent or lower if possible, by offering fixed-term contracts to visiting staff. This is planned to improve the overall learner experience. They are also recruiting additional administrators to decrease the overall administrative burden on staff.
  - The visitors are satisfied with the education provider's performance in this section and have identified no risks of their provision.

**Risks identified which may impact on performance:** None

**Outstanding issues for follow up:** We noted from the education provider submission that they are currently partaking in an internal programme review. We are mindful of this in setting our ongoing monitoring period. We recommend that the education provider reflect on their internal programme review and then provide

feedback on how the work of curriculum development is going as part of their next performance review.

Quality theme: Thematic reflection

**Findings of the assessment panel:**

- **Embedding the revised Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) –**
  - The education provider has discussed how they have one approved programme, meaning their activities for embedding the revised SOPs are focused on one professional area. They also have no intentions to expand their provision with additional programmes. The education provider has discussed how they refocused some sessions regarding the specific standard of understanding safeguarding.
  - Furthermore, they are developing a 'Fitness to Practice' policy. This is in response to many of the new standards which concern students' self-care and monitoring of personal learning. Additionally, support as well as the explicit standard of 2.13. This policy will be presented to the School's Academic Board in the spring term of 2024 for implementation from 2024-25. This document will sit alongside their existing procedures, including the learner's code of conduct and the equality and diversity procedures. The Fitness to Practice document will respond specifically to the professional circumstances of the dramatherapy learners. This will set out clear procedures and guidelines for the processing of concerns about a learner's fitness to practice (as distinct to fitness to study).
  - Through clarification, the education provider detailed how, during the review period, learners have been considered under their Health, Wellbeing and Support for Study Procedures. The changes are being implemented through scrutiny of the proposed Fitness to Practice policy via their Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. This will be prior to submission for approval at the School's Academic Board in July 2024 to enable implementation in 2024-25.
  - They also work with their partner placement host organisations to encourage Service User & Carer engagement and will continue to do so. This will be monitored in respect of the SOP to centralise the service users.
  - The visitors noted the education provider's reflections in this area and welcomed their expansions via points of clarification. They have found the education provider to be performing satisfactorily in this area.
- **Learning and developments from the COVID-19 pandemic –**
  - The education provider has discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic (the pandemic) had a significant impact on the normal running of their provision. This is in part due to the nature of their provision being normally predicated on high-contact experiential learning. The pandemic necessitated adjustments in delivery to ensure they could continue to deliver a quality experience to learners. The academic year 2021-22 was primarily delivered in two 'bubbles' to accommodate social distancing, which changed the nature of in-person learning. They were also required to make concessions for the clinical hours learners



were required to evidence due to the impact of the pandemic in placement settings.

- The External Examiner (EE) confirmed the standards of their assessment and, by extension, the standard of learner outcomes during this time. After the pandemic, they worked with programme teams to reflect on what worked well and what was less successful from their pivoted pandemic delivery. This aimed to inform the development of future curricula and support mechanisms.
- The education provider has discussed how they engaged with both staff and learners and look to deliver the programme through alternative modes. They made use of platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams to facilitate both delivery and support where possible. As part of their Portfolio Review, departments and course teams were encouraged to identify modules or particular sessions which may be better suited to online delivery. The objective is to maintain high contact and explore alternative modes for this.
- The visitors found there to be a thorough reflection on the challenges faced and the impact this had on how the education provider taught during this time. They noted how these challenges may be future opportunities for development in how aspects of the programme can be delivered in the future. They have found the education provider to be performing well in this area.
- **Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods –**
  - The education provider has discussed how they are developing their policies with respect to artificial intelligence. There is a particular focus on potential academic misconduct and AI-generated scholarship. An AI Working Group was convened to review this area. This was chaired by their Director of Learning, Teaching, and Inclusion, to develop formative guidance for learners on proper and fair use of AI to support learning. They have agreed that the use of AI to generate assessment submissions is considered an academic offence the beneficial uses of AI to support learning and academic practices in institutional and disciplinary contexts will be the focus of the working group.
  - The programme team are exploring opportunities to collaborate and share learning with their colleagues in music therapy. New opportunities to look at interprofessional learning and specifically advances in music therapy and digital technologies. This is aimed to enhance opportunities for interprofessional learning for staff and learners, but particularly to explore advances in music therapy related to digital technologies.
  - Through clarification, the education provider explained how they do not currently employ technology as part of their approach to simulated learning. This is something the course team do keep under review and will consider going forward.
  - The visitors noted their reflections on this area and welcomed the expansions made. They found no risk to the overall provision and found the education provider to be performing satisfactorily in this area.
- **Apprenticeships in England –**

- The education provider does not run any apprenticeship-styled programme and is not considering doing so in the future. They remain aware and mindful of apprenticeships and shall continue to consider this as part of future strategic planning.
- The visitors acknowledged their reflections and the explanation for not running apprenticeship programmes.

**Risks identified which may impact on performance:** None

**Outstanding issues for follow up:** None

Quality theme: Sector body assessment reflection

**Findings of the assessment panel:**

- **Assessments against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education –**
  - The education provider has discussed how they have been subject to a sector-wide assessment during the review period. They have joined the Quality Assurance membership scheme during the 2022-23 academic year. They will participate in the planned review and redevelopment of the Quality Code during the 2023-24 academic year.
  - The education provider also stated how their Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement was a contributing author and editor of the advice and guidance on ‘Course Design and Development’ for the current iteration of the code.
  - The visitors noted the education provider’s reflection in this section and their plans for future engagement. They were satisfied with their performance in this area and wanted to recognise their efforts in this area as an area of good practice. They have highlighted their involvement with the Quality Assurance membership scheme and their involvement in authoring and editing the code’s scheme as good practice.
- **Office for Students (OfS) –**
  - The education provider has reflected on the challenges associated with the changing OfS conditions. This includes retaining a record of learner's work up to five years after their completion of the programme. They noted how this requirement is easier for written work but more complicated for work such as the assessment of practice on placement or the presentations given for viva.
  - They have also been engaging with the Academic Registrar’s Council Assessment Practitioner Group. This is part of a Task and Finish Group set up by the Office for Students to identify the challenges which apply to their accredited and wider provision.
  - The visitors are satisfied with their reflections and the work undertaken since their last review. They agreed the education provider is performing well in this area.
- **Other professional regulators / professional bodies –**
  - The education provider has stated how their programme leader for the approved programme continues to play an active role in dramatherapy professional bodies. This includes working on the creation of a revised document outlining ‘Curriculum guidelines for approved dramatherapy

training programmes in the UK', overseen by the executive of the BADth.

- The education provider is also engaged on a research project generated by the European Consortium of Arts Therapies Education (ECArTE). This is exploring the assessment of tacit and embodied knowledge in the training of arts therapists.
- The visitors found the reflections in this area to be limited. But did not find this to raise a risk and are satisfied with these and the work undertaken since their last review.

**Risks identified which may impact on performance:** None

**Outstanding issues for follow up:** None

Quality theme: Profession specific reflection

**Findings of the assessment panel:**

- **Curriculum development –**

- The education provider has discussed how their programme team has reflected on the revised SOPs in relation to their existing curriculum. They have identified so far how the SOPs are already present within the existing curriculum and delivery of the programme. They reflect that particular strengths include clinical competency skills, understanding client capacity, equality and agency. Active implementation of the SOPs is aligned with the degree's methodology and the programme delivery.
- The SOPs review was the focus of a 2-day training event they held. This discusses addressed pedagogy and curriculum content, which teaches critical reflection, positioning and questions of ontology and epistemology. They have also introduced a revised bibliography which introduces a more diverse reading/teaching base.
- The education provider reflected on the changes they made for the 2023-24 academic year. This includes changes to the end of unit assessment which now asks learners to write a longer assignment, integrating and referencing both analytical and developmental psychology. Going forward, they will review learner outcomes with the revised assessment to ensure that this results in the desired improvement in learners' reflections across both areas. It is retained in the programme post-Portfolio Review.
- The visitors noted their reflections on the internal review they have undertaken on the SOPs, the training event, benchmark statements and specific changes to the programme. They found these useful for their assessment and the education provider to be performing well in this area.

- **Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance –**

- The education provider has discussed the BADth training subcommittee who had provided revised curriculum guidance which was published in March 2023. Revisions and enhancement to this guidance were informed by sector-wide engagement and consultation. There was a particular focus on decolonisation of the curriculum and

equality, diversity and inclusion. The education provider has reflected on how they will draw on this guidance and reflect on any curriculum developments required as part of their portfolio review.

- The visitors noted the education providers' reflections in this section and their plans going forward. The visitors found them to be performing satisfactorily in this area.
- **Capacity of practice-based learning (programme / profession level) –**
  - The education provider discussed how they have continued to develop their systems for placement administration and allocation. They reflected on how this has included a particular focus on second-year apprenticeships and independent project placements. Their internal systems to administer these placements have developed in line with the development role of the Placements Officer and systems for monitoring and dialoguing with placement providers.
  - The education provider also maintains a database of placement providers that continues to grow with (contextually) high numbers of potential placement providers contacting them with a view to learners working on placement.
  - The visitors noted the education providers' reflections in this section and their plans going forward. The visitors found them to be performing satisfactorily in this area with no risks to placement capacity being identified.

**Risks identified which may impact on performance:** None

**Outstanding issues for follow up:** None

Quality theme: Stakeholder feedback and actions

**Findings of the assessment panel:**

- **Learners –**
  - The education provider has discussed how in the period since their last Performance Review, they have had two complaints progressed to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) by one individual. One of these was in response to the findings of an academic appeal and was subsequently withdrawn by the learner. The second of these was returned by the OIA as 'not justified'. The education provider has been open and transparent about this process and will continue to engage with the OIA as required, responding to any outcomes in due course.
  - The education provider has discussed the termly learner survey they previously had in place. This is the practice of using this survey was paused since their last performance review due to low levels of uptake. They have taken this time to reflect on supporting programme and unit-level engagement with surveys. This has resulted in a response rates on the Post Graduate Taught Education Survey (PTES) of 49% (2022) and 46% (2023). This compares favourably with the sector which sees a 30-40% response rate as positive for internal surveys and those delivered by 'Advance HE'. They are now introducing a new termly survey for all taught learners from the autumn term of 2023-24 and working on publishing clearer information for learners.

- They also provide different forums for learners to share their feedback with staff such as the department-wide forum. This has seen the introduction of department forums where all learners are invited to discuss their experience with heads of department. They hold programme committee meetings for the postgraduate applied programme cluster during academic years 2021-22 and 2022-23. These provide opportunities for learner representatives to share feedback on behalf of their cohorts with learners on other programme and their programme Leaders. The main issues identified through these are related to infrastructure such as IT, facilities and estates, and the library. These have also enabled consideration of matters of inclusion around anti-racism and other initiatives.
- These meetings will continue and sit alongside surveys and department forums to provide open opportunities for learner feedback. They keep the effectiveness of groups such as the programme committees under review, which continues as they embed new departmental structures.
- The visitors noted the education providers' reflections in this section and their plans going forward. The visitors found them to be performing well in this area, with a positive point regarding the high levels of PTES engagement.
- **Practice placement educators –**
  - The education provider discussed how ongoing communication with placement providers occurs through established training days (PIP Day) and regular contact with the placement managers. This training day and ongoing dialogue with placement providers enables them to be responsive to placement educators. They also state that no significant issues have been raised during the review period.,
  - They have also undertaken a consultation project with placement supervisors and will maintain this level of dialogue going forward. They will continue to keep under review their mechanisms for receiving feedback from placement educators.
  - The visitors noted the education providers' reflections in this section and their plans going forward. The visitors found them to be performing satisfactorily in this area. They highlighted that a more structured way to receive feedback from placement providers might be useful to consider for future reviews.
- **External examiners –**
  - The education provider discussed how their External Examiner (EE) has expressed a desire to review a larger sample of work. The education provider explained how they continue to send a sample to their EE. They were considering the appointment of a new EE at the time of their submission. They confirmed they will discuss this feedback and continue to keep under review their agreed approach to sampling on their programme.
  - The education provider has discussed how judgments and outcomes from their external examiner reporting process for 2021-22 and 2022-23 generally have positive summative conclusions. This provides assurance in their maintenance of academic standards, the conduct

and outcomes of assessment processes, and the rigour and appropriateness of existing practice.

- The education provider is in the process of starting their portfolio review. They have described how they will take into consideration the findings and comments from external examiners. In doing so they aim to retain the efficacy and utility of assessment design and implementation.
- Through clarification, the education provider submitted further information and context on their process for approving new EE's. They described how nominations are received using a standard form. It requires candidates to demonstrate their academic and professional experience and other information relevant to their appointment. This is aimed at reviewing evidence of their ability to confirm the parity of academic standards of the programme with Masters-level study.
- The visitors noted the education providers' reflections in this section and their plans going forward. The visitors welcomed the expansion in information achieved through the point of clarification that helped them complete their assessment. The visitors found them to be performing satisfactorily in this area.

**Risks identified which may impact on performance:** None

**Outstanding issues for follow up:** None

#### Data and reflections

#### **Findings of the assessment panel:**

- **Learner non continuation:**
  - The education provider discussed how they continue to employ their existing Health, Wellbeing and Support for Study procedures for learners. They state this, enables timely and holistic engagement directly with learners. This is to ensure appropriate support mechanisms are in place or established where learners experience difficulties during their studies.
  - The visitors noted the education providers' reflections in this section and found them to be performing satisfactorily.
- **Outcomes for those who complete programmes:**
  - The education provider reflected that their learner numbers are small, and the nature of the sectors graduates enter are often project-based and funding-dependent. This can result in significant impacts from the wider political and economic factors when learners are seeking to enter sectors directly related to their fields of study. However, they have reported a 93% outcome for graduates of the programme. This demonstrates the preparedness of their learners upon completion of their programmes as well as the currency of our programme design, delivery and assessment.
  - The visitors noted how their reflection shares the challenges they have around collecting thorough data in this area. But also noted their near benchmark percentage as a success and found the education provider to be performing satisfactorily in this area.

- **Learner satisfaction:**
  - The education provider has discussed how the OfS National Student Survey (NSS) used across HCPC processes is out of scope for them as it only applies to undergraduate learners. They instead work with the PTES and have reported an 89.5% level of overall satisfaction in 2023 which rose to 95% in 2023.
  - They reflected that in the last two years, their programme levels of satisfaction have exceeded the institutional average. They equate some of success as a result of improvements that are School-wide initiatives such as investment in IT infrastructure and a more streamlined timetabling process. Others such as the implementation of Fitness to Practice regulations and procedures – relate more directly to the programme team. The programme leader is working closely with the Academic Registrar and Head of Department (Practice) to finalise and implement the necessary changes for 2024.
  - The visitors noted the education providers' reflections in this section and their plans for development going forward. The strong PTES scores are commendable, and the visitors found the education provider to be performing satisfactorily in this area.
- **Programme level data:**
  - The education provider has discussed how their staff-to-learner ratio has continued and marginally improved compared to the previous period. It currently stands as one member of staff to six learners (1:6). This demonstrates its ongoing commitment to supporting the effective delivery of the programme. They have now developed a business intelligence model which is designed to ensure that staffing remains commensurate with learners' numbers and programme needs. They also review the appointment and use of visiting lecturers to identify where recurring engagement may be better suited to permanent appointments.
  - The visitors are satisfied with the education providers' performance in this area. They noted how the education provider is reflecting on the business intelligence model, which is there to ensure staffing remains at appropriate levels, and recommend they continue to do so.

**Proposal for supplying data points to the HCPC:** The education provider has expressed an interest in working with the HCPC to establish data points that will be useable in our processes. This work continues, and we should, by their next performance review, have useable data points in place that can be considered in determining future ongoing monitoring periods. We acknowledge the annual receipt of data is required to consider a longer than two-year ongoing monitoring period, and we should be in a position to consider this at their next review (2025-26).

**Risks identified which may impact on performance:** None

**Outstanding issues for follow up:** None

Section 5: Issues identified for further review

This section summarises any areas which require further follow-up through a separate quality assurance process (the approval or focused review process).

## **Referrals to next scheduled performance review**

### Education providers internal programme review

**Summary of issue:** We noted from the education provider submission that they are currently partaking in an internal programme review. We are mindful of this in setting our ongoing monitoring period. We recommend that the education provider reflect on their internal programme review and then provide feedback on how the work of curriculum development is going as part of their next performance review.

## **Section 6: Decision on performance review outcomes**

### **Assessment panel recommendation**

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that:

- The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2025-26 academic year
- The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out in accordance with the details contained in section 5 of this report

### **Reason for next engagement recommendation**

- Internal stakeholder engagement
  - The education provider engages with a range of stakeholders with quality assurance and enhancement in mind. Specific groups engaged by the education provider include learners, service users, practice educators, partner organisations and external examiners.
- External input into quality assurance and enhancement
  - The education provider continues to engage with one professional body this being the BADth. They consider professional body findings in improving their provision.
  - The education provider did not engage with any other professional or system regulator(s) as they are not applicable to the nature of their provision.
- Data supply
  - Through this review, the education provider established how they will supply quality and performance data points which are equivalent to those in external supplies available for other organisations. A regular supply of this data will enable us to actively monitor changes to key performance areas within the review period. The annual receipt of this data will enable us to consider a longer than two-year ongoing monitoring period at their next performance review.
- What the data is telling us:
  - From data points considered and reflections through the process, the education provider considers data in their quality assurance and enhancement processes and acts on data to inform positive change.



- In summary, the reason for the recommendation of a two-year monitoring period is:
  - We are recommending an ongoing monitoring period of two years so that the area of ongoing development surrounding the programme review can be enacted and concluded. This will allow time for reflections and data on these areas to be collected.
  - We shall be able to work with the education provider during the ongoing monitoring period to supply us with the required data. The annual receipt of this data will enable the visitors at their next performance review to consider a longer ongoing monitoring period.

### **Education and Training Committee decision**

Education and Training Committee considered the assessment panel's recommendations and the findings which support these. The education provider was also provided with the opportunity to submit any observation they had on the conclusions reached.

Based on all information presented to them, the Committee decided that:

- The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2025-26 academic year.
- The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out as detailed in section 5 and reflected on at their next performance review.

**Reason for this decision:** The Panel agreed with the visitors' recommended monitoring period for the reasons noted in the report. The panel recommended that the education provider and its programmes next engage with the performance review process within the stated timeframe.

## Appendix 1 – summary report

If the education provider does not provide observations, only this summary report (rather than the whole report) will be provided to the Education and Training Committee (Panel) to enable their decision on the next steps for the provider. The lead visitors confirm this is an accurate summary of their recommendation (including their reasons) and any referrals.

Education provider	Case reference	Lead visitors	Review period recommendation	Reason for recommendation	Referrals
The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama	CAS-01370-L6M8M7	Rosie Axon Robert Mackinnon	2 years	<p>We are recommending 2 two-year ongoing monitoring period in accordance with current guidance.</p> <p>We are recommending an ongoing monitoring period of two years so that the area of ongoing development surrounding the programme review can be enacted and concluded. This will allow time for reflections and data on these areas to be collected.</p> <p>We shall be able to work with the education provider during the ongoing monitoring period to supply us with the required data. The annual receipt of this data will enable the visitors at their next performance review to</p>	<p>Education providers internal programme review:</p> <p>We noted from the education provider submission that they are currently partaking in an internal programme review. We are mindful of this in setting our ongoing monitoring period. We recommend that the education provider reflect on their internal programme review and then provide feedback on how the work of curriculum development is going as part of their next performance review.</p>

				consider a longer ongoing monitoring period.	
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Appendix 2 – list of open programmes at this institution

<b>Name</b>	<b>Mode of study</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Modality</b>	<b>Annotation</b>	<b>First intake date</b>
MA Drama and Movement Therapy	FT (Full time)	Arts therapist	Drama therapy		01/10/2016