



Designated Quality Body  
in England

# Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students

## Central School of Ballet



### Review Report

February 2022

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## Summary of findings and reasons

Ref	Core practice	Outcome	Confidence	Summary of reasons
S1	The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks.	Met	High	<p>From the evidence seen, the assessment team considers that the standards set for the provider's courses are in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework. The assessment team also considers that standards described in the approved programme documentation are set at levels that are consistent with these sector-recognised standards and the provider's academic regulations and policies should ensure that standards are maintained appropriately.</p> <p>The assessment team considers that, based on the evidence scrutinised, the standards that will be achieved by the provider's students are expected to be in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework. The assessment team also considers that the provider's academic regulations and policies will ensure that these standards are maintained. The assessment team considers that staff fully understand the provider's approach to maintaining these standards and that the evidence seen demonstrates they are committed to implementing this approach.</p> <p>The School ensures that the threshold standards for the qualifications it delivers are consistent with relevant national qualifications' frameworks. Approved programme and module documents for the Foundation degree, BA(Hons) and MA/PGDip contain details of credit volumes for modules, levels and programmes, and learning outcomes for each qualification, which are consistent with those described in the FHEQs. The School effectively applies the academic framework and regulations of its validating university to ensure standards. In addition, the School has developed its own quality assurance manual and guidance on assessment and moderation to implement its responsibilities for assessment design, marking, moderation and the</p>

				<p>provision of feedback to students. The sample of student assessed work, external examiner reports and the records of examination boards confirm that threshold standards are consistent with the FHEQ, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where the relevant threshold standards have been met.</p> <p>There are clearly assigned responsibilities for maintaining standards within the School's academic governance framework. The School's robust annual monitoring process demonstrates that staff understand their responsibilities for maintaining standards leading to qualifications of the University. The annual monitoring process enables staff to consider external examiner feedback and recommendations and informs actions to ensure the maintenance of academic standards. Therefore, based on its scrutiny of the evidence provided, the assessment team concludes that this Core practice is met.</p> <p>In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of regulations, policies, external examiner and monitoring reports as well as assessed student work and spoke to staff at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.</p>
S2	The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.	Met	High	<p>Based on the evidence presented, the assessment team determined that the standards set for students to achieve beyond the threshold on the provider's courses are reasonably comparable with those set by other UK providers. The assessment team considered that the standards described in the approved programme documentation and in the provider's academic regulations and policies should ensure that such standards are maintained appropriately.</p> <p>The School ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. The standards described in approved course documentation beyond the threshold level for the programmes which</p>

				<p>the School delivers are reasonably comparable with those in other UK providers. There are clear and comprehensive assessment regulations, and the School's approach to assessment design and classification of student achievement, including the use of grade bands and grading criteria, forms a sound basis for the maintenance of standards of the qualifications it delivers. The sample of student written and performance assessed coursework confirms that marks are appropriately arrived at through the application of the School's arrangements for marking. External examiners confirm that standards beyond the threshold level are reasonably comparable with those in other UK providers, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where those standards have been met.</p> <p>The School's approach to maintaining comparable standards through the oversight of the Academic Board, programme monitoring arrangements, the external examiner system, and the operation of Boards of Examiners is robust and evidence based. Students understand what is required to reach standards beyond the threshold and receive verbal and written feedback to assist their understanding of assessment and what they need to do to achieve beyond the threshold level. Staff understanding of the School's approach to maintaining comparable standards was evident in meetings with the assessment team and in the conduct of meetings of the Academic Board. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.</p> <p>In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of policies, handbooks, course documentation, external examiner and monitoring reports as well as assessed student work and spoke to staff at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.</p>
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S3	Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.	Met	High	<p>The School has effective arrangements in place to ensure standards of awards are credible and secure, irrespective of where or how courses are delivered, or who delivers them. The partnership agreement with the University is clear and detailed and staff understand their responsibilities in maintaining academic standards within the overall framework and regulatory requirement of the University. The School has a good track record of partnership working with the University and complies with the University's regulatory and quality assurance requirements to maintain high academic standards. This is confirmed by external examiner reports and the assessment team's consideration of the random sample of assessed student work, and the operation of assessment and marking in accordance with University requirements. The assessment team also found that the School's internal oversight arrangements, the detailed and thorough annual monitoring and periodic review processes, and regular meetings with the University-appointed Academic School Liaison Officers provide sound evidence of the School working in accordance with its partnership agreement with the University to ensure that academic standards are secure. The assessment team therefore concludes that this Core practice is met.</p> <p>In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of agreements, minutes of meetings, external examiner and monitoring reports as well as assessed student work and spoke to staff at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.</p>
S4	The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.	Met	High	<p>The School uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent. There are clear policies for the use of external expertise in initial programme approval, periodic review and maintaining academic standards. The regulations and processes for assessment and classification described in programme documentation are transparent, assessment methods are varied and appropriate to test students' achievement of the learning outcomes being assessed, with clear assessment and</p>

				<p>grading criteria to ensure consistency and reliability.</p> <p>Assessed student work confirms that assessment and classification are conducted in accordance with the University's regulations and the processes set out in the School's assessment and moderation procedures. External examiners' reports provide further evidence and positive feedback on the consistent application of assessment regulations and processes for marking, moderation and classification, and confirm that the assessment and classification processes are reliable, fair and transparent. Staff understand the requirement for the use of external expertise, and the School responds appropriately to external examiner feedback.</p> <p>The most recent periodic review of the School's Foundation degree, BA(Hons), and MA/PGDip undertaken in 2017 with the University in accordance with their regulations demonstrates the effective use of external experts with external peer review being integral to the panel process and deliberations. Students were positive about the support provided by staff to enable them to understand the process of assessment and classification. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.</p> <p>In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of handbooks, policies, minutes of meetings external examiner and monitoring reports as well as assessed student work and spoke to staff and students at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.</p>
Q1	The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.	Met	High	The assessment team concludes that the School has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system because it manages its admissions process in accordance with its published Admissions Policy. Admissions decisions are made in line with its published entry and audition criteria and processes are easily accessible to applicants on the School's website. The School has a set of clear policies and procedures in place to manage its admissions process. At present the

			<p>School is led by the Admissions Policy of CDD - the Conservatoire. Its own policy which is closely modelled on that of CDD will be implemented from September 2022.</p> <p>The admissions requirements set out in the approved programme documentation are consistent with the Admissions Policy.</p> <p>The School manages its relationship with the Japanese overseas agent for the provision of audition space and audition support staff in an appropriate manner through a formal agreement.</p> <p>Information for applicants is transparent, accessible and fit for purpose. This is because comprehensive information about the programmes, entry requirements, audition arrangements and selection criteria, and admissions appeals and complaints are readily available and accessible to all applicants on the website and applicants are well supported during the admissions process.</p> <p>Staff spoke knowledgably about the admissions process, their role in it and how the selection process worked in practice. Staff involved in the admissions process are adequately skilled and supported to fulfil their role. Students confirmed they had access to all the information, advice, support and guidance they required during the admissions process and tend to agree that the admissions process is reliable, fair and inclusive.</p> <p>Until September 2021 the School did not keep full records of admissions decisions which are largely based on audition performance. However, admissions records from the latest recruitment round demonstrate that this situation has changed, and admissions decisions are now fully documented. Admissions records from this period show that the School follows the Admissions Policy and rigorously and consistently applies the specified selection criteria leading the assessment team to conclude that the School makes reliable, fair and inclusive admissions decisions and that this Core</p>
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				<p>practice is met.</p> <p>In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of the School's current and future policies in relation to admissions and widening participation, as well as speaking with staff and students from the School. Recent positive changes to the management of admissions provide supportive evidence on the future approach to admissions and therefore the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgment.</p>
Q2	The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.	Met	High	<p>The School complies with the requirements of the University's Code of Practice which provides an appropriate framework which enables the design and delivery of high-quality courses. In addition, the School demonstrates that it has a robust and credible approach for designing and delivering high-quality courses by utilising its design and delivery processes in its Quality Manual which are confirmed in its annual monitoring reports and positive outcome of the recent periodic review with the University. Approved course documentation indicates that the teaching, learning, and assessment design enables students to meet and demonstrate the intended learning outcomes. External examiner reports confirm that courses are high quality.</p> <p>The assessment team concluded through its observations of teaching and learning that staff demonstrate their clear objectives, good planning and organisation, appropriate content, effective use of resources, and stimulating delivery that engages students. Staff were able to articulate what high quality means in the context of the provider. Students regard their courses as being of high quality and agreed that there are sufficient appropriately skilled and qualified staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.</p> <p>In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of the School's strategies and policies relating to the design and delivery of courses, external examiner and monitoring reports as well as assessed student work and spoke to staff at the</p>

				School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.
Q3	The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.	Met	High	<p>The School has robust and credible approaches for the recruitment, appointment, induction and support of sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff. The School demonstrated this through its comprehensive and clear recruitment policy supported by appropriate job descriptions and appointments. All new starters are provided with a comprehensive induction and all teaching staff received start of the year training on regulations and academic practice. Ongoing staff development is managed and monitored by relevant course teams and informed by strategic aims. Plans for staff development are embedded within the School's key strategies and action plans.</p> <p>The assessment team concluded that there are a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience which was also confirmed by the CDD. External examiners' reports noted positively the skills of the teaching staff. The assessment team confirmed that staff sampled and/or met by the team have been recruited, appointed, inducted and supported according to the provider's regulations or policies. This conclusion is reinforced by the assessment team's direct observations of a sample of classes where tutors demonstrated their skills and expertise. The assessment team further concluded that students agree that there are sufficient appropriately skilled and qualified staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience. The assessment team concludes that the Core practice is met.</p> <p>In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of the School's strategies and policies relating to the recruitment and development of staff, action plans and training schedules as well as observation of lessons and spoke to staff at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.</p>

Q4	The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.	Met	High	<p>The assessment team found that the School has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience. This is because students have access to new purpose-built facilities following the recent move to a new location which includes performance and practice-related facilities, studios, injury and fitness suites. Dance studios and teaching areas are well equipped and appropriate for the School's subject provision. Learning resources include a well-stocked dance-specific library and the virtual learning environment which is used for resource provision, information sharing and communication. The School has a range of student support services with a strong focus on health and wellbeing services which is appropriate for the nature of the School's provision.</p> <p>The School's plans for facilities, learning resources and support services are robust and credible. This is because there is sufficient oversight of facilities and learning resources with regular monitoring of resources at institutional level by the Academic Board and the learning and Teaching Committee. The School makes effective use of a range of mechanisms such as annual programme monitoring and student feedback to ensure facilities, learning resources and student support services continue to contribute to delivering a high-quality academic experience. The School's Strategic Plan and its Estates are demonstrably linked to the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes.</p> <p>Students tend to regard the facilities, learning resources and support services as sufficient, high-quality and supporting their learning. The majority of students feel well supported to achieve academic and professional success and agree that the medical, pastoral and wellbeing support available at the School meets their needs.</p> <p>The School has a sufficient number of support staff for the size of its higher education student body. They are appropriately professionally qualified and skilled. Responsibilities of staff for student support are</p>
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				<p>clearly defined in role profiles and well understood by staff. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.</p> <p>In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of the School's strategies and policies relating to the resources and facilities at the School, student feedback and meeting minutes, as well as a tour of the School's campus and spoke to staff at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.</p>
Q5	The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.	Met	High	<p>The assessment team concludes that the School actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. This is because its plan to engage students is credible and robust. The School ensures that through the student representative system students can contribute effectively to the enhancement of their learning experience through membership of key academic committees like the Academic Board and joint ownership of the agenda-setting process of the Student Voice Forum. Student representatives are well prepared for their role through training and ongoing support by the Learning and Development Manager and the Student Liaison Governor. Individually, students have the opportunity to provide feedback on their learning experience through formal (internal and external) student surveys which are routinely analysed by the School, as well as informal feedback to staff, and action is taken where required.</p> <p>The School has a clear and effective approach to engaging students which is understood by students who report that the student representative system is effective. Student representatives make meaningful contributions at Academic Board and the Student Voice Forum which discusses important aspects of their learning experience. Their feedback is taken seriously and acted upon by the School. Examples of the School making changes to the student learning experience show the positive impact student feedback has had in the process. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that</p>

				<p>the Core practice is met.</p> <p>In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of the School committees' terms of reference and minutes where feedback is considered, monitoring reports and survey results and feedback and spoke to staff and students at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.</p>
Q6	The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.	Met	High	<p>The assessment team concludes that the School implements CDD's policies and procedures that currently govern complaints, including those on sexual misconduct and harassment, in a rigorous manner. Examples of complaints scrutinised have been dealt with according to the published procedures and outcomes are fair and timely.</p> <p>The School has credible and robust plans for developing and operating fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints once its relationship with CDD ends. The procedures it has developed to manage complaints are clear with transparent responsibilities and reasonable timescales for complaint resolution articulated. The procedures are likely to lead to fair and timely outcomes for students. Staff were able to articulate the School's approach to complaints and appeals well.</p> <p>There is clear and accessible information for appellants and complainants in course and general student handbooks. Students confirmed that information is easily available and displayed an understanding of who to contact for guidance and advice on the processes. They did not raise any concerns about the fairness, transparency or accessibility of the procedures, or their application. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.</p> <p>In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of new and current policies relating to complaints, approaches to annual monitoring of complaints, an</p>

				example of handling a complaint under the Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Related Behaviours Policy, and spoke with staff and students at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.
Q8	Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.	Met	High	<p>Where the School works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them. This is because it has clear and comprehensive policies that support its partnership agreement with the School's validating University. There are also robust and credible plans for the management of its responsibilities in supporting the above agreement, for example, in ensuring the School's Quality Handbook is in line with the University's Code of Practice for Quality Assurance. Where the School works with venues in the delivery of its Level 6 National Tour module there are robust and credible plans in place to ensure a high-quality academic experience for students. Students also confirmed their positive experience of this module. External examiner reports and reports from University's liaison officer and most recent periodic review confirm that the academic experience is high quality. Staff from the School understand their responsibilities for quality. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.</p> <p>In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of processes relating to the working of partnerships, external examiners and annual monitoring reports, risk assessments and spoke with staff and students at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.</p>
Q9	The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.	Met	High	The School supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. This is because it has robust and credible plans and policies to support students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. While support is provided for

				<p>all students, there are specific interventions for students under 18, international students, and students with additional learning needs to support them to achieve in the academic and technical components of their course. Staff understand their roles in providing support to students, and students and external examiners are complimentary about the approach the school takes.</p> <p>The School facilitates successful academic and professional outcomes through the design of its courses, ensuring that students have the necessary technical skills to succeed in their chosen dance discipline and have additional skills useful to their chosen profession. Assessed student work demonstrates that students are given comprehensive, developmental, and timely feedback. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.</p> <p>In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of strategies and handbooks, external examiner and annual monitoring reports, student feedback and assessed student work, and spoke with staff and students at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.</p>
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## About this report

This is a report detailing the outcomes of the Quality and Standards Review for providers applying to register with the Office for Students (OfS), conducted by QAA in January 2022, for the Central School of Ballet.

A Quality and Standards Review (QSR) is a method of assessment QAA uses to provide the OfS with evidence about whether new providers applying to be on the OfS Register meet the Core practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), based on evidence reviewed by expert assessors. This report is structured to outline the assessment team's decisions about the provider's ability to meet the Core practices through detailing the key pieces of evidence scrutinised and linking that evidence to the judgements made.

The team for this assessment was:

Name: Dr Fiona Bannon, Associate Professor School of Performance and Cultural Industries  
Institution: University of Leeds  
Role in assessment team: Performing Arts

Name: Stef Jones, Deputy Registrar  
Institution: Institute of Contemporary Music Performance  
Role in assessment team: Institutional assessor

Name: Dr Kate Wicklow  
Institution: Lancaster University  
Role in assessment team: Student assessor

The QAA officer for the assessment was Professor Danny Saunders OBE.

The size and composition of this assessment team is in line with published guidance and, as such, is comprised of experts with significant experience and expertise across the higher education sector. The assessment team included members with experience of a similar provider to the institution, knowledge of the academic awards offered and included academics with expertise in subject areas relevant to the provider's provision. Collectively the assessment team had experience of the management and delivery of higher education programmes from academic and professional services perspectives, included members with regulatory and investigative experience, and had at least one member able to represent the interests of students. The assessment team included at least one senior academic leader qualified to doctoral level. Details of assessment team members were shared with the provider prior to the assessment to identify and resolve any possible conflicts of interest.

## About the Central School of Ballet

The Central School of Ballet (the School/CSB) is to register with the Office for Students (OfS) from the academic year 2022-23. It was founded 40 years ago as a charity providing education in ballet and related arts and has moved recently to a new purpose-built facility at the Countess of Wessex Studios in the Southbank arts community of London.

The CSB Executive Director reports to the Board of Governors, which has oversight of all academic provision via the Academic Board and its two subcommittees: Research and Ethics, and Learning and Teaching. A third subcommittee for Access and Participation is in the process of being established during the current academic session. Since 2004 all courses have been and continue to be validated by the University of Kent (UoK).



Since 2004, the School has been a member of the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama (CDD), a federal collaboration of specialist schools delivering education and training in the performing arts. CDD is registered with the Office for Students (OfS) and has developed an academic framework (and produced guidance relating to this in a CDD Quality Handbook) to maintain academic standards and manage the quality of learning and teaching across its member schools. The framework is overseen by the CDD Academic Board and the Board's reporting committees and working groups which include representation from member schools. Ownership of academic standards and quality is shared through CDD's committees, policies and procedures and its Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy has been designed to develop a high-quality student learning and assessment experience across its member schools. CDD has also provided networking opportunities and other activities for its member schools to support staff development to deliver high-quality education, training and scholarship.

CDD is now winding up and the School plans to end its membership of the CDD and seek registration as an independent higher education provider with the OfS, by 1 August 2022. To that end, the School is working closely with CDD to ensure the School's smooth transition to independence and registration.

The School delivers three courses: the Foundation Degree (FD) in Professional Dance and Performance spanning two years of full-time study, the BA (top-up) spanning one year of full-time study, and the master's degree (MA) in Choreography spanning one year of study. There is no part-time provision, and many foundation degree students commence their studies at the age of 16. One third of the School's undergraduate students are international.

The qualification titles and current student numbers for 2021-2022 are:

- the Foundation Degree in Professional Dance and Performance (38 students at Level 4; 35 students at Level 5)
- the BA (top-up) in Professional Dance and Performance (44 students at Level 6)
- the MA in Choreography (two students at Level 7).

During the 2020-21 academic session 93% of year 1 (Level 4) FD students progressed to year 2 (Level 5), and 94% of second year students gained their FD qualification. Successful completions for the BA (Level 6 degree) were lower at 76%, with nine students deferring their studies because of the COVID disruptions. This figure compares with a 91% completion rate for the BA degree in 2019-20. All MA students are continuing with their studies and have not yet completed.

The School aims to support an increasingly diverse and innovative, internationally recognised culture of dance in the UK. In addition to the provision of high-intensity contact hours, delivery is characterised by small group teaching and one-to-one tuition in dance studios. The School employs specialist practitioner-based teachers, including choreographers, industry leaders and expert coaches. In support of the School's ambition to provide future generations of dance professionals with practical skills based on technical training as well as higher education studies, the BA students are members of a touring dance company called Ballet Central. The company performs in a range of UK venues and generates coursework evidence for the BA degree. During COVID lock-downs these performances have transferred to online productions.

## How the assessment was conducted

The assessment was conducted according to the process set out in [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

When undertaking a QSR all 13 of the Core practices are considered by the assessment team. However, for this assessment it was clear that the provider does not offer a research degree programme. Therefore, the assessment team did not consider Q7 (where the provider offers research degrees, it delivers these in appropriate and supportive research environments).

To form its judgements about the provider's ability to meet the Core practices, the assessment team considered a range of evidence that was submitted prior to the assessment visit and evidence gathered at the assessment visit itself. [Annex 1] To ensure that the assessment team focused on the principles embedded in the Core practices, and that the evidence considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other assessments, the team utilised Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers to construct this report and detail the key pieces of evidence seen. Annex 4 expects that assessment teams will sample certain types of key evidence using a combination of representative sampling, risk-based sampling and randomised sampling. In this assessment, the team sampled the following areas for evidence for the reasons given below:

- The assessment team considered a random sample of assessed student work during the 2020-21 academic session. The sample included 85 FD assessments, 44 BA assessments, and 3 MA assessments and they were considered in order to
  - test that students' assessed work reflects relevant threshold standards
  - test that marks and awards given to students are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers
  - that where the School works in partnerships with other organisations, the standards of awards are credible and secure
  - test whether students are given comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback.
- The assessment team considered a random sample of 101 records, broken down into 38 successful and 63 unsuccessful applicants. The sample covered levels of study (FD Levels 4 and 5; BA top-up Level 6 and MA Level 7), involving a mixture of larger and smaller student cohorts, in order to assess whether reliable, fair and inclusive admissions decisions were made for the applicants sampled.
- The assessment team completed a representative sample of teaching observations selected from the Spring term timetable for the School. A total of seven 30-minute online observations of live classes covering the FD (three observations), BA (two observations) and MA (two observations) were considered to test whether course delivery is high quality.
- The assessment team met with a representative group of nine undergraduate [Meeting 2] and postgraduate [Meeting 2a] students drawn from all programmes and levels. This involved the Lead Student from the Student Voice Forum, one student from year 1 of the FD, one student from year 2 of the FD, two students from the BA, one student who has been assessed through Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), two graduate students who completed four placements when in year 3, and one MA student.

Further details of all the evidence the assessment team considered are provided in Annex 1 of this report.

## Explanation of findings

### S1 The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks

1 To meet this Core practice a provider must ensure that threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks. The threshold standards for its qualifications must be articulated clearly and must be met, or exceeded, through the delivery of the qualification and the assessment of students.

2 The sector-recognised standards that are used in relation to this Core practice are those that apply in England, as defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS regulatory framework. That is, those set out in Table 1, in paragraphs 4.10, 4.12, 4.15, 4.17, 4.18, in paragraphs 6.13-6.18 and in the Table in Annex C, in the version of [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#) (FHEQ) published in October 2014. These sector-recognised standards represent the threshold academic standards for each level of the FHEQ and the minimum volumes of credit typically associated with qualifications at each level.

3 The QAA assessment team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

#### The evidence the assessment team considered

4 The QAA team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the assessment team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The assessment team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other assessments and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the assessment team is below:

- a Responsibilities Checklist-University of Kent [003]
- b Quality Handbook [004]
- c Memorandum of Agreement October 2019 [008]
- d Conjoint Periodic Programme Review Report June 2017 [010]
- e Academic Board ToR [026]
- f Foundation Degree Course Handbook 2021-22 [029]
- g Foundation Degree Course Summary Document 2021-22 [030]
- h BA Top-up Course Handbook 2021-22 [31]
- i BA Top-up Course Summary Document 2021-22 [032]
- j MA Choreography Course Handbook 2022 [033]
- k MA Choreography Course Summary Document 2021-22 [034]
- l Code of Practice for Quality Assurance Introduction [035]
- m Annex 2 Qualification Level Descriptors [036]
- n Annex 6 Marking [037]
- o Annex C Approval and Withdrawal of Taught Courses [039]
- p Annex E Annual Monitoring [040]
- q Annex F Periodic Review [041]

r	Annex J Board of Examiners [042]
s	Annex P Approval and Quality Assurance Procedures for Partnerships [043]
t	Credit Framework for Taught Courses of Study [044]
u	Annual Programme Monitoring Report 2019-20 for CDD [046]
v	Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21 for CDD [047]
w	Annual Course Monitoring Report 2019-20 for UoK [048]
x	External Examiner Report UG (SM) 2020 [049]
y	External Examiner Report UG (DLA) 2020 [050]
z	External Examiner Report UG (DLA) 2021 [052]
aa	External Examiner Report PGT 2021 [053]
bb	Response to External Examiner Report UG 2021 [054]
cc	Response to External Examiner Report PGT 2021 [055]
dd	Academic Board Spring 2021 Extraordinary Meeting minutes [070]
ee	Academic Board Spring 2021 Part A minutes [071]
ff	Academic Board Spring 2021 Part B minutes [072]
gg	Academic Board Summer 2021 Part A minutes [073]
hh	Academic Board Spring 2021 Part B minutes [074]
ii	Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21 for UoK [094]
jj	Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21 for UoK Statistical Data [095]
kk	Conjoint Periodic Programme Review Critical Evaluation Document 2017 [105]
ll	UoK Academic Liaison Officer Reports for 2019-20 and 2020-21 [101; 113]
mm	CPD and Training for New Academic Staff 2020-21 [133]
nn	Meeting with senior staff [M1]
oo	Meeting with teaching and support staff [M3]
pp	Final meeting with senior staff 4. [M4]

5 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the assessment team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this assessment are outlined below:

6 No third-party endorsements from professional, statutory or regulatory bodies were available as the School does not run programmes requiring such endorsements.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

7 To test that specified threshold standards for courses sampled are consistent with relevant national qualifications' frameworks, the assessment team considered all approved course documentation for all programmes.

8 The assessment team viewed a sample of assessed student work for the 2020-21 academic year comprising a total of 95 assessments: 49 from the Foundation degree, 43 from the BA(Hons) top-up and three from the MA/PGDip programme. Random samples were drawn from the four modules on the Level 4 FD; the four modules on Level 5 of the FD; the five modules on the BA Level 6 top-up and the five modules on the MA at Level 7. The sample included video recordings of students performing practical assignments in front of tutors and written assessments.

### **Why and how the assessment team considered this evidence**

9 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider [Annex 1] was considered by the assessment team either prior to the visit, or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the assessment team to make its judgement regarding the provider's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the assessment team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the

Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below:

10 To understand the basis of the standards of the awards the School delivers, the assessment team scrutinised University regulations and policies with regard to programme design and requirements for awards and classification, [036; 039; 043; 044] the Memorandum of Agreement [008] between the University and the School, and the School's approach to quality assurance [004] and assessment and moderation. [120]

11 To test that the specified threshold standards for programmes that the School delivers are consistent with the relevant qualifications' frameworks, the assessment team read the approved programme specifications contained in programme handbooks and course summaries. [029-034]

12 To interrogate the robustness and credibility of the School's approach to ensuring and maintaining threshold standards, and to test that staff understand and apply the School's approach to maintaining standards, the assessment team investigated the School's committee structure and Academic Board's terms of reference, [026] the minutes of Academic Board meetings, [071-074] annual programme monitoring reports and accompanying statistics produced for the University, [048; 094; 095] University Liaison Officer reports [101; 113] and annual monitoring reports produced for the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama (CDD), [046; 047] the most recent period review report, [010] and the School's responses to external examiner reports. [054; 055] The assessment team also met with senior staff [M1; M4] and teaching staff [M3] and investigated arrangements for the training and support of staff in assessment. [133]

13 To test that students' assessed work reflects the threshold standards and that external examiners confirm threshold standards are consistent with the national qualifications' frameworks, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where the threshold standards have been met, the assessment team scrutinised students' assessed work, including practical assessments, and written work, [Assessed student work sample] external examiner reports, [049-053] and minutes of Boards of Examiners. [091-093]

### **What the evidence shows**

14 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

15 The School currently delivers the Foundation Degree in Professional Dance and Performance, BA (top-up) in Professional Dance and Performance, and the MA/PGDip in Choreography validated by the University of Kent. The respective roles and responsibilities of the School and the University for ensuring that the School delivers courses that meet the academic standards described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) are clearly set out in the Memorandum of Agreement. [008] As part of the agreement, the School is required to implement University regulations and policies with regard to programme design and requirements for awards and classification. [039; 043; 044] The University of Kent has adopted the qualification level descriptors as set out in the FHEQ for all its programmes. The level descriptors and volumes of credit typically associated with qualifications described in the FHEQ form the basis of the University's Credit Framework for Taught Courses of Study Information for Students, Teachers and Examiners document, [044] which describes the way in which credit and the level descriptors are used on its programmes.

16 When initially designing the programmes which the School delivers, the School follows the University regulations for course design which make explicit the requirement that programme design teams ensure that consideration is given to the level descriptors and volumes of credit associated with qualifications at each level as described in the FHEQ and

to the University's regulations for taught courses. [036; 039; 044] The School has also developed its own guidance on course design for its staff which reflects the principles outlined in the University approach. [004 Quality Handbook]

17 Standards for qualifications designed and delivered by the School are considered at validation and periodic review events (undertaken every six years) managed by the University in accordance with their regulations and procedures. [039 Approval and Withdrawal of Courses] Records of the periodic review of the FdA, BA(Hons) and MA/PGDip delivered by the School undertaken with the University in 2017 [010 Conjoint Periodic Review Report, 2017] demonstrate that detailed, evidence-based consideration was given to whether programme specifications are being delivered, learning outcomes achieved, and standards are being met.

18 The School uses standardised documents to record approved programme and module information about intended aims and learning outcomes and the approach to assessment which form the basis for the delivery of programmes and ensure that staff and students have a shared understanding of the threshold standards that apply for each level of study on qualifications. The assessment team found that approved programme and module specifications for the Foundation degree, BA(Hons) and MA/PGDip [029-034] contain details of credit volumes for modules, levels and programmes, and learning outcomes for each qualification, which are consistent with those described in the sector-recognised standards.

19 The School has clearly assigned responsibilities for maintaining standards with the Academic Board having primary responsibility for safeguarding academic standards. The Board's terms of reference [026] describe its responsibility for maintaining academic standards, determining and reviewing assessment policies and procedures, and ensuring that appropriate arrangements are made for the conduct of assessment boards. The minutes of Academic Board meetings [071-074] confirm that the Board effectively discharges its responsibilities for maintaining threshold standards through, for example, deliberation on external examiner feedback, monitoring data on student progression and awards, and review of assessment policies and procedures to ensure fitness for purpose. Operational responsibility for maintaining standards rests with the Director, the Director of Higher Education, the Artistic Director and programme leaders.

20 The assessment team found that the School undertakes annual programme monitoring to assure itself and the University that standards are achieved and being maintained. Programme monitoring reports are developed in accordance with the requirements of the University [040 Annual Monitoring] and draw on external examiner feedback and data on student achievement to evaluate the achievement and maintenance of standards. [048 Annual Course Monitoring Report 2010-20; 094 Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21; 095 Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21 Statistical data] Staff at the School also work closely with Academic School Liaison Officers, appointed by the University, through a series of scheduled meetings during the year to ensure that standards are being maintained on an ongoing basis. Annual reports on the outcomes of meetings between School staff and the University Liaison Officer confirm that meetings included review of ongoing standards of student achievement, the rigour of marking and the application of assessment criteria. [101; 113]

21 As a member of CDD, the School also produces an annual monitoring report according to CDD requirements. As with the development of reports for the University, the development of the reports and associated action plans for CDD involves School staff working together to reflect on a number of issues related to standards, including data on admissions, student retention, progression and achievement, external examiner and student feedback. [046 Annual Monitoring Report, 2019-21; 047 Annual Monitoring Report, 2020-21]

22 Boards of Examiners appointed by the University, attended by staff from the School involved in assessment, external examiners, and chaired by the University, enable the School to ensure that sector-recognised standards are maintained through the role of the Boards in considering and agreeing whether students have met the requirements of their programme of study and have achieved the required standard through assessment for the award of credit and qualifications. The minutes of Boards of Examiners [091-093] confirm that the Boards consider module marks, agree on recommendations for progression and the award and classification of qualifications.

23 External examiners are appointed by the University for qualifications delivered by the School [035 University Code of Practice for Quality Assurance] and are required to comment on whether the standards set are appropriate for the level of the qualification, and on processes of assessment and the determination of awards, including the procedures of the Boards of Examiners. The assessment team found that external examiner reports for the Foundation degree, BA(Hons) and the MA/PGDip in 2020-21 [049-053] confirm that the standards set for the awards are appropriate for qualifications at that level and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where those standards have been met through assessment. The reports also confirm that Boards of Examiners are conducted appropriately.

24 The School monitors and reviews external examiners' feedback and responds to examiners' comments and recommendations. [054 Responses to EE UG; 055 Responses to EE PG] to ensure improvement. External examiner reports [049-053] comment positively on responses to their comments. For example, an external examiner commented on improvements in the consistency of tutor feedback and improvements in the academic writing skills of students following recommendations in a previous report. [050] The assessment team formed the view that the School's approach to ensuring sector-recognised standards are reached through the oversight of the Academic Board, annual and in-year programme monitoring arrangements, the external examiner system, and the operation of Boards of Examiners is robust and credible.

25 Within the terms of its agreement with the University, the School has authority to design assessment tasks on the courses it delivers, undertake first and second marking following the regulations of the University with regard to marking, [037] and provide feedback to students on their assessed work. The School provides training for staff involved in delivering the curriculum and assessing students to develop their understanding of learning outcomes, assessment and marking procedures, the use of assessment criteria and grade band descriptors. [133 CPD and Training for New Academic Staff 2020-21] The School also provides written guidance for staff describing requirements and arrangements for the assessment and moderation of student work. [120] Senior management and teaching staff [M1; M3] showed awareness of threshold standards and the outcomes students were required to demonstrate to attain those standards, and spoke knowledgeably of their involvement in the design of assessment tasks to enable students to demonstrate learning outcomes at the required levels.

26 Student course handbooks for the Foundation degree, BA(Hons) and MA/PGDip describe the range of assessment methodologies and practices employed on programmes.[029; 031; 032] The information on assessment contained in course handbooks shows that module assessment tasks provide an opportunity for students to achieve the sector-recognised standard for each course. Assessment criteria are clearly described, tasks are mapped to learning outcomes and are effectively designed to test students' achievement of the module and programme learning outcomes at each level. The sample of assessed work seen by the assessment team, which included viewing videos of practical assessment, reading examples of written work, and scrutinising moderation mark sheets, demonstrates that student achievement is consistent with the levels described in the FHEQs. [Assessed

Coursework Sample] Marks are appropriately arrived at through the application of the School's arrangements for marking and use of assessment criteria.

## Conclusions

27 As described above, the assessment team considered all of the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the assessment team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing the assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

28 From the evidence seen, the assessment team considers that the standards set for the provider's courses are in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework. The assessment team also considers that standards described in the approved programme documentation are set at levels that are consistent with these sector-recognised standards and the provider's academic regulations and policies should ensure that standards are maintained appropriately.

29 The assessment team considers that, based on the evidence scrutinised, the standards that will be achieved by the provider's students are expected to be in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework. The assessment team also considers that the provider's academic regulations and policies will ensure that these standards are maintained. The assessment team considers that staff fully understand the provider's approach to maintaining these standards and that the evidence seen demonstrates they are committed to implementing this approach.

30 The School ensures that the threshold standards for the qualifications it delivers are consistent with relevant national qualifications' frameworks. Approved programme and module documents for the Foundation degree, BA(Hons) and MA/PGDip contain details of credit volumes for modules, levels and programmes, and learning outcomes for each qualification, which are consistent with those described in the FHEQ. The School effectively applies the academic framework and regulations of its validating university to ensure standards. In addition, the School has developed its own quality assurance manual and guidance on assessment and moderation to implement its responsibilities for assessment design, marking, moderation and the provision of feedback to students. The sample of student assessed work, external examiner reports and the records of examination boards confirm that threshold standards are consistent with the FHEQ, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where the relevant threshold standards have been met.

31 There are clearly assigned responsibilities for maintaining standards within the School's academic governance framework. The School's robust annual monitoring process demonstrates that staff understand their responsibilities for maintaining standards leading to qualifications of the University. The annual monitoring process enables staff to consider external examiner feedback and recommendations and informs actions to ensure the maintenance of academic standards. Therefore, based on scrutiny of the evidence provided, the assessment team concludes that this Core practice is met.

32 In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of regulations, policies, external examiner and monitoring reports as well as assessed student work and spoke to staff at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.



## **S2 The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers**

33 This Core practice expects that the provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

34 The QAA assessment team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the assessment team considered**

35 The QAA team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the assessment team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The assessment team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other assessments and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the assessment team is below:

- a Memorandum of Agreement October 2019 [008]
- b Quality Handbook [004]
- c Conjoint Periodic Programme Review Report June 2017 [010]
- d Student Handbook 2021-2022 [028]
- e Foundation Degree Course Handbook 2021-2022 [029]
- f Foundation Degree Course Summary Document 2021-22 [030]
- g BA Top-up Course Handbook 2021-22 [031]
- h BA Top-up Course Summary Document 2021-22 [032]
- i MA Choreography Course Handbook 2021-22 [033]
- j MA Choreography Course Summary Document 2021-22 [034]
- k Code of Practice for Quality Assurance Introduction [035]
- l Annex 2 Qualification Level Descriptors [036]
- m Annex 6 Marking [037]
- n Annex F Periodic Review [041]
- o Annex J Board of Examiners [042]
- p Credit Framework for Taught Courses of Study [044]
- q Annual Programme Monitoring Report 2019-20 for CDD [046]
- r Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21 for CDD [047]
- s Annual Course Monitoring Report 2019-20 for UoK [048]
- t External Examiner Report UG (SM) 2020 [049]
- u External Examiner Report UG (DLA) 2020 [050]
- v External Examiner Report UG (DLA) 2021 [052]
- w External Examiner Report PGT 2021 2021 [053]
- x Module guides and assessment briefs [059; 060]
- y Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21 UoK [094]
- z Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21 for UoK Statistical Data [095]
- aa Academic Liaison Officer Report 2019-20 [101]
- bb Student submission [128]

- cc Meeting with senior staff [M1]
- dd Meeting 2 and 2a with students [M2 and 2a]
- ee Meeting 3 with teaching and support staff [M3]
- ff Assessed coursework sample.

36 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the assessment team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this assessment are outlined below:

37 No third-party endorsements from professional, statutory or regulatory bodies were available as the School does not run programmes requiring such endorsements.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

38 The assessment team viewed a sample of assessed student work for the 2020-21 academic year comprising a total of 95 assessments: 49 from the Foundation degree, 43 from the BA(Hons) top-up and three from the MA/PGDip programme. Random samples were drawn from the four modules on the Level 4 FD; the four modules on Level 5 of the FD; the five modules on the BA Level 6 top-up and the five modules on the MA at Level 7. The sample included video recordings of students performing practical assignments in front of tutors and written assessments.

### **Why and how the assessment team considered this evidence**

39 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider [Annex 1] was considered by the assessment team either prior to the visit, or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the assessment team to make its judgement regarding the provider's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the assessment team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below:

40 To understand the basis of the standards of the awards the School delivers, the assessment team scrutinised the University regulations for programme and assessment design, marking and moderation, requirements for awards and classification, [036; 037; 041; 042; 044] the Memorandum of Agreement, [008] and the School's policies and procedures for implementing University regulations. [004; 120]

41 To test that the specified standards beyond the threshold for programmes that the School delivers are comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, the assessment team scrutinised the approved programme documentation contained in course handbooks, [029-034] module guides and assessment briefs. [059; 060]

42 To interrogate the robustness and credibility of the School's approach to maintaining comparable standards, and staff understanding of their roles in maintaining standards, the assessment team looked at the Academic Board's terms of reference, [026] the minutes of Academic Board meetings, [071-074] annual programme monitoring reports and accompanying statistics produced for the University, [048; 094; 095] and annual monitoring reports produced for CDD. [046; 047]

43 To test that marks and awards given to students are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, the assessment team inspected a sample of student assessed work, including practical and written assessment, and the mark sheets. [Assessed coursework sample]

44 To check that external examiners confirm that standards beyond the threshold are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, and that credit and qualifications are only awarded where those standards have been met, the assessment team looked at external examiner reports [049-053] and examination board minutes. [091-093]

45 To assess whether students understand what is required of them to reach standards beyond the threshold, the assessment team looked at written feedback provided to students by staff on their assessed work, [061-069] viewed the student submission [128] and met with students. [M2; M2a]

### **What the evidence shows**

46 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

47 The School's approach to assessment design, marking procedures, requirements for awards and approaches to classification which form the basis for the standards of the awards it delivers, are determined by the University's regulations and associated marking conventions for taught courses of study. [036; 037; 041; 042; 044] The University marking regulations require assessors to use grading and classification schemes which differentiate student achievement below, at, and beyond the threshold level. Within the terms of its agreement with the University, [008] the School has authority to design its own assessment tasks, undertake marking and moderation, and record student outcomes using the University's grading and classification scheme. In order to implement this responsibility and comply with the University regulations, the School has developed its own guidance to staff and procedures with regard to assessment which set out clearly requirements for assessment design and arrangements for marking and moderation. [004;120]

48 The assessment details contained in the approved course documentation which includes the School's course handbooks for the Foundation degree, the BA(Hons) and MA and PG/Dip [029-034] provide detailed information for staff and students regarding assessment tasks, assessment criteria and the grading bands used on programmes. This information specifies what knowledge, skills and practical abilities students need to demonstrate in order to achieve higher grades and meet standards beyond the threshold at each level. The assessment team agreed that the standards described in approved course documentation beyond the threshold level are reasonably comparable with those in other UK providers. There are clear and comprehensive assessment regulations, and the School's approach to assessment design and classification of student achievement, including the use of grade bands and grading criteria, forms a sound basis for the maintenance of standards of the qualifications it delivers.

49 The team's review of the sampled assessment outcomes for written and performance work [Assessed Coursework Sample folder] confirms that marks are appropriately arrived at through the application of the School's arrangements for marking and use of assessment criteria, [004 Quality Handbook; 120 Assessment and Moderation of Student Work] and outcomes are recorded using the grade banding scheme. The marks given to students at and beyond the threshold level are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. This view is also corroborated in external examiner reports for 2020-21 [049-053] which comment explicitly on standards and confirm that standards beyond the threshold level are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where standards have been met.

50 The School uses continuous and summative assessment approaches. [004 Quality Handbook; 120 Assessment and Moderation of Student Work] Practical work is assessed

through ongoing assessment with staff providing formative verbal and written feedback on student progress. Students receive verbal and written feedback to assist their understanding of assessment and what they need to do to achieve beyond the threshold level. Examples of written feedback provided to students on assessment show detailed staff comments, clearly related to the assessment and grading criteria, providing guidance to students on how to achieve at higher grades. [061-069] In their meeting with the assessment team, students commented positively on the usefulness of the module and course handbooks in enabling them to understand what is required of them to reach standards beyond the threshold, the explanations of assessment processes and one-to-one feedback on their progress and achievement provided by staff. [M2; M2a]

51 The School undertakes annual programme monitoring to assure itself and its partners that comparable standards beyond the threshold level are being maintained. Programme monitoring reports for the University are developed in accordance with the University's requirements [040 Annual Monitoring] and draw on external examiner feedback and data on student achievement to evaluate the maintenance of academic standards and identify areas for further development. [048 Annual Course Monitoring Report 2010-20; 094 Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21; 095 Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21 Statistical data] The School also produces annual monitoring reports for CDD drawing on student data and external examiner feedback which require staff at the School to reflect on the achievement of standards. [046 Annual Monitoring Report, 2019-21; 047 Annual Monitoring Report, 2020-21]

52 The Academic Board monitors standards. [026 Academic Board Terms of Reference] The minutes of Academic Board meetings [071-074] confirm that the Board effectively discharges its responsibilities for monitoring standards through, for example, consideration of external examiner feedback regarding the standards achieved by students, monitoring data on student progression and awards, and reviewing the effectiveness of assessment policies.

53 Boards of Examiners appointed by the University, attended by staff involved in assessment from the School as well as external examiners and chaired by the University, also enable the School to ensure that standards beyond the threshold level are maintained through the role of the Boards in considering and agreeing whether students have met the requirements of their programme of study and have achieved the required standard through assessment for the award of credit and qualifications. [091-093 Examiners Boards minutes] The assessment team formed the view that the School's approach to maintaining comparable standards through the oversight of the Academic Board, programme monitoring arrangements, the external examiner system, and the operation of Boards of Examiners is robust and evidence based.

54 Staff understanding of the School's approach to maintaining comparable standards was evident in meetings with the assessment team. Staff explained how they used external examiner feedback and worked together in the marking and moderation processes, to continuously review assessment methods and outcomes, and teaching and learning approaches, to ensure that students have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level. [M1; M3]

## **Conclusions**

55 As described above, the assessment team considered all of the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the assessment team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing the assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and

remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

56 The assessment team, based on the evidence presented, determined that the standards set for students to achieve beyond the threshold on the provider's courses are reasonably comparable with those set by other UK providers. The team considered that the standards described in the approved programme documentation and in the provider's academic regulations and policies should ensure that such standards are maintained appropriately.

57 The School ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. The standards described in approved course documentation beyond the threshold level for the programmes which the School delivers are reasonably comparable with those in other UK providers. There are clear and comprehensive assessment regulations, and the School's approach to assessment design and classification of student achievement, including the use of grade bands and grading criteria, forms a sound basis for the maintenance of standards of the qualifications it delivers. The sample of student written and performance assessed coursework confirms that marks are appropriately arrived at through the application of the School's arrangements for marking. External examiners confirm that standards beyond the threshold level are reasonably comparable with those in other UK providers, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where those standards have been met.

58 The School's approach to maintaining comparable standards through the oversight of the Academic Board, programme monitoring arrangements, the external examiner system, and the operation of Boards of Examiners is robust and evidence based. Students understand what is required to reach standards beyond the threshold and receive verbal and written feedback to assist their understanding of assessment and what they need to do to achieve beyond the threshold level. Staff understanding of the School's approach to maintaining comparable standards was evident in meetings with the assessment team and in the conduct of meetings of the Academic Board. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

59 In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of policies, handbooks, course documentation, external examiner and monitoring reports as well as assessed student work and spoke to staff at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

### **S3 Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them**

60 This Core practice expects that where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.

61 The QAA assessment team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

#### **The evidence the assessment team considered**

62 The QAA team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the assessment team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The assessment team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other assessments and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the assessment team is below:

- a Quality Handbook [004]
- b Memorandum of Agreement [008]
- c Conjoint Periodic Review Report, 2017 [010]
- d A Brief History of CDD [027]
- e Student Handbook [028]
- f BA Top-up course handbook [031]
- g Code of Practice for Quality Assurance Introduction [035]
- h Approval and Withdrawal of Courses [039]
- i Annual Monitoring [040]
- j Annex J Board of Examiners [042]
- k Annex P Approval and Quality Assurance Procedures for Collaborative Partnerships [043]
- l Credit Framework for Taught Courses of Study [044]
- m Annual Course Monitoring Report 2010-20 [048]
- n External Examiner Report UG SM 2020 [049]
- o External Examiner Report UG DLA 2020 [050]
- p External Examiner Report PGT 2020 [051]
- q External Examiner Report UG DLA 2021 [052]
- r External Examiner Report PGT 2021 [053]
- s Minutes of Academic Board meetings [071-074]
- t Minutes of Board of Examiners 2021 [075]
- u Minutes of Board of Examiners 2020 [091]
- v Minutes of Board of Examiners UG 2019 [092]
- w Minutes of Board of Examiners PG 2019 [093]
- x Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21 [094]
- y Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21 Statistical data [095]
- z External Examiner Report UG SM 2021 [096]

- aa Academic Liaison Officer Report 2019-20 [101]
- bb Student Complaints Procedure [107]
- cc Academic Liaison Officer Report 2020-21 [113]
- dd Assessment and moderation of student work [120]
- ee Meeting with senior staff [M1; M4]
- ff Meeting with teaching and support staff [M3]
- gg Assessed coursework sample.

63 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the assessment team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this assessment are outlined below:

64 No third-party endorsements from professional, statutory or regulatory bodies were available as the School does not run programmes requiring such endorsements.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

65 The assessment team viewed a sample of assessed student work for the 2020-21 academic year comprising a total of 95 assessments: 49 from the Foundation degree, 43 from the BA(Hons) top-up and three from the MA/PGDip programme. Random samples were drawn from the four modules on the Level 4 FD; the four modules on Level 5 of the FD; the five modules on the BA Level 6 top-up and the five modules on the MA at Level 7. The sample included video recordings of students performing practical assignments in front of tutors and written assessments.

### **Why and how the assessment team considered this evidence**

66 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider [Annex 1] was considered by the assessment team either prior to the visit, or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the assessment team to make its judgement regarding the provider's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the assessment team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below:

67 To interrogate the basis for the maintenance of academic standards within the partnership, the assessment team looked at the Memorandum of Agreement with the University, [008] the University regulations, policies and procedures which form the basis of the partnership, [035-046] and the policies and procedures developed by the School to implement the requirements of the University. [004; 120]

68 To assess whether the School has credible, robust and evidence-based approaches to maintaining standards in its partnership with the University, and that staff understand and discharge effectively their responsibilities to the awarding body, the assessment team considered the School's internal academic governance arrangements, specifically the Academic Board's terms of reference, [026] the minutes of Academic Board meetings, [071-074] annual programme monitoring reports, [048; 094; 095] University Liaison Officer reports, [101; 113] and the most recent period review report. [010] The assessment team met with senior staff [M1; M4] and teaching staff. [M3] The team also considered the School's relationship with CDD to understand how membership of CDD contributes to the development of the School's academic policies and practices to support the maintenance of standards. [027; 107]

69 To test that standards of awards are credible and secure and confirm the effectiveness of the partnership, the assessment team scrutinised assessed students' work

[Assessed coursework sample folder] and external examiner reports. [049-053; 096]

### **What the evidence shows**

70 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations:

71 The School works in partnership with the University of Kent to deliver programmes validated by the University. The relationship with the University is governed by detailed regulations, policies and procedures. [035-046] The respective roles and responsibilities of the School and the University for ensuring that the standards of the University's awards are credible and secure are clearly set out in the Memorandum of Agreement. [008] As part of these arrangements the School is responsible for developing curricula, admissions, programme management and delivery, and the design and operation of assessment including marking and moderation. The University is responsible for initial programme approval and periodic review, the appointment of external examiners and an examination board, and the conduct of assessment boards.

72 To implement its partnership responsibilities and ensure staff understand their roles and responsibilities, the assessment team found that the School has developed its own guidance and procedures to ensure it follows the University regulations and secures standards. This includes, for example, the School's Quality Handbook which provides guidance to staff teams on course design, the admission of students, academic appeals processes, and the external examiner process, [004] and guidance to staff on procedures for assessment and moderation. [120] The process of ensuring that the standards for qualifications designed and delivered by the School are consistent with the FHEQ and the requirements of the University, is carried out through validation and periodic review events managed by the University in accordance with their procedures and regulations. [039 Approval and Withdrawal of Courses] Records of the periodic review of the FdA, BA(Hons) and MA/PGDip delivered by the School undertaken with the University in 2017, [010 Conjoint Periodic Review Report, 2017] provides evidence of School staff engaged in detailed, evidence-based consideration of the standards of the awards with University staff representatives. The report also confirms that the School is effectively implementing the University's regulations and policies as a mechanism to ensure the standards of its awards. At the time of the review, the School was preparing to undertake a further periodic review of its programmes with the University according to the University requirements that such events take place every six years.

73 The School has clearly assigned responsibilities for ensuring that the standards of the awards it delivers in partnership are secure, with the Academic Board having primary responsibility for safeguarding academic standards. The Board's terms of reference [026] describe its responsibility for maintaining academic standards. The minutes of Academic Board meetings [071-074] confirm that the Board effectively discharges its responsibilities for securing standards through, for example, deliberation on external examiner feedback, monitoring data on student progression and awards, and review of assessment policies and procedures. The minutes also confirm that the School monitors and implements the requirements of its partners, including, for example, nominating new external examiners for consideration by the University, and making arrangements for the implementation of the University's 'no detriment' policy for student assessment during the pandemic.

74 As part of its agreement with the University, the School produces an annual programme monitoring report. [040 Annual Monitoring] Reports draw on external examiner feedback and data on student achievement to evaluate the achievement and maintenance of standards. [048 Annual Course Monitoring Report 2010-20; 094 Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21; 095 Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21 Statistical data] Staff at the School also work closely with Academic School Liaison Officers, appointed by the University,



through a series of scheduled meetings during the year to ensure that standards are being maintained on an ongoing basis. Annual reports on the outcomes of meetings between School staff and the University Liaison Officer confirm that meetings included review of ongoing standards of student achievement and the rigour of marking. [101; 113] The assessment team found that internal oversight arrangements, the detailed and thorough annual monitoring and periodic review processes, and regular meetings with University appointed Academic School Liaison Officers provide sound evidence of the School working in accordance with its partnership agreement with the University to ensure that academic standards are secure.

75 External examiners confirm in their reports that they consider that standards on the School's programmes are credible and secure. [049-053; 096 External examiner reports] The sample of assessed student work scrutinised by the assessment team [Assessed coursework sample] demonstrated that marks are appropriately arrived at through the application of the School's arrangements for marking [04 Quality Handbook; 120 Assessment and Moderation of Students' Work] and that the marking and moderation arrangements used by the School are in accordance with the University's requirements. The assessment team formed the view that the positive external examiner reports and the standards achieved by students in their assessed work confirm the effectiveness of the underpinning partnership arrangements.

76 In addition to its partnership with the University of Kent, the School is a member of the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama (CDD). While the University of Kent has ultimate responsibility for the standards of its validated awards delivered by the School, CDD provides its members with opportunities to collaborate artistically, share expertise and resources, and work with peers to share good practice to support the required standards in higher education. [027 A Brief History of CDD] At the time of the assessment, CDD was winding down and the School was preparing to operate without the peer support of the Conservatoire by August 2022. As a member of CDD, the School implements a number of CDD policies with regard to the delivery of higher education which are also approved by the University as complying with their requirements. In working towards independence from CDD, the School has adopted, with some adaptation, CDD's policies and procedures, such as, for example, the Student Complaints Procedure [107] and the annual monitoring report. [M1; M4]

## **Conclusions**

77 As described above, the assessment team considered all of the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the assessment team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing the assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

78 The School has effective arrangements in place to ensure standards of awards are credible and secure, irrespective of where or how courses are delivered, or who delivers them. The partnership agreement with the University is clear and detailed and staff understand their responsibilities in maintaining academic standards within the overall framework and regulatory requirement of the University. The School has a good track record of partnership working with the University and complies with the University's regulatory and quality assurance requirements to maintain high academic standards. This is confirmed by external examiner reports and the assessment team's consideration of the random sample of assessed student work, and the operation of assessment and marking in accordance with University requirements. The assessment team also found that the School's internal

oversight arrangements, the detailed and thorough annual monitoring and periodic review processes, and regular meetings with University-appointed Academic School Liaison Officers provide sound evidence of the School working in accordance with its partnership agreement with the University to ensure that academic standards are secure. The assessment team therefore concludes that this Core practice is met.

79 In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of agreements, minutes of meetings, external examiner and monitoring reports as well as assessed student work and spoke to staff at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## **S4 The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent**

80 This Core practice expects that the provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.

81 The QAA assessment team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the assessment team considered**

82 The QAA team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the assessment team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The assessment team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other assessments and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the assessment team is below:

- a Quality Handbook [004]
- b Memorandum of Agreement [008]
- c Conjoint Periodic Programme Review Report [010]
- d Student Handbook [028]
- e Foundation Degree Course Handbook [029]
- f BA Top-up Course Handbook [031]
- g MA Course Handbook [033]
- h Code of Practice for Quality Assurance Introduction [035]
- i Annex 6 marking [037]
- j Annex F Periodic Review [041]
- k Annex J Board of Examiners [042]
- l Credit Framework for Taught Courses of Study [044]
- m Annual monitoring reports [047; 048]
- n External Examiner Report UG SM 2020 [049]
- o External Examiner Report UG DLA 2020 [050]
- p External Examiner Report PGT 2020 [051]
- q External Examiner Report UG DLA 2021 [052]
- r External Examiner Report PGT 2021 [053]
- s Response to external examiner report UG 2021 [054]
- t Response to external examiner report PGT 2021 [055]
- u Academic Board minutes [071-074]
- v Annual Monitoring Report 2020-21 for UoK [094]
- w External Examiner Report UG SM 2021 [096]
- x Unconfirmed minutes Learning and Teaching Committee [116]
- y Action Plan 2021-22 [117]
- z Appointment of New External Examiners [119]
- aa Assessment and moderation of student work [120]
- bb Student submission [128]
- cc Update on Action 8 [129]
- dd Meeting with senior staff [M1]
- ee Meeting with students [M2 and M2a]
- ff Meeting with teaching and support staff [M3]

gg Assessed course work sample.

83 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the assessment team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this assessment are outlined below:

84 No third-party endorsements from professional, statutory or regulatory bodies were available as the School does not run programmes requiring such endorsements.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

85 The assessment team viewed a sample of assessed student work for the 2020-21 academic year comprising a total of 95 assessments: 49 from the Foundation degree, 43 from the BA(Hons) top-up and three from the MA/PGDip programme. Random samples were drawn from the four modules on the Level 4 FD; the four modules on Level 5 of the FD; the five modules on the BA Level 6 top-up and the five modules on the MA at Level 7. The sample included video recordings of students performing practical assignments in front of tutors and written assessments.

### **Why and how the assessment team considered this evidence**

86 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider [Annex 1] was considered by the assessment team either prior to the visit, or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the assessment team to make its judgement regarding the provider's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the assessment team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below:

87 To identify how external experts are used in maintaining standards and how the School's assessment and classification processes operate, the assessment team considered the University's regulations with regard to the use of external expertise, assessment and classification, [035; 037; 039; 041; 042; 044] the Memorandum of Agreement between the University and the School [008] and the School's policies and procedures to implement the requirements of the University. [004; 120]

88 To assess whether the use of external expertise and the operation of assessment processes are credible, robust and evidence-based, and that external experts are used according to the School's policies, the assessment team considered the record of the most recent periodic review report, [010] the School's responses to external examiners, [054; 055] Academic Board minutes, [071-074] annual programme monitoring reports [047; 048; 094] and action plans. [117]

89 To assess the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes for the courses that the School delivers, and identify external examiner views about assessment, the assessment team scrutinised approved programme documentation, [029-034] the minutes of the Learning and Teaching Committee held in autumn 2021 [116] and details of the assessment briefings provided to students, [129] and read external examiner reports. [049-053]

90 To test that staff understand the requirements for the use of external expertise and the School's assessment processes, the assessment team met with senior staff [M1] and teaching staff. [M3]

91 To identify how students regard the reliability, fairness and transparency of

assessment processes, the assessment team met students [M2; M2a] and viewed the student submission. [128]

### **What the evidence shows**

92 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

93 As part of the agreement with the University, the School is required to implement University regulations and policies with regard to the involvement of external expertise, assessment, and classification processes. These requirements are clearly set out in the University's regulatory documents which describe arrangements for the use of external expertise in course approval and review, the role and appointment of external examiners, meetings of Boards of Examiners, marking and the use of categorical marking schemes and the accreditation of prior learning. [035; 037; 039; 041; 042; 044] The roles and responsibilities of the School and the University for the implementation of assessment processes and the use of external expertise are set out in the Memorandum of Agreement. [008] As part of these arrangements the School is responsible for designing assessment tasks, undertaking marking and moderation and using classification processes following University regulations. The University is responsible for the appointment of external examiners and an examination board, and the conduct of assessment boards.

94 Further clarification on how the School's assessment and classification processes operate is provided in the School's own documentation. The School has developed its own guidance and procedures governing the operationalisation of assessment, marking and moderation practice which are consistent with the University's requirement and ensure these requirements are understood by staff involved in assessment. The Quality Assurance Handbook [004] outlines the guiding principles for assessment including requirements for assessment design and the use of assessment criteria and grading bands linked to learning outcomes. The guidance on Assessment and Moderation of Student Work [120] provides clear instruction on the composition and role of assessment panels in assessing students' practical work, and arrangements for the first and second marking of written work and oral presentations. The assessment team was satisfied that the academic regulatory and policy documents which provide the framework for assessment and classification clearly set out how the School's assessment and classification processes operate.

95 Approved programme documentation, including programme and module specifications, course handbooks and the student handbook, [028; 029-034] provide clear information on the range of assessment methods used on programmes, and there is detailed information setting out the different components of assessment, their weightings and associated marking criteria. Full details of the University's classification and grading criteria, and marking and grade bands are included in the course handbooks. [029-034] The assessment team formed the view that the processes for assessment and classification described in the programme documentation are transparent, assessment methods are varied and appropriate to test students' achievement of the learning outcomes being assessed, with clear assessment and grading criteria to ensure consistency and reliability.

96 In addition to the provision of written information on assessment to students, the School has taken further action to ensure that assessment is transparent and fair across the provision. For example, the assessment team noted that in the minutes of the Learning and Teaching Committee held in autumn 2021 [116] some students were reported as being unclear about marking and grading processes. In response, the School's Director of Higher Education delivered briefing sessions to students, providing information on grading in preparation for assessment. [129] Students who met the assessment team, and in their submission [M2; M2a; Student Submission 128] were positive about the support provided by staff to enable them to understand the process of assessment and classification and thought

the assessment process was transparent and fair.

97 The sample of assessed student work, [Assessed Coursework Sample] which includes practical assessments and assessment of written work, confirms that assessment and classification are conducted in accordance with the University's regulations and the processes set out in the School's assessment and moderation procedures. [04; 037;120] The assessment team was able to confirm from the sample that the assessment criteria and grading schemes were clear for assessment tasks and consistently applied by staff involved in marking. External examiners' reports provide further evidence and positive feedback on the consistent application of University regulations and processes for marking, moderation and classification. [049-053]

98 The evidence confirms that external examiners are appointed to programmes. [049-053 External Examiner reports; 119 Appointment of External Examiners] The School monitors and reviews external examiners' feedback and responds to examiners' comments and recommendations [054 Responses to EE UG; 055 Responses to EE PG] to ensure improvement. External examiner reports [049-053] comment positively on responses to their comments. For example, an external examiner commented on improvements in the consistency of tutor feedback and improvements in the academic writing skills of students following recommendations in a previous report. [050] External examiner reports are overseen within the committee structure, with reports received by Academic Board. [071-074 Academic Board minutes] External examiner comments are also reflected on in annual programme monitoring reports [047; 048; 094] and action plans. [117] The assessment team was satisfied that the School responds appropriately to external examiner feedback, and is continuing to refine its approach, taking account of comments received.

99 The assessment team's consideration of the most recent periodic review of the records of the School's Foundation degree, BA(Hons), and MA/PGDip undertaken in 2017 by the University in accordance with their regulations [010 Conjoint Periodic Programme Review Report; 041 Annex F Periodic Review] demonstrates the effective use of external experts with external peer review being integral to the panel process and deliberations. The panel included academic experts from other universities and CDD partner institutions. At the time of the assessment, the School was preparing for the next periodic review of its programmes with the University. The School's guidance to course assessment teams involved in course design and development set out in the Quality Handbook [004] contains the requirement to engage external stakeholders to inform course development, develop existing provision and approve new courses.

## **Conclusions**

100 As described above, the assessment team considered all of the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the assessment team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing the assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

101 The School uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent. There are clear policies for the use of external expertise in initial programme approval, periodic review and maintaining academic standards. The regulations and processes for assessment and classification described in programme documentation are transparent, assessment methods are varied and appropriate to test students' achievement of the learning outcomes being assessed, with clear assessment and grading criteria to ensure consistency and reliability.

102 Assessed student work confirms that assessment and classification are conducted in accordance with the University's regulations and the processes set out in the School's assessment and moderation procedures. External examiners' reports provide further evidence and positive feedback on the consistent application of assessment regulations and processes for marking, moderation and classification, and confirm that the assessment and classification processes are reliable, fair and transparent. Staff understand the requirement for the use of external expertise, and the School responds appropriately to external examiner feedback.

103 The most recent periodic review of the School's Foundation degree, BA(Hons) and MA/PGDip undertaken in 2017 with the University in accordance with their regulations demonstrates the effective use of external experts with external peer review being integral to the panel process and deliberations. Students were positive about the support provided by staff to enable them to understand the process of assessment and classification. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

104 In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of handbooks, policies, minutes of meetings, external examiner and monitoring reports as well as assessed student work and spoke to staff and students at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## Q1 The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system

105 This Core practice expects that the provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.

106 The QAA assessment team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### The evidence the assessment team considered

107 The QAA team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the assessment team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The assessment team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other assessments and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the assessment team is below:

- a CSB submission [000]
- b Student submission [128]
- c Quality Handbook [004]
- d Undergraduate Terms and Conditions [014]
- e Postgraduate Terms and Conditions [015]
- f CSB Admissions Policy [018]
- g Application Audition and Admissions Overview [023]
- h Staff Training Week September 2021 [025]
- i Foundation Degree Professional Dance and Performance Course Handbook 2021-22 [029]
- j Foundation Degree Professional Dance and Performance Course Summary Document 2021-22 [030]
- k BA (Hons) Professional Dance and Performance Course Handbook 2021-22 [031]
- l BA (Hons) Professional Dance and Performance Course Summary Document 2021-22 [032]
- m MA Choreography Course Handbook 2021-22 [033]
- n MA Choreography Course Summary Document 2021-22 [034]
- o CDD Terms and Conditions [080]
- p CDD Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy & Procedure [082]
- q CDD Admissions Policy [083]
- r CDD Access and Participation Plan [084]
- s Audition Panel and Criteria [097]
- t Student Visa Guide [098]
- u University of Kent Code of Practice for Quality Assurance of Taught Courses of Study - Annex R: Recognition of Prior Learning [112]
- v APEL for Direct Entry Students [114]
- w Training for Recruitment and Admissions Staff [132]
- x CPD and Training for New Academic Staff 2020-2021 [133]
- y Summary of The-Wells Agreement [134]
- z Agreement for Auditions in Japan 2021 [135]
- aa Provider clarification note
- bb Admissions - a Student Journey Folder



cc	Admissions Sample Folder
dd	Recent Auditions Folder
ee	Meeting with senior staff [M1]
ff	Meetings with students [M2 and 2a]
gg	Meeting with teaching and support staff [M3]
hh	Final meeting [M4]
ii	Presentation Internal Shared Drive
jj	Additional information [152]
kk	Website Screenshot 1 - Course Page BA (Hons) Professional Dance and Performance
ll	Website Screenshot 2 - Policies and Procedures
mm	Website Screenshot 3 - How to Apply
nn	Website Screenshot 4 - Application Fee.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

108 The assessment team considered a random sample of 101 admissions records from the 2020-21 academic session from the three programmes. The sample covered Levels 4, 6 and 7 of study, involving a mixture of larger and smaller student cohorts. The team also considered a risk-based sample of 76 audition mark sheets from the September - December 2021 audition cycle involving two UK locations and one in Japan as well as four student admissions folders from that period, one for a standard UK applicant, one for an overseas applicant, one for direct entry and one for a student continuing from the Foundation degree to the BA (Hons) Professional Dance and Performance.

### **Why and how the assessment team considered this evidence**

109 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider [Annex 1] was considered by the assessment team either prior to the visit, or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the assessment team to make its judgement regarding the provider's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the assessment team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below:

110 To identify institutional policy relating to the recruitment, selection and admission of students; roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the admissions process; support for applicants; how the provider verifies applicants' entry qualifications; how the provider facilitates an inclusive admissions system; and how it handles complaints and appeals, the assessment team considered the CDD Admissions Policy [083] and the CDD Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedure, [082] the CSB Admissions Policy, [018] the CSB submission, [000] Application, Audition and Admission Overview, [023] the admissions pages of the School's website, [Screenshot 1 – Course Page BA] the audition panel and criteria document [097] and the admissions - a student journey folder, additional information on admissions. [152] The assessment team also met with senior, [M1, M4] teaching and support staff. [M3]

111 To assess whether the provider has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that admissions systems are reliable, fair and inclusive, the assessment team considered the CDD Admissions Policy, [083] the application audition and admissions overview document, [023] the APEL for direct entry students document, [114] the University of Kent Code of Practice Annex R - Recognition of Prior Learning, [112] the admissions sample and the admissions - a student journey folder, the audition panel and criteria document, [097] additional admissions information, [152] the CPD and training for new

academic staff 2020-2021 document, [133] the staff training week programme September 2021, [025] the student visa guide, [098] the CDD Access and Participation Plan [084] and the terms of reference of the CSB Access and Participation Committee. [022] The assessment team also met with senior, [M1, M4] teaching and support staff. [M3]

112 To test whether the information given to applicants is transparent, inclusive and fit-for-purpose, the assessment team scrutinised the CDD Admissions Policy, [083] the student visa guide, [098] the School's website, [screenshot 1 - course page BA, screenshot 3 - how to apply, screenshot 4 - application fees] the CDD terms and conditions [080] as well as the CSB undergraduate [014] and postgraduate terms and conditions, [015] and a provider clarification note. The assessment team also met with students from all programmes [M2, M2a] and teaching and support staff. [M3]

113 To interrogate how the provider ensures that third parties understand and implement the provider's admissions policy and processes effectively, the assessment team examined the agreement for auditions in Japan 2021 [135] and a summary of the agreement with Japanese agent The Wells.

114 To test whether admissions requirements reflect the provider's overall policy, the assessment team considered approved course documentation for all programmes consisting of programme and module specifications [029, 031, 033] and course summaries. [030, 032, 034]

115 To assess whether reliable, fair and inclusive admissions decisions were made for the applicants sampled, the assessment team scrutinised the admissions record sample, recent auditions records, the audition criteria document, [097] the admissions - the student journey folder and the CDD Admissions Policy. [083] The assessment team also saw a demonstration of the new digital admissions records system. [presentation internal shared drive]

116 To test whether staff understand their responsibilities, are appropriately skilled and supported and can articulate how the provider's approach to inclusivity is manifest in the admissions process, the assessment team met with senior, [M1] teaching and support staff [M3] and examined the training for recruitment and admissions staff document, [132] the staff training programme September 2021 [025] and the audition panel document. [097]

117 To assess students' views about the admissions process, the assessment team considered the student submission, [128] student voice forum minutes, [076] year 1 module and overall feedback results 2020-21 [056] and met with a sample of students from all programmes. [M2, M2a]

### **What the evidence shows**

118 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

119 The School has overall responsibility for the admissions of students and currently uses the CDD Admissions Policy [083] and the Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedure [082] to manage the admissions process. As the School is moving away from CDD it has developed its own Admissions Policy [018] which it closely modelled on the CDD's policy. It intends to use its own policy for entry from the academic year 2022-23 onwards. Senior staff reported that the policy would be put forward for final approval by the Academic Board and the Board of Governors should the School be successful in becoming an independent institution. [M4 final meeting] The assessment team found both admissions policies [018, 083] to be comprehensive because they set out general admissions requirements to higher education programmes and link to programme-specific entry requirements. They also set out the application and selection process including audition and

interview procedures and the confirmation of offer and registration processes. Overall, they provide a clear framework for the recruitment, selection and admission of students.

120 The School does not use UCAS for its admissions services, instead students apply directly to the School and the Senior School Manager is responsible for the administration of the admissions process. [000 CSB submission, M1 senior staff meeting] Applicants for undergraduate programmes are selected on the basis of an application form accompanied by a personal statement, and a two-stage in-person or video audition and audition photo submission. [023 application, audition and admission overview, website screenshot 1 – course page BA] In addition, all overseas undergraduate students have to demonstrate that they achieved a minimum B1 level of English language competency, reaching a 4.0 score in each module band, in an approved English language examination such as International English Language Testing System (IELTS). The general selection criteria are clearly articulated in the Admissions Policy [083] with the audition criteria being set out in the audition panel and criteria document [097] thus aiding transparency and consistency in decision making. Five staff from the core teaching team and the Artistic Director are involved in the audition process and making final admissions decisions for undergraduate programmes. The Senior School Manager keeps records of audition outcomes and informs applicants of the outcomes, [023 application, audition and admission overview] offering support and guidance to applicants throughout the process. [admissions – a student journey folder]

121 Admission to the postgraduate programme is by application consisting of a CV, a portfolio of work, and a personal statement, and applicants who meet the entry requirements are invited for interview. [000 CSB submission, 152 additional information admissions] The Course Lead and at least two members of the executive team make admissions decisions for this programme against clearly specified selection criteria. [097 audition panel and criteria] The assessment team concluded that there are clearly defined procedures and transparent criteria for selecting students.

122 The assessment team found that programme and module specifications (contained in course handbooks) [029, 031, 033] and course summaries [030, 032, 034] are consistent in terms of the formal entry requirements, accurately reflect the School's admissions criteria and are consistent with University of Kent regulations. The assessment team formed the view that admissions requirements reflect accurately the School's policy.

123 The School permits direct entry onto Level 5 and exceptionally to Level 6 for applicants who can demonstrate prior learning. [023 application audition and admissions overview, 114 APEL for direct entry students] Eligibility is established at audition. Where the audition panel takes the view that an applicant's level of dance ability is equivalent to Level 5, the applicant would be encouraged to apply for direct entry to the second year of the Foundation degree programme. This judgement is made through the process of moderation based on the selection audition criteria and knowledge of learning at Level 4 and Level 5. The applicant would also be set two written tasks to demonstrate their critical reflective and analytical skills and a judgement is made by the Learning Development Manager as to whether the applicant demonstrates accomplishment of Level 4 contextual studies abilities. [114 APEL for direct entry students] Students may also be admitted to the undergraduate programme with advanced standing. Such cases are subject to prior approval by the University of Kent according to its recognition of prior learning (RPL) procedures and criteria. [112 University of Kent Code of Practice, Annex R: Recognition of Prior Learning] The assessment team was satisfied that the School's plans for the operation and management of the recognition of prior learning are robust and credible and are likely to ensure reliable outcomes.

124 While the admissions process for overseas students generally follows the

processes described above, audition of overseas students from Japan is facilitated through an overseas agent and an agreement to manage the process is in place. [135 agreement for auditions in Japan 2021] The agreement specifies that the agent provides the venue and support staff for auditions, ensures the health and safety of audition participants on the day, supports applicants in completing application forms, provides information on studying in the UK but is not involved in making any admissions decisions which are taken by School staff as outlined above. [134 summary of The Wells agreement] The assessment team saw evidence of this agreement being implemented satisfactorily in the audition arrangement agreed for the 2021-22 intake. [135 agreement for auditions in Japan 2021] The assessment team concluded that the School has appropriate arrangements in place to manage its relationship with the agent.

125 The assessment team found that the application form used for all undergraduate applicants enables the School to collect sufficient information about an applicant's age and prior academic and technical training and allows the School to monitor protected characteristics of applicants. Students are invited to declare any disabilities, learning difficulties and support needs on the application form, and are invited to discuss details with staff at any point during the application process. [admissions sample; admissions – a student journey folder, M3 teaching and support staff meeting] The School selects applicants for undergraduate programmes solely on the basis of their talent and potential to develop the skills required for their chosen profession. From the selection criteria it is clear that it judges applicants on their suitability for the programme they have applied for and their potential to successfully complete. [083 CDD Admissions Policy] The assessment team considered that fairness and consistency are ensured through the use of clearly defined general and specific selection criteria with discussions of how these criteria are used by auditions panels. [097 audition panel and criteria, M4 final meeting] For example, the selection panels complete an assessment form for each applicant/auditionee followed by a meeting to moderate and make final decisions. [admissions sample – audition mark sheet (moderated); 152 additional admissions information] The assessment team also noted that as part of the School's commitment to a fair and inclusive admissions process staff have received unconscious bias training. [133 CPD and training for new academic staff 2020-2021, 025 staff training week September 2021] In the assessment team's view all of this evidence pointed to the use of a credible admissions systems that is fair, reliable and inclusive.

126 While overseas students are required to submit a copy of their IELTS exam certificate, [023 application audition and admissions overview, 098 student visa guide] the School did not routinely validate prior academic qualifications of successful UK applicants. The School explained that to date students have been asked to confirm their examination results after they have accepted the offer of a place but admitted that there has not been a consistent practice of asking for evidence of these results. [152 additional admissions information] The assessment team learnt that the School has taken steps to address this issue and applicants will now be asked to supply evidence of their exam results in the induction information requested of them before their enrolment at the start of the programme. [152 additional admissions information]

127 The assessment team found that the admissions framework supports the School's widening access commitments and objectives. For example, the commitment to widening participation and to promoting its programmes to those who are less likely to participate in higher education, as articulated in the Admissions Policy, [018 CSB Admissions Policy; 083 CDD Admissions Policy] is evident at the application stage which encourages students to disclose access needs or disabilities and the School will also make any necessary reasonable adjustments, in accordance with the *Equality Act (2010)*, to ensure that disabled students can study at the School. [018 CSB Admissions Policy; 083 CDD Admissions Policy] The School also offers scholarships, bursaries and fee reductions for applicants from low-income households. [018 CSB Admissions Policy; 083 CDD Admissions Policy, admission

student journey folder] The assessment team heard both from senior staff [M1 senior staff meeting, M4 final meeting] and teaching and support staff [M3] that the School is working to improve its understanding of barriers to entry and strives to widen access through its outreach activities. The School also works to ensure the training required for entry into higher education is available to young people from ethnic backgrounds. The School is currently subject to the Conservatoire's Access and Participation Plan; [084] however, once the School is an independent institution it will have its own plan and an as yet unconstituted Access and Participation Committee will have oversight of progress made against the School's widening participation targets, including access for disadvantaged groups. [022 terms of reference APC] The assessment team formed the view that, once fully implemented, the School is likely to have in place a suitable framework for widening access and promoting equality through its admissions process.

128 Comprehensive information about the programmes, entry requirements including entry with advanced standing and English language requirements for overseas students on undergraduate programmes, the application process, audition arrangements and fees, are readily available and accessible to all applicants. All students are also informed at application stage that they must have medical insurance to cover the cost of any additional external physical or psychological support during the course of their studies. [014 Undergraduate Terms and Conditions, 015 MA Terms and Conditions 015] For overseas applicants the School also has a helpful student visa guide. [098] All this information is published on the School website processes. [website screenshot 1 – course page BA] The School's website also provided clear guidance on the audition and criteria audition panels will be applying. Due to the pandemic, all auditions for the 2020-21 intake were online, and detailed guidance was provided to applicants about how to submit an audition video. [website screenshot 3 - how to apply, M2, M2a student meetings, M3 teaching and support staff meeting] The assessment team discovered a discrepancy in the published audition fee in the Admissions Policy [018, 083] and on the website. [website screenshot 4 - application fee] The School explained that the different prices were due to a reduction of the audition fee during online only auditions for 2021-22 intake which is reflected in the CDD's Admissions Policy [083] whereas the website relates to the current 2022-23 recruitment cycle and normal pricing applies again. [provider clarification note] The assessment team was therefore satisfied that information available to applicants is transparent, accessible and fit for purpose.

129 The Senior School Manager provides comprehensive advice and guidance to all applicants throughout the admissions process to ensure that applicants understand what is expected of them. [M1 Senior Staff, Admission – a student journey folder] This was confirmed by students from all programmes who were satisfied with the support received and confirmed that the pre-enrolment information they received was accessible and comprehensive. [M2, M2a student meetings] Successful applicants are provided with CDD's Terms and Conditions document [080] that represents the contractual agreement on which the offer of a place will be fulfilled. The School has developed its own Terms and Conditions which will apply to entrants from September 2022. [014 UG Terms and Conditions, 015 PG Terms and Conditions] The assessment team was therefore satisfied that applicants are adequately supported.

130 The assessment team examined a representative sample of application forms from successful and unsuccessful applicants spanning the academic years 2015-2021 [admissions record sample] and discovered that no records about applicants' performance in auditions were kept from that time. Because admissions decisions are based on an applicant's performance in a two-stage audition process, the assessment team was unable to judge whether the School was making reliable, fair and inclusive decisions on admissions. The assessment team learnt that a new admissions team led by the recently appointed Senior School Manager has been directing admissions operations since September 2021

and audition records are now routinely kept. The assessment team was therefore able to examine a risk-based second sample consisting of the complete set of assessment sheets for the current round of stage one auditions completed between September and December 2021 both for two UK locations and Japan. [recent auditions records] The assessment team's scrutiny revealed that marksheets were clear as to who was accepted to the second stage of auditions with sufficient reasoning provided. It was also evident that criteria specified in the audition criteria document [097] had been used consistently by all assessors, with evidence showing how scores of successful auditions compare to unsuccessful ones. [recent auditions folder]

131 In addition, the assessment team requested and examined four undergraduate student admissions files from the same period, one for a standard UK applicant, one for direct entry, one overseas application and one form for a continuing student from the Foundation degree to the BA top-up. [admissions - the student journey folder] The assessment team found that these student record folders included the complete documentation as defined in the Conservatoire's Admissions Policy. [083] There were the completed application form containing personal details for enrolled students, including visa requirements and English language proficiency for the overseas applicant, confirmation of the audition results and offer of a place as well as induction and enrolment communication and paperwork. For the direct entry applicant, it was clear that the student met the School's prior learning requirements. [admissions - the student journey folder] Furthermore, the assessment team requested to view the new admissions management and record-keeping process in action and was able to examine the School's internal digital filing system. [presentation internal shared drive] The assessment team saw evidence of a well structured system for data management covering student applications, auditions and enrolment. The assessment team could clearly see how admissions records are now being generated, decisions recorded, how they are communicated to applicants, and where student records are located. The assessment team was therefore satisfied that the School now keeps complete application records and that the School's admissions policy is implemented in practice. The assessment team concluded that the School is making reliable, fair and inclusive undergraduate admissions decisions.

132 Three postgraduate students were admitted to the MA Choreography in January 2022. Their admissions process followed the documented procedure with the submission of CVs, a portfolio of work and a personal statement. [152 additional information] Two of the three applicants were admitted with the required academic entry qualification of a BA (Hons) degree, the third candidate was judged to be academically suitable for the programme by the admissions panel based on their professional experience supported by favourable references. [152 additional information] This is in line with the School's recognition of prior learning policy which allows for the admission of applicants without the required academic entry qualifications if they can demonstrate that they possess the experience and understanding of a comparable level gained through work. The assessment team therefore formed the view that the School makes reliable and fair admissions decisions for postgraduate students.

133 The School publishes information about the processes for admissions complaints and appeals [082 CDD Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedure] on its website which includes clear guidance on how to make a complaint or appeal, and the grounds on which applicants may lodge an appeal. The School would seek opportunities for the early informal resolution of complaints and appeals [000 CSB submission] but stated that there have been no formal complaints or appeals of the School's admission decisions. [M1 senior staff meeting, M3 teaching and support staff meeting]

134 In discussions with the assessment team, staff articulated the School's approach to fair, reliable and inclusive admissions. Senior and teaching staff were clear about their role in

auditions and subsequent decision making. Senior staff explained that fair and consistent decisions can be made because all audition panels include core team members and all panel members complete audition mark sheets in accordance with clearly specified criteria which are known to applicants. [M1 senior staff meeting] Teaching staff reported that, in order to be as inclusive as possible, the School holds auditions in various locations in the UK and in Japan. The School would also support applicants who struggle to meet the costs for attending auditions Teaching staff also pointed out that the application form and auditions provide an opportunity for applicants to declare any difficulties or specific needs. This information is then provided to tutors and appropriate other staff who will provide special support or make allowances as appropriate. They also stated that the School holds a number of briefing workshops for applicants who want to audition, all of this showing the School's approach to inclusivity. [M3 teaching and support staff meeting]

135 Staff who undertake admissions are appropriately skilled. Audition panels who ultimately make the admissions decisions for undergraduate entry are made up of experienced teaching staff and the Artistic Director. Similarly, the selection panel for postgraduate entry comprises staff in programme and institutional management roles. [097 audition panel document] With regard to professional development and training in support of admissions, the assessment team found that the staff involved in the admissions process receive appropriate training. For example, the Senior School Manager and other staff with responsibility for the admissions process have received training in CMA (Competition and Markets Authority) compliance, inclusivity and immigration [132 training for recruitment and admissions staff] and staff who make admissions decisions also had unconscious bias training. [025 staff training week September 2021] The assessment team also heard that the Artistic Director supports audition panels to ensure the criteria are universally understood and consistently applied. [M1 senior staff meeting] The assessment team concluded that staff understand the School's approach to admissions and their role within it and are adequately skilled and supported to fulfil their role.

136 The assessment team noted supportive commentary on admissions within the student submission [128] and students who met the assessment team felt well supported in the admissions process and were appreciative of the advice and guidance provided. Students especially valued the support leading up to auditions and navigating the new video audition approach and the information they received pre-enrolment. [M2, M2a student meetings] Student Voice Forum minutes [076] evidence positive feedback from student representatives regarding admissions, including clear communication, prioritisation of student safety and immediate implementation of a high standard of training during the pandemic. The School's latest internal first year student survey also shows high levels of student satisfaction with admissions, with 94% of students agreeing that the admissions system was reliable, fair and inclusive. It was agreed by 92% of students that information received prior to starting was sufficient and that they felt prepared. [056 year 1 module and overall feedback 2020-21] The assessment team concluded that students generally agree that the School's admissions system is reliable, fair and inclusive.

## **Conclusions**

137 As described above, the assessment team considered all of the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the assessment team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing the assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

138 The assessment team concludes that the School has a reliable, fair and inclusive

admissions system. This is because it manages its admissions process in accordance with its published Admissions Policy and admissions decisions are made in line with its published entry and audition criteria and processes that are easily accessible to applicants on the School's website. The School has a set of clear policies and procedures in place to manage its admissions process. At present the School is led by the Admissions Policy of CDD, the Conservatoire. Its own policy which is closely modelled on that of CDD will be implemented from September 2022.

139 The admissions requirements set out in the approved programme documentation are consistent with the Admissions Policy.

140 The School manages its relationship with the Japanese overseas agent for the provision of audition space and audition support staff in an appropriate manner through a formal agreement.

141 Information for applicants is transparent, accessible and fit for purpose. This is because comprehensive information about the programmes, entry requirements, audition arrangements and selection criteria, and admissions appeals and complaints are readily available and accessible to all applicants on the website and applicants are well supported during the admissions process.

142 Staff spoke knowledgably about the admissions process, their role in it and how the selection process worked in practice. Staff involved in the admissions process are adequately skilled and supported to fulfil their role. Students confirmed they had access to all the information, advice, support and guidance they required during the admissions process and tend to agree that the admissions process is reliable, fair and inclusive.

143 Until September 2021 the School did not keep full records of admissions decisions which are largely based on audition performance. However, admissions records from the latest recruitment round demonstrate that this situation has changed, and admissions decisions are now fully documented. Admissions records from this period show that the School follows the Admissions Policy and rigorously and consistently applies the specified selection criteria leading the assessment team to conclude that the School makes reliable, fair and inclusive admissions decisions and that this Core practice is met.

144 In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of the School's current and future policies in relation to admissions and widening participation, as well as speaking with staff and students from the School. Recent positive changes to the management of admissions provide supportive evidence on the future approach to admissions and therefore the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.



## Q2 The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses

145 This Core practice expects that the provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.

146 The QAA assessment team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### The evidence the assessment team considered

147 The QAA team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the assessment team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The assessment team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other assessments and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the assessment team is below:

- a Responsibilities Checklist for the School and the University [003]
- b Quality Handbook [004]
- c 5-year Strategic Plan 2022-27 Executive-Summary [005]
- d Memorandum of Agreement in 2019 [008]
- e Interim Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2021-22 [009]
- f The Conjoint Periodic Review Panel Report [010]
- g Student Handbook 2021-22 [028]
- h Foundation Degree Course Handbook 2021-22 [029]
- i BA Top-up Course Handbook 2021-22 [031]
- j MA Choreography Course Handbook 2021-22 [033]
- k Foundation Degree Course Summary Document 2021-22 [030]
- l BA Top-up Course Summary Document 2021-22 [032]
- m MA Choreography Course Summary Document 2021-22 [034]
- n The Code of Practice for Quality Assurance [035]
- o Annex 2 Qualification Level Descriptors [036]
- p Annex 6 Marking [037]
- q Annex C Approval and Withdrawal of Taught Courses [039]
- r Annex P Approval and Quality Assurance Procedures for Collaborative Partnerships [043]
- s Annual Course Monitoring Report 2019-20 for UoK [048]
- t Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21 for CDD [047]
- u External Examiner Report UG (SM) 2020 [049]
- v External Examiner Report UG (DLA) 2020 [050]
- w External Examiner Report UG (DLA) 2021 [052]
- x External Examiner Report PGT 2021 [053]
- y Responses to External Examiner Reports UG and PGT 2021 [054-5]
- z Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21 [056 - 058]
- aa Academic Board Spring 2021 Part A minutes [071]
- bb Academic Board Spring 2021 Part B minutes [072]
- cc Academic Board Summer 2021 Part A minutes [073]
- dd Academic Board Spring 2021 Part B minutes [074]
- ee Student Forum minutes [076 - 079]
- ff Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21 [094]

gg	Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21 for UoK Statistical Data [095]
hh	The Workplan [122]
ii	Strategic Framework [126]
jj	Student submission [128]
kk	Teaching Observations: Pointe year 3; [TO1] Dance year 1; [TO2] Jazz year 2; [TO3] Dance year 1; [TO4] MA workshop with year 1; [TO5] Dance year 3; [TO6] and MA tutorial [TO7]
ll	Meeting with senior staff [M1]
mm	Meeting with students [M2, M2a]
nn	Meeting with academic staff [M3]
oo	Meeting with support staff. [M4]

148 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the assessment team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this assessment are outlined below:

149 No third-party endorsements from professional, statutory or regulatory bodies were available as the School does not run programmes requiring such endorsements.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

150 To test that all elements of the courses sampled are high quality (curriculum design, content and organisation, learning, teaching and assessment approaches) and that the teaching, learning and assessment design will enable students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes, the assessment team viewed a random and representative sample of assessed student work. Further explanation of sampling details is located in How the Assessment was Conducted section of this report.

151 To assess how staff ensure courses are high quality and to assess students' views about quality of the courses sampled, the assessment team met with a representative sample of nine undergraduate and postgraduate students drawn from all programmes and levels, all senior staff associated with higher education provision and support, and a representative sample of 11 teaching and support staff drawn from all programmes and support operations. Further explanations of sampling details are located in the How the Assessment was Conducted section of this report.

### **Why and how the assessment team considered this evidence**

152 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider [Annex 1] was considered by the assessment team either prior to the visit, or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the assessment team to make its judgement regarding the provider's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the assessment team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below:

153 To establish the School's approach to designing and delivering high-quality courses, the assessment team reviewed the Memorandum of Agreement with the University, [008] responsibilities checklist, [003] the Quality Handbook, [004] University's Code of Practice for Quality Assurance [035] and its annexes, [036-043] 5 year Strategic Plan 2022-27 Executive-Summary, [005] the Conjoint Periodic Review Panel Report, [010] annual monitoring reports, [094, 095] Annual Course Monitoring Reports 2019-21, [047, 048] Action Plan 2021-22 Strategic Framework, [126] Academic Board minutes, [071-74] Responses to External Examiner Reports UG and PGT 2021, [054-5] Interim Learning, Teaching and

Assessment Strategy 2021-22 [009] and the Workplan. [122]

154 To establish external examiners' views about the quality of the provision delivered by the School, the assessment team scrutinised external examiner reports, [049, 050, 051, 052,053] minutes from the Board of Examiners, [091, 092, 093] Academic Board minutes [071-074] and Responses to External Examiner Reports UG and PGT 2021. [054-055]

155 To test whether the programmes sampled are high quality and have a well designed curriculum, appropriate teaching and learning strategies and that assessment design enables students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes, the assessment team reviewed approved course documentation including Foundation Degree Course Summary Document 2021-22, [030] BA Top-up Course Summary Document 2021-22, [032] MA Choreography Course Summary Document 2021-22 [034] and associated handbooks. [028, 029, 031, 032, 033]

156 To identify students' views on the quality of their programmes, the assessment team considered the student submission, [128] minutes from the Student Voice Forum, [076- 9] module and course surveys, [056, 057; 058] and spoke to students. [M2, M2a]

157 The assessment team met staff [M1, M3, M4] to establish how staff ensure that courses are high quality.

158 To test whether the quality of programme delivery is high quality, the assessment team undertook a range of teaching and learning observations, including technique classes, tutorials and workshops. [TO1-7]

### **What the evidence shows**

159 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

160 The Memorandum of Agreement with the University [008] outlines the responsibilities of the School for course design and delivery which is also reflected in the responsibilities checklist. [003] These confirm that the School is responsible for the design and delivery of courses with the University being responsible for new programme proposals and the periodic review of existing programmes. The School's approach to the design and delivery of courses is detailed in the Quality Handbook [004] which confirms seven guiding principles including strategic oversight, feedback from external stakeholders to inform course content and the review of design, development and approval process. Principles for teaching and learning include effective learning and teaching underpinned by the School's learning and teaching strategy and is informed through reflective practice. The assessment team found that these approaches align to the University regulations for course design and review, as guided by the University's Code of Practice for Quality Assurance [035] and its annexes. These annexes to the regulations include the use of level descriptors, approval and withdrawal of taught courses, annual monitoring, periodic review, and approved procedures for Collaborative Partnerships [036-043] on which the assessment team formed the view that this framework would facilitate the design and delivery of high-quality courses.

161 The School confirmed [M1; M4] that it has no plans to develop new programmes or courses which was also confirmed in the School's Strategic Plan. [5-year Strategic Plan 2022-27 Executive-Summary 005]

162 In accordance with the University regulations, all programmes are subject to periodic review (every five years) and annual monitoring. [Quality Manual 004] In 2017 the University conducted a periodic review of all three programmes [110] involving a conjoint panel between CDD and the University. The review, which included both student and external input, concluded that the University had confidence in the quality and standards of

the validated programmes delivered at the School. The assessment team found that the recent annual monitoring reports [094 Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21; 095 Annual Course Monitoring Report 2020-21 for UoK Statistical] show that full consideration is given to the programme management and content. For example, the reports show how the School responded to the COVID pandemic by moving classes successfully online. Changes to content (approved by the University) are also included as well as NSS scores and changes as a result of student feedback. [094, 095] For example, in order to address the long gaps in-between timetabled classes, the School developed a new weekly timetable. Plans for improvement embedded within the annual programme reports, [Annual Course Monitoring Reports 2019-21 047-8] feed into action planning [Action Plan 2021-22 Strategic Framework 126; 5-year Strategic Plan 2022-27, Executive-Summary 005] and are considered and discussed by Academic Board. [Academic Board Minutes 071-74; Responses to External Examiner Reports UG and PGT 2021 054-5] The assessment team found further evidence of the School reflecting on curriculum through the Workplan [122] which highlighted activity around decolonising the curriculum. The Interim Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2021/22 [009] contains an objective to deliver a responsive and evolving curriculum to meet the diversity of needs of student talent and aimed to do this through, among other measures, industry-focused projects. An activity put in place to meet this objective was a Masterclass Series initiative shaped by questions from students and delivered by artists from diverse parts of the dance industry to enhance the experience of students during lockdown.

163 The assessment team scrutinised external examiners' views about the quality of courses provided by the School. The complete set of external examiner reports for all undergraduate and postgraduate provision over the last two academic sessions confirmed that external examiners provide consistently favourable feedback about the high quality of teaching and learning provided by the School. [Minutes of Board of Examiners 091-093; External Examiner Reports 049-053] One example includes comments from the external examiner for the FD and BA [050] stating that the School is a thriving leader in the field, with excellent results from the end-of-year shows, and with good practice in the use of continuous assessment elements in all modules. The assessment team noted another example of complimentary feedback from the External Examiner Report PGT 2020 [051] highlighting the achievement of sophisticated individual choreographic voice and creative and artistic vision through a symbiotic relationship between postgraduate and undergraduate students learning together. The assessment team found that the School responds to external examiners' comments, [Academic Board Minutes [071-74; Responses to External Examiner Reports UG and PGT 2021 054-5] although no recommendations had been made in the external examiner reports seen by the assessment team, so there was no evidence of changes being made to the provision as a result. The assessment team therefore formed the view that external examiners agree that the quality of the courses is high.

164 Approved course documentation [030, 032, 034] and associated handbooks [028; 029, 031, 033] contained detailed information on the programme content including methods of study and methods of assessment and contact hours. The assessment team found that without exception the approved documentation defined clearly the relationships between designated learning outcomes, setting of assignments that are appropriate for student challenge, in assessment criteria and achievements, and would enable students to demonstrate the learning outcomes.

165 The assessment team noted positive commentary about overall student satisfaction with the quality of delivery within the student submission [128] in addition to the content of minutes from the Student Voice Forum. [SVF 2020- 1 076- 9] The assessment team compared this information with feedback from students as gathered through module and course surveys, [Yr1 Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21 056; Yr2 Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21 057; Yr3 Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21 058] again noting

consistently high levels of satisfaction with the provision of learning opportunities. This evidence shows that for 2020-21 student feedback indicates that 97% (Year 1), 91% (Year 2), and 92% (Year 3) of students consider their courses to be of high quality. Students confirmed [M2 and M2a] that staff are both accessible and supportive and they were positive about group work adopted in lessons, assessments and the opportunity to have individual as well as group tutorials. One assessment difficulty experienced by a small number of students was noted (see S4, paragraph 96), with the assessment team finding that the School has taken appropriate actions to ensure there is no recurrence. Overall the assessment team found that students confirmed that the learning experience that they received was of high quality.

166 The assessment team found that staff [M1, M3, M4] were able to demonstrate a consistent and thorough understanding of the School's approaches for ensuring high-quality courses, including annual monitoring, periodic review, and action planning, all of which is underpinned by professional development. Staff expressed priorities around digital learning both in terms of using digital platforms for learning and also developing digital skills for students.

167 The assessment team carried out observations of seven classes and tutorials for Pointe year 3 TO1; Dance year 1 TO2; Jazz year 2 TO3; Dance year 1 TO4; MA workshop with year 1 TO5; Dance year 3 TO6; and MA tutorial TO7. These sessions included studio teaching, individual tutorials, rehearsal activity and independent self-study. The assessment team found that all observations demonstrated that lessons were well structured, included clarity of objectives, good planning and organisation, sound methods of delivery, appropriate and varied content, effective use of resources and student engagement. Groupwork in the classrooms was effectively managed and the practical lessons included appropriately set tasks. In all cases the assessment team found that the learning strategies being applied by tutors were well suited to the specialist provision, noting the delivery to be at appropriate levels with respect to the range of challenges. Therefore, the assessment team took the view that programme delivery at the School is of high quality.

## **Conclusions**

168 As described above, the assessment team considered all of the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the assessment team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing the assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

169 The School complies with the requirements of the University's Code of Practice which provides an appropriate framework that enables the design and delivery of high-quality courses. In addition, the School demonstrates that it has a robust and credible approach for designing and delivering high-quality courses by utilising its design and delivery processes in its Quality Manual which are confirmed in its annual monitoring reports and positive outcome of the recent periodic review with the University. Approved course documentation indicates that the teaching, learning and assessment design enables students to meet and demonstrate the intended learning outcomes. External examiner reports confirm that courses are high quality.

170 The assessment team concluded through their observations of teaching and learning that staff demonstrate their clear objectives, good planning and organisation, appropriate content, effective use of resources, and stimulating delivery that engages students. Staff were able to articulate what high quality means in the context of the provider.

Students regard their courses as being of high quality and agreed that there are sufficient appropriately skilled and qualified staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

171 In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of the School's strategies and policies relating to the design and delivery of courses, external examiner and monitoring reports, as well as assessed student work and spoke to staff at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

### **Q3 The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience**

172 This Core practice expects that the provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

173 The QAA assessment team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

#### **The evidence the assessment team considered**

174 The QAA team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the assessment team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The assessment team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other assessments and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the assessment team is below:

- a 5-year Strategic Plan 2022-27 Executive-Summary [005]
- b Organisational Chart [007]
- c Interim Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2021-22 [009]
- d Recruitment Policy [019]
- e Staff Training Week Schedule [September 2021 025]
- f External Examiner Report UG (DLA) 2020 [050]
- g External Examiner Report PGT 2021 [053]
- h Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21 [056 - 058]
- i Student Forum minutes [076 - 079]
- j Statement from the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama on CSB facilities & Resources 2020/21 [102]
- k Role Profiles related to the delivery of HE courses [115]
- l Action Plan 2021-22 [117]
- m The Workplan [122]
- n Strategic Framework [126]
- o Student submission [128]
- p Training for Recruitment and Admissions staff [132]
- q CPD and Training for New Academic Staff 2020-21 [133]
- r Full and part-time staff and highest level of qualification [138]
- s Artistic Director recruitment ad Jun 21 [148]
- t Course Lead MA Choreography advert Oct 20 [149]
- u Director of Higher Education Advert [150]
- v Staff profiles [<https://www.centralschoolofballet.co.uk/about-us/our-people>]
- w Teaching Observations: Pointe year 3; [TO1] Dance year 1; [TO2] Jazz year 2; [TO3] Dance year 1; [TO4] MA workshop with year 1; [TO5] Dance year 3; [TO6] and MA tutorial [TO7]
- x Meeting with senior staff [M1, M4]
- y Meeting with students [M2, M2a]
- z Meeting with academic staff. [M3]

175 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the assessment team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this assessment are outlined below:

176 No third-party endorsements from professional, statutory or regulatory bodies were available as the School does not run programmes requiring such endorsements.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

177 To test whether academic staff deliver a high-quality learning experience the assessment team completed a representative sample of teaching observations selected from the Spring term timetable for the School. Further explanations of sampling details are located in How the Assessment was Conducted section of this report.

### **Why and how the assessment team considered this evidence**

178 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider [Annex 1] was considered by the assessment team either prior to the visit, or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the assessment team to make its judgement regarding the provider's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the assessment team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below:

179 To identify how the provider recruits, appoints, inducts and supports staff so that it meets the outcome, the assessment team considered: Recruitment Policy; [019] Organisational Chart, [007] Artistic Director recruitment ad Jun 21, [148] Course Lead MA Choreography advert Oct 20, [149] Director of Higher Education Advert, [150] CPD and Training for New Academic Staff 2020-21, [133] Staff Training Week Schedule, [September 2021 025] Workplan, [122] Strategic Framework document, [126] Training for Recruitment and Admissions staff, [132] 5-year Strategic Plan 2022-27 Executive-Summary, [005] Action Plan 2021-22 [117] and Interim LTAS 2021-22. [009] The assessment team also spoke to senior staff [M1, M4] and academic staff. [M3]

180 To identify external views about sufficiency, qualifications and skills of staff, the assessment team considered Statement from the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama on CSB facilities & Resources 2020-21 [102] and external examiners' reports. [050,053]

181 To identify the roles or posts the provider has to deliver a high-quality learning experience and assess whether they are sufficient, the assessment team considered Role Profiles related to the delivery of HE courses, [115] staff profiles, [<https://www.centralschoolofballet.co.uk/about-us/our-people>] Full and Part-time Staff and highest level of qualification [138] and Workplan. [122]

182 To identify students' views about sufficiency, qualifications and skills of staff, the assessment team considered the student submission, [128] Yr1 Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21, [056] Yr2 Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21, [057] Yr3 Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21, [058] SVF Autumn Term 2020 minutes, [076] SVF Spring Term 2020 minutes, [077] SVF Summer Term 2020 minutes, [078] SVF Summer Term 202 Minutes. [079] In order to explore how student views were being captured and actioned, the assessment team also spoke with students. [M2, M2a]

183 To test whether academic staff deliver a high-quality learning experience the assessment team undertook a range of teaching and learning observations, including technique classes, tutorials and workshops. [TO1-7]



## What the evidence shows

184 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

185 The School has a clear and comprehensive Recruitment Policy [019] which sets out its approach to the recruitment of its staff. The aims of the policy include to 'ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position and to ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently'. The policy details how vacancies will be advertised, accompanied by a job and personal specification. Application forms are required by candidates detailing academic and employment history. Candidates are invited to attend an interview which includes a teaching observation for academic staff. Relevant checks such as a right to work in the UK, references and CBS are undertaken by the School. The assessment team found that there was clear and accurate advertising of posts [Artistic Director Recruitment Advertisement Jun 21 148; Course Lead MA Choreography Advertisement Oct 20 149; Director of Higher Education Advertisement 150] linked to well defined and documented role profiles [Organisational Chart 007; Role Profiles Related to the Delivery of HE Courses, 115] which demonstrated that appropriately skilled and qualified staff had been recruited to those roles.

186 The assessment team found that the School has a clear approach to supporting new staff. The CPD and Training for New Academic Staff 2020-21 [133] and Staff Training Week Schedule [September 2021 025] demonstrate that a thorough induction is carried out which includes general training/briefings on safeguarding, COVID and human resources information as well as academic sessions on learning outcomes, assessments and marking for academic staff. It was also confirmed that teaching by all new staff is observed by senior members of staff. [M1]

187 All academic staff attend staff training sessions at the beginning of the academic year [Staff Training Week Schedule September 2021 025] and the most recent schedule demonstrated that sessions were held around reflections on assessment and feedback, concerns, complaints and appeals and unconscious bias training. The latter was found to be a priority in the School's Workplan [122] which details the activities supporting the strategic priorities in the Strategic Framework document. [126] Staff confirmed that these sessions are led by senior staff with expertise in research-based pedagogies and artistic practice. [M3] The School provided evidence of ongoing staff updates around the recruitment and admission of students for senior staff and staff involved in admissions which included updates on immigration legislation and inclusivity awareness. [Training for Recruitment and Admissions staff 132] The assessment team found that all training and briefing documents are made available to staff through the virtual learning environment (VLE). [Presentation Internal Shared Drive]

188 The School outlines its aims and activities for staff development in a number of ways. One of the School's strategic goals within its 5-year Strategic Plan [2022-27 Executive-Summary 005] is to develop research and scholarship strategy and staff development in order to produce well informed and highly skilled staff who integrate research and practice. One of the School's strategic priorities listed in the Strategic Framework 2021-2026 document is 'Nurture Our People' through (among other areas) support. The Action Plan for 2021-22 details activity of using the staff appraisal process to identify areas for staff training and record staff development and scholarship activity. Staff confirmed that continuous assessment of teaching is carried out through peer review and observation of classes. [M3] The assessment team found that the Interim Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2021-22 [009] contained objectives to foster and embed research into pedagogy and aimed to do this through, among other things, enabling staff to identify and pursue professional development activities and support pedagogical research, scholarship and collaboration. The activities put in place to meet those aims are Teacher

Wisdom events that offer staff time to reflect on pedagogical issues and promotion of the HEA fellowship. The Workplan [122] confirms that development for HEA Fellowship is a priority and the provider submission confirmed that two members of staff are Fellows of HEA and one was in preparation for a Senior Fellowship. [000] Senior staff explained that teaching staff are supported by the School in seeking associations with other higher education providers and dance industry professionals for the purpose of their own professional development. This includes external validation, external examining, mentoring trainee teachers, and supporting the discipline subject centre DanceHE. Senior [M1; M4] and teaching staff [M3] explained that a distinctive feature of the School's tutoring involves the relationships forged by academic staff with other organisations in the professional arts and dance sectors. Teaching staff confirmed that they were appropriately supported especially around assessment and new staff work alongside experienced staff when marking for the first time. They also highlighted that staff development and support can come through informal Syllabus Meetings, the Teacher Wisdom events, peer reviews and observation of classes and noted that the identification of training needs can also be informed by student feedback. The assessment team formed the view that the School provides credible approaches to support appropriately skilled and qualified staff.

189 The assessment team identified external views about the sufficiency, qualifications and skills of staff through the CDD statement, [Statement from the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama on CSB facilities & Resources 2020/21 102] which confirmed that resources (which includes staff) at the School were sufficient and appropriate. External examiners recognise the effectiveness of staff in providing high-quality learning opportunities to students. [External Examiner Report UG (DLA) 2020 050; External Examiner Report PGT 2021 2021 053] For example, one external examiner noted that the teaching staff at the School are leaders in the field in terms of performance standard achievement, and another commented positively on a new team leader's creative, supervisory and guidance skills. [050, 053] The assessment team therefore formed the view that external views consider staff within the School to have sufficient and appropriate qualifications and skills.

190 The assessment team noted that there are currently 22 full-time and 45 part-time staff working in the School. [Role Profiles Related to the Delivery of HE Courses 115] The assessment team found that the list of role profiles relating to positions in the school related to the delivery of higher education courses [115] demonstrated that there was sufficient depth and breadth of roles in management, teaching and support to deliver a high-quality experience. The School's website claims that it recruits tutors who are experts in teaching dance and delivering support services required by a world-leading professional training organisation. [<https://www.centralschoolofballet.co.uk/about-us/our-people/>] The assessment team found that the staff profiles on the website demonstrated the extensive experience and practice of the tutors in their field with some still practising artists. The profiles also confirmed, as reflected in the document provided by the School about tutors' qualifications, [Full and Part-time Staff and highest level of qualification 138] that most of the 16 permanent teaching staff tutors have either a professional or academic qualification. The Workplan [122] indicates that the School intends to create several professional posts (for example in community outreach) in the Spring of 2022 and review role responsibilities. Therefore, the assessment team formed the view that the School has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality learning experience.

191 The assessment team explored student views about the quality of staff within the School. The student submission [128] praised the responsiveness and accessibility of support professionals and services and commented on the openness and expertise of tutors. Student Module Evaluations all include positive comments about effective teaching with staff who provide challenge, support and motivation, as well as the positivity noted on the skills and support of the physio and wellbeing staff, [Yr1 Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21 056] preparation for studio-based assignments/assessments [Yr2 Module and Overall

Feedback 2020-21 057] and tutors who are not just teachers but also guides into the professional world. [Yr3 Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21 058] The assessment team further noted in the minutes of Student Voice Forum meetings and in meetings with students [M2 and 2a] the consistently positive comments about staff providing support and tuition. [SVF Autumn Term 2020 Minutes 076; SVF Spring Term 2020 Minutes 077; SVF Summer Term 2020 Minutes 078; SVF Summer Term 2021 Minutes 079] The assessment team therefore formed the view that students were positive about the sufficiency, qualifications and skills of staff.

192 The lesson observations carried out by the assessment team [TO1, TO2, TO3, TO4, TO5, TO6, TO7] demonstrated high-quality delivery in that the lessons were well structured, set appropriate challenges and there were opportunities for student engagement. The tutors' subject knowledge and experience were evident throughout all the observations, with practical skills clearly demonstrated in the practical lessons. Therefore the assessment team concluded that staff at the School deliver a high-quality learning experience.

## **Conclusions**

193 As described above, the assessment team considered all of the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the assessment team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing the assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

194 The School has robust and credible approaches for the recruitment, appointment, induction and support of sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff. The School demonstrated this through its comprehensive and clear recruitment policy supported by appropriate job descriptions and appointments. All new starters are provided with a comprehensive induction and all teaching staff received start of the year training on regulations and academic practice. Ongoing staff development is managed and monitored by relevant course teams and informed by strategic aims. Plans for staff development are embedded within the School's key strategies and action plans.

195 The assessment team concluded that there are a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience which was also confirmed by the CDD. External examiners' reports noted positively the skills of the teaching staff. The assessment team confirmed that staff sampled and/or met by the assessment team have been recruited, appointed, inducted and supported according to the provider's regulations or policies. This conclusion is reinforced by the assessment team's direct observations of a sample of classes where tutors demonstrated their skills and expertise. The assessment team further concluded that students agree that there are sufficient appropriately skilled and qualified staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience. The assessment team concludes, therefore that the Core practice is met.

196 In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of the School's strategies and policies relating to the recruitment and development of staff, action plans and training schedules as well as observation of lessons and spoke to staff at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## **Q4 The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience**

197 This Core practice expects that the provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

198 The QAA assessment team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the assessment team considered**

199 The QAA team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the assessment team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The assessment team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other assessments and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the assessment team is below:

- a Quality Handbook [004]
- b Strategic Plan 2022-2027 Executive Summary [005]
- c Organisational Chart [007]
- d Learning and Teaching Committee TOR [020]
- e Study Skills Overview [024]
- f Student Handbook 2021-22 [028]
- g Year 1 Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21 [056]
- h Year 2 Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21 [057]
- i Year 3 Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21 [058]
- j Academic Board Spring 2021 minutes [071]
- k Academic Board Summer 2021 minutes [073]
- l SVF Autumn Term 2020 minutes [076]
- m SVF Spring Term 2020 minutes [077]
- n SVF Summer Term 2020 minutes [078]
- o SVF Summer Term 2021 minutes [079]
- p CDD's Support Through Studies Policy and Procedure [088]
- q Statement from CDD on CSB Facilities and Resources [102]
- r Staff Role Profiles [115]
- s Minutes Learning and Teaching Committee [116].
- t Workplan [122]
- u Student submission [128]
- v Estates and Accommodation Strategy [130]
- w Learning Resources Presentation [157]
- x Meeting with senior staff [M1]
- y Meeting with students [M2 and M2a]
- z Meeting with teaching and support staff [M3]
- aa Presentation Learning Development and Virtual Tour
- bb Teaching observations. [TO1-7]

200 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the assessment team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this assessment are outlined below:

201 As the School does not work with any professional, statutory or regulatory bodies no third-party endorsements could be considered.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

202 The volume of documentation was such that the assessment team was able to consider all relevant evidence. Therefore, no sample was constructed for this Core practice.

### **Why and how the assessment team considered this evidence**

203 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider [Annex 1] was considered by the assessment team either prior to the visit, or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the assessment team to make its judgement regarding the provider's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the assessment team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below:

204 To identify the provider's facilities, learning resources and student support services and how they contribute to delivering a high-quality academic experience, the assessment team considered the CSB submission, [000] the student handbook, [028] the Estates and Accommodation Strategy, [130] the study skills overview [024] and the learning resources presentation. [157]

205 To assess whether the provider has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that they have sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience, the assessment team considered the Estates and Accommodation Strategy, [130] the CSB submission, [000] the CDD statement on CSB facilities and resources, [102] the student handbook, [028] the CDD Support Through Studies Policy and Procedure, [088] staff role profiles [115] and staff biographies on the website, the Strategic Plan 2022-27, [005] the School's Workplan, [122] the organisation chart, [007] the quality handbook, [004] Academic Board minutes 2021, [071, 073] Student Voice Forum minutes, [076-079] annual course monitoring reports [046-048, 094] and internal student surveys, [056-058] the terms of reference [020] and minutes of the Learning and Teaching Committee. [116] The assessment team also undertook seven teaching observations, [TO1-7] conducted a virtual tour of facilities and met with a sample of students from all programmes and levels of study, [M2, M2a] senior staff [M1] and teaching and support staff. [M3]

206 To test that the facilities, resources or services under assessment deliver a high-quality academic experience, the assessment team conducted seven teaching observations across the whole provision [TO1-7] and a virtual tour of the facilities and the VLE. [learning development presentation and virtual tour]

207 To determine whether staff roles are consistent with the delivery of a high-quality learning experience, staff are appropriately qualified and skilled, and understand their roles and responsibilities, the assessment team considered the organisation structure, [007] the role profiles of staff, [115] staff biographies on the School website and met with senior [M1] and teaching and support staff. [M3]

208 To assess students' views about facilities, learning resources and support services,

the assessment team considered the student submission, [128] the student handbook, [028] and met with a sample of undergraduate and postgraduate students from all programmes and levels of study. [M2, M2a]

## **What the evidence shows**

209 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

210 Students at the School have access to a wide range of facilities, including performance and practice-related facilities, studios, injury and fitness suites, information technology equipment and basic assistive software and other supporting resources such as colour overlays, text-to-speech readers, and grammar checking software. Learning resources include the library, research data bases and a VLE. [000 CSB submission, 028 student handbook, 157 learning resources presentation]

211 The assessment team received a demonstration of the School's VLE, which showed how the School uses digital technology to facilitate a high-quality academic experience and support students. [157 learning resources presentation, learning development presentation] The assessment team considered the VLE to be well organised and clearly structured. It is used by the School for information sharing and communication, with students having access to course handbooks, school policies and procedures and other course-related information. Assignment information and programme-specific learning resources support contextual and practical studies. Additionally, the platform provides students with access to extensive study skills information, the library catalogue, and a wealth of health and wellbeing resources. [000 CSB submission, 157 learning resources presentation]

212 A dedicated dance library with extensive dance-specific academic resources including 1,600 books covering dance subject areas, study skills and learning strategies support students' academic development and assessment preparation. A collection of more than 300 dance DVDs and remote access to research databases via an online platform as well as extensive archive of dance-related journals and paraphernalia support the analysis and research of dance and dance performances. [000 CSB submission, 028 student handbook, 024 study skills overview, 157 learning resources presentation]

213 There have been significant recent improvements with the provision of facilities. In June 2021, the School moved to its new purpose-built facilities, the Countess of Wessex Studios, with a gross internal area that is more than twice the size of the former location. The studios are situated in the arts hub of the Southbank, London. The new site is the sole premises of the School with all onsite and online programmes delivered from this venue. [130 estates strategy] The assessment team noted the favourable comments from CDD on the School's new facilities and resources. [102 CDD statement on CSB facilities and resources] The assessment team's real-time virtual tour of resources and a number of teaching observations confirmed that the School has sufficient and well-equipped teaching and learning spaces. [virtual tour of facilities, TO1-7] The facilities are high quality, comprising seven state of the art dance studios all with high-quality sprung dance floors, sound systems and superb accompanist pianos, mirrored walls and wrap-around barres used for technique classes. There is also a studio theatre equipped with professional lighting rig and stage set. Backstage facilities include dressing rooms and various changing and showering facilities. The building also has music recording facilities and a costume department. These provide sufficient space for the number of students the School has and are equipped to enable students to evaluate their technique. This is appropriate for the type of programmes offered. The new facilities also include a higher education learning suite with a learning resource room, seminar and meeting rooms, informal break-out spaces, a storage room and kitchen facilities, thus providing sufficient classroom, independent and social space. In addition, there is a Pilates and rehabilitation suite which is appropriate for the

nature of the provision and demonstrates that the School takes students' health and wellbeing seriously in addressing issues of injury prevention and support for wellbeing. [000 CSB Submission, 130 estates strategy, virtual tour of facilities, TO1-7] The assessment team concluded that the School has sufficient and appropriate facilities and learning resources to provide a high-quality academic experience. The physical learning environments are appropriate to the mode and location of learning and are safe, reliable and accessible to all students.

214 The School has a range of student support services with wellbeing and holistic approaches to health being at the forefront of student support services. All undergraduate students have access to a Student Support Officer who is present every day and is the first port of call when students have a concern. The Student Support Officer makes referrals to other forms of support as appropriate and works closely with the health and wellbeing team. [000 CSB submission] The School assessment team offers a range of treatments and support such as Pilates classes, triage of injury, physiotherapy, rehabilitation plans (which are shared with teaching teams), specialist performance psychology support and strategic preventative mental health sessions with a clinical psychologist. [000 CSB submission, 028 student handbook] Wellbeing workshops are scheduled for each undergraduate year group and students have free access to an online mental health service. [028 student handbook] If necessary, undergraduate and postgraduate students are also able to access external counselling services. In addition, informal life coaching is available through the Support Through Studies team and the Learning Support team provides screening for special learning differences to all students upon entry, and support and tuition with learning equipment. [000 CSB submission] Students can seek guidance on financial matters from the Senior School Manager. [000 CSB submission, 028 student handbook] The assessment team formed the view that the School has student support services that are appropriately focused on the nature of the provision and student needs.

215 The regular contact and high level of trust between the School's staff and students facilitates open dialogue [M1 senior staff meeting, M2, M2a student meetings, M3 teaching and support staff meeting] and staff are well placed to identify behaviours which may indicate a possible student welfare issue, drawing upon their own experience and training to respond appropriately. [<https://www.centralschoolofballet.co.uk/team/>, 115 role profiles] CDD's Support Through Studies Policy and Procedure [088] is utilised when a student's health, wellbeing or behaviour is, or appears to be, at risk of having a detrimental impact upon their studies and/or their ability to cope with student life, or poses a wider risk to others or has a detrimental impact on others. The policy provides detailed procedural guidance on supporting students who need additional help.

216 The School's strategies and plans for facilities, learning resources and support services are demonstrably linked to the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes. This is because the Estates and Accommodation Strategy [130] shows that the space and facilities requirements of the School were carefully considered when commissioning the configuration of the new premises. There are no plans to secure additional premises at this time for core activities. The School's strategy is to learn to maximise the efficiency of how the new building is used for the benefit of higher education students, as well as other participants, and audiences. The effective transition to full practice following lockdown and support of students through mental health challenges as well as the successful operation of the new facilities are strategic goals of the School. [005 strategic plan 2022-27] The delivery of these goals is facilitated by the School's Workplan [122] which lists the various support activities to be undertaken together with targets, outcomes and measures of success and completion dates.

217 The assessment team found that there is appropriate oversight of the facilities. Responsibility for the facilities rests with the Director of Finance and Operations, with

responsibility delegated to the Buildings and IT Manager. [007 organisation chart, 115 staff role profiles] Whilst formal completion of the new building has been achieved, the contractor continues to work through a snagging list which is due for completion at the end of January 2022. This work is managed by the contractor working in liaison with an independent Project Manager, the School's Executive Director, and the Buildings and IT Manager. This group meets weekly and reviews progress on the outstanding works as well as addressing any maintenance items which have occurred during this period. The Buildings and IT Manager oversees day-to-day issues on the site and has set up an email reporting system for staff to flag issues as and when they arise. The School is working on developing an ongoing maintenance plan which will identify a cyclical programme of inspections, planned works and replacements to ensure the mechanical, electrical, and other equipment is properly maintained, repaired and replaced. [130 estates strategy]

218 Similarly, there is appropriate oversight of learning resources. Responsibility for learning resources in relation to the dance contextual curriculum rests with the Learning Development Manager. [115 staff role profiles] The School uses technology to enhance learning through increased accessibility of learning resources. The School plans to increase the use of the VLE as a means of communication and resource sharing and to curation of learning resources. [071 AB minutes spring 2021] To this end the library is being expanded in terms of the quantity of digital resources in response and an eBook database in development from across subject areas is under development. [004 quality handbook, 000 CSB submission] The addition of a careers section on the VLE is also planned. [071 AB minutes spring 2021]

219 The School makes use of a range of sources to ensure facilities, learning resources and student support services contribute to delivering a high-quality academic experience. This includes but is not limited to Student Voice Forum minutes, [076-079] annual course monitoring reports [046-048, 094] and internal student surveys [056-058] and external student surveys like the NSS all of which evaluate the quality and accessibility of facilities and learning resources. The annual monitoring reports for 2020 and 2021 to CDD and the University of Kent show that the School, often in consultation with students, carefully adapted the use of facilities and resources in line the access restrictions in force during the pandemic with a shift to more online resources. [046-048, 094]

220 Recent module feedback from undergraduate students [056-058] shows that students regard the facilities, learning resources and support services as sufficient, high-quality and supporting their learning. The majority of students felt well supported to achieve academic and professional success and agreed that medical, pastoral and wellbeing support available at the School matched their needs. [056-058 module feedback year 1-3 2020-21] Minutes of Student Voice Forum from the last calendar year [076-079] evidence frequent discussions of student wellbeing and mental health support and show that the majority of student requests for change have been implemented. The assessment team noted the students' request for the introduction of formal career guidance and to include ballet and other aspects of dance such as commercial, contemporary, musical theatre and freelance careers planning, as an increasing number of students are interested in following these career paths [078 SVF minutes summer term 2020] but it was unclear from the documentation whether this request would be accommodated by the School as the forum minutes did not provide any follow-up on this item.

221 At School level the monitoring and evaluation of facilities, learning resources and support services are undertaken by the recently established Learning and Teaching Committee, [020 TOR LTC] and formally reported to the Academic Board and the Senior Management Team. Minutes of the inaugural meeting of the committee [116] evidence discussion of the strategy for accessing learning resources following the separation from CDD including any budgetary implications. The Academic Board also has a standing agenda



item, where it receives updates on learning resources and estate management. [071, 073 AB minutes 2021] The assessment team was satisfied that the School has credible, realistic and evidence-based plans for the ongoing provision and maintenance of facilities and learning. Facilities and learning resources are appropriately monitored both at programme and School level and any changes that are made are largely made in response to the changing needs of students and are informed by their feedback.

222 The organisation structure [007] shows that the School has a sufficient number of support staff for the size of its higher education student body. They work in a number of roles with a strong focus on student health and wellbeing and the role profiles of staff [115] clearly identify their responsibilities for the support of students. Staff biographies and background information on the School website [<https://www.centralschoolofballet.co.uk/team/>] shows that the School has in place staff that are appropriately professionally qualified and skilled with extensive practical experience associated with dance performance and choreography. This demonstrates that the student support roles are consistent with the delivery of a high-quality learning experience. The assessment team found that staff understand their roles and responsibilities. Staff who met with the assessment team [M1 senior staff meeting, M3 teaching and support staff meeting] were able to articulate clearly their responsibilities which matched the responsibilities described in the staff role profiles. [115]

223 Students are appropriately informed about the student support system with student support roles being described in the student handbook [028] together with staff contact times. The video student submission [128] is evidence that students value the new physical space and learning resources, with comments indicating that students feel very supported. Students across all programmes who met the assessment team [M2, M2a student meetings] also commented positively on the wide range of learning and support resources available on the VLE and unanimously provided positive feedback on the new facilities. Students appreciate the work of the specialist support staff, for example the medical and wellbeing team, who provide wrap-around care for students who are facing challenges. They value that staff members have a dance-specific approach to their work. Similarly, students comment positively on the student support team who have great sensitivity to their needs. [128 student submission] The assessment team formed the view, therefore, that students tend to regard facilities, learning resources and student support services as sufficient and appropriate and facilitating a high-quality academic experience.

## **Conclusions**

224 As described above, the assessment team considered all of the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the assessment team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing the assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below:

225 The assessment team found that the School has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience. This is because students have access to new purpose-built facilities following the recent move to a new location which includes performance and practice-related facilities, studios, injury and fitness suites. Dance studios and teaching areas are well equipped and appropriate for the School's subject provision. Learning resources include a well stocked dance-specific library and the VLE, which is used for resource provision, information-sharing and communication. The School has a range of student support services with a strong focus on health and wellbeing services which is appropriate for the nature of the School's provision.

226 The School's plans for facilities, learning resources and support services are robust and credible. This is because there is sufficient oversight of facilities and learning resources with regular monitoring of resources at institutional level by the Academic Board and the Learning and Teaching Committee. The School makes effective use of a range of mechanisms, such as annual programme monitoring and student feedback, to ensure facilities, learning resources and student support services continue to contribute to delivering a high-quality academic experience. The School's Strategic Plan and its estates are demonstrably linked to the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes.

227 Students tend to regard the facilities, learning resources and support services as sufficient, high-quality and supporting their learning. The majority of students feel well supported to achieve academic and professional success and agree that the medical, pastoral and wellbeing support available at the School meets their needs.

228 The School has a sufficient number of support staff for the size of its higher education student body. They are appropriately professionally qualified and skilled. Responsibilities of staff for student support are clearly defined in role profiles and well understood by staff. The assessment team, therefore, concludes that the Core practice is met.

229 In making the judgement the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of the School's strategies and policies relating to the resources and facilities at the School, student feedback and meeting minutes, as well as a tour of the School's campus and spoke to staff at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## **Q5 The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience**

230 This Core practice expects that the provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.

231 The QAA assessment team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the assessment team considered**

232 The QAA team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the assessment team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The assessment team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other assessments and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the assessment team is below:

- a CSB submission [000]
- b Academic Board Terms of Reference and Membership [026]
- c Teaching and Learning Committee Terms of Reference and Membership [020]
- d Diversity and Inclusion Forum Terms of Reference and Membership [016]
- e Student Handbook 2021-22 [028]
- f Annual Programme Monitoring Report 2019-20 for CDD [046]
- g Annual Programme Monitoring Report 2020-21 for CDD [047]
- h Annual Programme Monitoring Report 2019-20 for University of Kent [048]
- i Yr1 Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21 [056]
- j Yr2 Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21 [057]
- k Yr3 Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21 [058]
- l Academic Board Spring 2021 Extraordinary Meeting minutes [070]
- m Academic Board Spring 2021 minutes [071]
- n Academic Board Summer 2021 minutes [073]
- o SVF Autumn Term 2020 minutes [076]
- p SVF Spring Term 2020 minutes [077]
- q SVF Summer Term 2020 minutes [078]
- r SVF Summer Term 202 minutes [079]
- s Annual Programme Monitoring Report 2020-21 for University of Kent [094]
- t Internal Process for Module Evaluation [106]
- u Strategic Framework [126]
- v Student submission [128]
- w Meeting with students. [M2, M2a]

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

233 The assessment team met with a representative sample of nine undergraduate and postgraduate students drawn from all programmes and levels.

### **Why and how the assessment team considered this evidence**

234 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider [Annex 1] was

considered by the assessment team either prior to the visit, or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the assessment team to make its judgement regarding the provider's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the assessment team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below:

235 To identify how the School actively engages students in the quality of their educational experience, the assessment team considered the School's Strategic Framework 2021-26, [126] the CSB submission, [000] the terms of reference and membership of the Academic Board, [026] the Learning and Teaching Committee [020] and the Diversity and Inclusion Forum, [016] the student handbook, [028] the module and course evaluation process [106] and undergraduate module 2020-21 from all year groups. [056-058]

236 To assess whether the School has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for engaging students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience the assessment team considered minutes of the Student Voice Forum [076-079] and Academic Board, [070-071, 073] the quality handbook, [004] the results of module and end-of-year surveys [056-058] and programme annual monitoring reports. [046-048, 094]

237 To illustrate the impact of the provider's approach to student engagement the assessment team examined the CSB submission [000] and annual monitoring reports for 2020-21 [047] and the student submission. [128]

238 To identify students' views about student engagement in the quality of their educational experience, the assessment team considered the student submission [128] and met with a sample of undergraduate and postgraduate students from all programmes and levels of study. [M2, M2a]

### **What the evidence shows**

239 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

240 The School's Strategic Framework 2021-26 [126] articulates the School's commitment to building and developing opportunities for student engagement and consultation. Undergraduate students are collectively engaged through the student representative system comprising a minimum of four student representatives for each year group. While two student representatives are members of Academic Board, [026 ToR AB, 028 student handbook] there is no student representation on the Learning and Teaching Committee. [020 ToR LTC] However, the main platform for students, through their representatives, to shape their educational experience is the Student Voice Forum. The forum which is co-chaired by a student representative and a member of staff, the Learning Development Manager, meets termly and reports to the Academic Board. [000 CSB submission, 028 student handbook] The School's Board of Governors nominates a Student Voice governor who attends the Student Voice meetings and through which students have direct access to the governing body. [000 CSB submission, 028 student handbook]

241 Students have further opportunities to contribute to enhancing their experience through the recently established Diversity and Inclusion Forum. [016 ToR DIF] This self-nominated group of staff and students in equal ratios meets once a term to identify issues of diversity and inclusion that should be addressed at the School. [000 CSB submission]

242 Undergraduate students are individually engaged in the quality of their educational experience through the provision of module feedback, end-of-year feedback and participation in the National Student Survey (NSS). [000 CSB submission, 106 module and

course evaluation process, 056-058 module feedback years 1-3 2020-21] The assessment team formed the view that the School has a framework in place that provides undergraduate students with suitable opportunities to engage individually and collectively in the quality of their educational experience.

243 Postgraduate students do not have representatives because cohort sizes are very small. Instead they are invited to attend the Student Voice Forum. They also have the opportunity to give feedback via the VLE or directly to the MA Course Lead. [000 CSB submission]

244 The assessment team found the collective engagement of students through the Student Voice Forum to be effective. This is because there is joint student-staff ownership of agenda setting [M2 student meeting] and meetings are well attended by student representatives from all year groups as well as the student liaison governor of the Board of Governors. The forum meets at termly intervals in accordance with its terms of reference. [076-079 forum minutes spring, autumn, summer term 2020, summer term 2021] Agendas for meetings ensure that there is opportunity for consideration of matters which are of concern to students. Agendas are comprehensive and provide scope for discussion on all aspects of student learning. The meeting minutes examined by the assessment team show discussions on a variety of important topics such as programme annual monitoring, the NSS, the review of policies and external examiners' reports. The meetings also provide the opportunity for student representative to raise operational issues related to course delivery. There are clear actions with deadlines for completion noted in the minutes arising from each meeting and progress of actions is reviewed at each meeting. The minutes also demonstrate the receipt of updates from Academic Board meetings, thus keeping students informed and closing the feedback loop. Minutes of meetings are made available to all students. [076-079 forum minutes spring, autumn, summer term 2020, summer term 2021]

245 Similarly, Academic Board minutes from the last calendar year [070, 071, 073 AB spring, summer 2021 minutes] evidence good attendance by student representatives for those parts of the meetings that do not discuss reserved business and the minutes show that they actively participate in discussions on policy and the curriculum. For example, student representatives are consulted regarding the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. The meetings also show the receipt of the Student Voice Forum minutes and regular discussion of issues arising from forum meetings. The Academic Board considers issues arising from individual engagement with students, such as programme and module surveys, as well as the NSS, and student feedback. [070, 071, 073 AB spring, summer 2021 minutes] For example, Academic Board noted the action of establishing the Diversity and Inclusion Forum was the result of student feedback, [071] and student feedback on the unbiased training rollout to all students. [073]

246 The assessment team found that undergraduate student feedback data from end-of-year, end-of-module surveys [056-058] and the NSS is routinely evaluated and feeds into actions in the annual course monitoring reports the School submits both to the Conservatoire [046-047] and the University of Kent. [048, 094] Due to the small cohort size of the postgraduate programme feedback from postgraduate students has been gathered in dialogue with the Course Lead. [047 CDD AMR 2020-21] Communication about the decisions resulting from feedback and those that impact on the student experience is facilitated formally through the Student Voice Forum and informally by tutors. Documentation on decisions and student feedback is made available to students through their representatives, newsletters and on the VLE, including relevant committee papers, action plans, and any actions taken in response to student feedback. [004 quality handbook]

247 Feedback from students and their representatives has led to positive changes in the student learning experience. For example, students requested that there should be greater

communication between tutors and the medical team regarding injuries and recovery plans. Following this the School implemented a new secure online platform that enables teachers to access the updated rehabilitation processes of injured students. [000 CSB submission, 047 CDD AMR 2020-21] Student representatives influenced the delivery of ballet this academic year. They had expressed concerns about the possibility of returning to larger class sizes following the removal of social distancing requirements and stated a strong preference for consistency of training through the year. Consequently, class schedules have been adapted to allow for some smaller size groupings while retaining the consistency of teaching. [000 CSB submission, 047 course annual monitoring] The assessment team therefore considered the School's plans for collective engagement of students to be credible and robust because the documentation examined clearly shows staff and student representatives engaging in constructive dialogue, striking a balance between giving feedback and contributing to future developments and leading to change where necessary and the School valuing student comments and feedback.

248 In addition to individual formal feedback systems and procedures such as surveys, and the use of collective student representation, the School encourages informal feedback from individual students. Students who had used this route reported that requests they had made have been followed through by tutors who have listened and taken action. [128 student submission]

249 Students who met the assessment team reported that the School engages them in the quality of their educational experience. Student representatives stated that they felt supported and empowered, and that there are sufficient opportunities for them to formally engage in decision making on the enhancement of the student experience. They confirmed that sufficient training for student representatives is provided by the School at the start of each academic year. The Learning Development Manager and the Student Liaison Governor can provide support to student representatives, for example on how to conduct themselves in meetings and effectively get their point across. Students particularly appreciated the open atmosphere at the School where they can approach any member of staff. [M2 and M2a student meetings] They expressed the view that the Student Voice Forum works well and agreed that the School is responsive to their feedback and that they contribute to the management of their programmes. [M2 and M2a student meetings, 128 student submission] The assessment team formed the view that the School manages the student voice system well and adequately supports student representatives in fulfilling their role.

## **Conclusions**

250 As described above, the assessment team considered all of the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the assessment team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing the assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

251 The assessment team concludes that the School actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. This is because its plan to engage students is credible and robust. The School ensures that through the student representative system students can contribute effectively to the enhancement of their learning experience through membership of key academic committees like the Academic Board and joint ownership of the agenda setting process of the Student Voice Forum. Student representatives are well prepared for their role through training and ongoing support by the Learning and Development Manager and the Student Liaison Governor. Individually, students have the opportunity to provide feedback on their learning experience through

formal (internal and external) student surveys which are routinely analysed by the School, as well as informal feedback to staff, and action is taken where required.

252 The School has a clear and effective approach to engaging students which is understood by students who report that the student representative system is effective. Student representatives make meaningful contributions at Academic Board and the Student Voice Forum which discusses important aspects of their learning experience. Their feedback is taken seriously and acted upon by the School. Examples of the School making changes to the student learning experience show the positive impact student feedback has had in the process. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

253 In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of the School committees' terms of reference and minutes where feedback is considered, monitoring reports and survey results and feedback, and spoke to staff and students at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## **Q6 The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students**

254 This Core practice expects that the provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.

255 The QAA assessment team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the assessment team considered**

256 The QAA team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the assessment team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The assessment team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other assessments and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the assessment team is below:

- a CSB submission [000]
- b University of Kent Academic Appeals Procedures [038]
- c CDD Complaints Policy and Procedure [089]
- d CSB Student Complaints Procedure [107]
- e CSB Complaints Policy [013]
- f CSB Whistleblowing Policy [012]
- g CDD Policy on Sexual Misconduct Harassment and Related Behaviour [086]
- h Student Handbook 2021-22 [028]
- i Foundation Degree Course Handbook 2021-22 [029]
- j BA Top-up Course Handbook 2021-22 [031]
- k MA Choreography Course Handbook 2021-22 [033]
- l Academic Board Minutes Spring 2021 [072]
- m Annual Complaints and Appeals Case Report 2019 [108]
- n Annual Complaints and Appeals Case Report 2020 [109]
- o Terms of Reference Academic Board [026]
- p Terms of Reference Learning and Teaching Committee [020]
- q Student Handbook 2021-22 [028]
- r Learning Resources Presentation [157]
- s Stage 1 Report Form [153]
- t Stage 2 Resolution Record [154]
- u Correspondence with Complainant [155]
- v Email Correspondence with Respondent [156]
- w Meeting with students [M2 and 2a]
- x Meeting with teaching and support staff. [M3]

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

257 As the School has only received one complaint no sample has been constructed.



## **Why and how the assessment team considered this evidence**

258 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider [Annex 1] was considered by the assessment team either prior to the visit, or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the assessment team to make its judgement regarding the provider's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the assessment team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below:

259 To identify the School's processes for handling complaints and appeals the assessment team considered the University of Kent Academic Appeals Procedure, [038] the CDD Complaints Policy and Procedure, [089] the CDD Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Related Behaviour, [086] the CSB Complaints Policy [013] and complaints procedures, [107] and the CSB Whistleblowing Policy. [012]

260 To assess whether the School has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for developing and operating fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints which are accessible to all students, the assessment team considered the CSB complaints procedures [107] and met with teaching and support staff. [M3]

261 To identify the levels of complaints and appeals overall and by type, the assessment team considered the annual case reports for 2019 and 2020. [108, 109]

262 To test complaints were dealt with in a fair, transparent and timely manner, the assessment team examined the paperwork for the only formal complaint received in the last three years consisting of stage 1 report form, [153] stage 2 resolution record, [154] and correspondence with the complainant. [155 and email correspondence with the respondent [156]] The assessment team also considered the annual case reports for 2019 and 2020, [108, 109] the terms of reference for the Learning and Teaching Committee [020] and Academic Board [026] and minutes of the Academic Board. [072]

263 To assess whether information for potential and actual complainants and appellants is clear and accessible, the assessment team considered the student handbook, [028] course handbooks for all programmes [029, 031, 033] and the School's VLE. [157 Presentation Learning Development and Virtual Tour]

264 To identify students' views about the clarity and accessibility of the provider's complaints procedures, the assessment team met with a sample of students from all programmes. [M2, M2a]

## **What the evidence shows**

265 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

266 The School is not responsible for managing academic appeals which is conducted by the University of Kent under its Academic Appeals procedures. [038 UoK Academic Appeals Procedures]

267 For the consideration of complaints, the School currently uses the CDD Complaints Policy and Procedure [089] which sets out a three-stage process for the resolution of complaints. The School is responsible for managing the first two stages (informal verbal complaints and formal investigation following a written complaint) to the timescales specified in the policy. CDD manages the final stage of the process - the appeal of decision. [089 CDD Complaints Policy and Procedure] For complaints about sexual misconduct, harassment and

related behaviour it uses CDD's policy on these matters, [086 CDD Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Related Behaviour] allowing staff and students to raise concerns about potentially sensitive and serious issues.

268 The School has developed its own complaints procedures [107] which will come into force when the relationship with CDD comes to an end. The School's procedures align with those of CDD with regard to the stages for complaints resolution but do not allow for group complaints. [107 CSB complaints procedure, 089 CDD Complaints Policy and Procedure] The School also has its own complaints policy for non-higher education related activities related to general student wellbeing, [013 Complaints Policy] and has separate policies related to whistleblowing. [012]

269 The assessment team found that the School has credible and robust plans for developing and operating fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints. This is because its complaints procedure [107] has multiple clearly defined stages for complaint resolution, ranging from informal resolution to formal investigation by a nominated internal independent investigator of sufficient seniority and review of the outcome by an independent reviewer if the complainant remains dissatisfied. Once the internal process has been exhausted complaints can be escalated to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Timescales for submission and consideration of complaints are reasonable and responsibilities for the consideration of complaints and reporting outcomes are clearly defined. [107 CSB complaints procedure] The assessment team formed the view that this approach ensures sufficient impartiality through the use of independent investigators and reviewers and is likely to deliver fair and timely outcomes for students.

270 The assessment team noted in the terms of reference of the Learning and Teaching Committee [020] and Academic Board, [026] committees have monitoring and reporting responsibilities with regards to academic appeals and complaints received. The assessment team could not consider any actual examples of formal complaint resolution because there have been no stage two or three complaints in the last three years. The assessment team did, however, examine four stage one complaints from 2019 and 2020. These are logged in a case reporting document [108, 109] (which also includes non-higher education complaints) and reported annually to the Academic Board. [072 AB minutes] While the School has not undertaken a thematic analysis of informal complaints, the assessment team is satisfied with this approach as the discussions at Academic Board allow sufficient critical reflection and the approach is proportionate given the small number of cases.

271 The assessment team was able to examine the management of a harassment complaint considered by the School under the Conservatoire's Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Related Behaviours Policy. [086] From the documentation it was clear the School handled this complaint in accordance with the documented procedures in a fair, transparent and timely manner. [153 stage 1 report form, 154 stage 2 resolution record, 155 correspondence with the complainant, 156 email correspondence with the respondent]

272 Through discussions with teaching and support staff [M3] the assessment team found that, among staff, there is clarity and understanding of the School's approach to complaints and appeals, the appeals and complaints procedures that apply and the responsibility of School staff, the awarding body and CDD within them.

273 There is clear and accessible information for appellants and complainants because short descriptions of the University Appeals Policy and the Conservatoire's Complaints Policy and Procedure can be found in the student handbook. [028] They are also signposted in all course handbooks [029, 031, 033] which hyperlinks to the full policies on the University's and CDD's websites and the School's VLE. [157 Presentation Learning Resources]

274 Students [M2 and 2a] who met the assessment team stated that they are confident that they understand where to find information about complaints and appeals, including speaking to the Student Support Officer and the Learning Development Manager about any potential concerns. They confirmed that the policies are available in their handbooks and on the VLE. [M2, M2a] The assessment team therefore formed the view that students consider the complaints and appeals procedures to be clear and accessible.

## **Conclusions**

275 As described above, the assessment team considered all of the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the assessment team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing the assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

276 The assessment team concludes that the School implements CDD's policies and procedures that currently govern complaints, including those on sexual misconduct and harassment, in a rigorous manner. Examples of complaints scrutinised have been dealt with according to the published procedures and outcomes are fair and timely.

277 The School has credible and robust plans for developing and operating fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints once its relationship with CDD ends. The procedures it has developed to manage complaints are clear with transparent responsibilities and reasonable timescales for complaint resolution articulated. The procedures are likely to lead to fair and timely outcomes for students. Staff were able to articulate the School's approach to complaints and appeals well.

278 There is clear and accessible information for appellants and complainants in course and general student handbooks. Students confirmed that information is easily available and displayed an understanding who to contact for guidance and advice on the processes. They did not raise any concerns about the fairness, transparency or accessibility of the procedures, or their application. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

279 In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of new and current policies relating to complaints, approaches to annual monitoring of complaints, an example of handling a complaint under the Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Related Behaviours Policy, and spoke with staff and students at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## **Q8 Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them**

280 This Core practice expects that where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.

281 The QAA team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the assessment team considered**

282 The QAA team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the assessment team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The assessment team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other assessments and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the assessment team is below:

- a Quality Handbook [004]
- b Memorandum of Agreement [008]
- c Conjoint periodic review [010]
- d Academic Board ToR [026]
- e BA Top-up course handbook [031]
- f Code of Practice for Quality Assurance Introduction [035]
- g Annex 2 Qualification Level Descriptors [036]
- h Annex 6 Marking [037]
- i Annex 13 Academic Appeals [038]
- j Annex C Approval and Withdrawal of Taught Courses [039]
- k Annex E Annual Monitoring [040]
- l Annex F Periodic Review [041]
- m Annex J Board of Examiners [042]
- n Annex P Approval and Quality Assurance Procedures for Collaborative Partnerships [043]
- o Annual Course monitoring report 2020-21 for CDD [047]
- p External Examiner Report UG SM 2020 [049]
- q External Examiner Report UG DLA 2020 [050]
- r External Examiner Report PGT 2020 [051]
- s External Examiner Report UG DLA 2021 [052]
- t External Examiner Report PGT 2021 [053]
- u Response to external examiner report UG 2021 [054]
- v Response to external examiner report PGT 2021 [055]
- w Annual Monitoring Report 2020-21 for UoK [094]
- x External Examiner Report UG SM 2021 [096]
- y Tour risk assessment [140]
- z Risk assessment filming of the Nutcracker [141]
- aa Visiting production agreement Yvonne Arnaud Theatre [142]
- bb Memo Yvonne Arnaud Theatre [143]

- cc Meeting with senior staff [M1, M4]
- dd Meeting with students [M2 and M2a]
- ee Meeting with teaching and support staff [M3]
- ff Final meeting. [M4]

283 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the assessment team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

284 The assessment team did not assess how other organisations regard the quality of courses delivered in partnership as the School does not deliver programmes requiring endorsements from third parties, such as professional, statutory or regulatory bodies or Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical end-point assessments.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

285 No sampling activity was undertaken for this Core practice.

### **Why and how the assessment team considered this evidence**

286 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider [Annex 1] was considered by the assessment team either prior to the visit, or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the assessment team to make its judgement regarding the provider's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the assessment team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below:

287 To assess how the provider ensures courses are high quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them, the assessment team considered the Quality Handbook, [004] Memorandum of Agreement, [008] Academic Board ToR, [026] and the University's Code of Practice for Quality Assurance. [035-043]

288 To assess whether the provider has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring a high-quality academic experience in partnership work, the assessment team considered the Quality Handbook, [004] Conjoint periodic review, [010] BA top-up course handbook, [031] National Tour Ballet Central, [139] Tour risk assessment, [140] Risk assessment filming of the Nutcracker, [141] visiting production agreement Yvonne Arnaud Theatre [142] and Memo Yvonne Arnaud Theatre. [143]

289 To assess students' views about the quality of courses delivered in partnership, the assessment team met with students. [M2, M2a]

290 To test the basis for the maintenance of high quality within specific partnerships, and that those arrangements are in line with the provider's regulations or policies, the assessment team considered Memorandum of Agreement, [008] Conjoint periodic review, [010] National Tour Ballet Central, [139] Tour risk assessment, [140] Risk assessment filming of the Nutcracker, [141] visiting production agreement Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, [142] Memo Yvonne Arnaud Theatre. [143]

291 To test that external examiners consider courses delivered in partnership to be of high quality, thus confirming the effectiveness of the underpinning arrangements, the assessment team considered external examiner reports. [049-053]

292 To test whether staff understand and discharge effectively their responsibilities to

the awarding body, the assessment team met with senior staff [M1] and with teaching and support staff. [M3]

### **What the evidence shows**

293 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

294 The School works in partnership with the University of Kent to deliver programmes validated by the University. A formal Memorandum of Agreement [008] exists between the School and the University and this serves as an overarching agreement for the partnership. This document clearly and comprehensively establishes the responsibilities of both parties including that the School has responsibility for all aspects of the recruitment and selection of students, all teaching and support services, the provision of learning resources and facilities, and the processing of all complaints, appeals and disciplinary cases. There is no single School policy for its management of partnerships. However, as part of the above agreement the School must comply with the University's Code of Practice for Quality Assurance, [035-043] which provides an effective structure for the management of the agreement. This includes requirements, for example, for the School to report annually on the outcome of its procedures for monitoring the quality and standards of the provision, as well as complying with the audit and review requirements of the University.

295 The School maintains policies, procedures, and guidance documents to ensure the quality of its courses and to support its collaborative agreement with the University. These include policies that govern areas such as admissions [018] and complaints. [013] A Quality Handbook [004] provides guidance to staff about various areas of the School's operations including learning and teaching, the monitoring and evaluation of the provision, assessment, marking and moderation, and the external examiner process. Staff informed the assessment team [M4] that this had only been recently developed. The School's handbook includes links to relevant annexes of the University's Code of Practice for Quality Assurance [035-043] to ensure the information provided is comprehensive and the assessment team found this document to be fully in line with the expectations of the University's Code of Practice. The terms of reference for the School's Academic Board [026] refer to oversight of the School's responsibilities that contribute to the University's processes for the appointment of external examiners and processes for assessment and examination results. All the above documents include information that is relevant and consistent with the Memorandum of Agreement [008] and the University's Code of Practice. These policies and the partnership agreement are therefore clear, comprehensive and up to date.

296 Senior staff confirmed that the collaboration with the University is the School's only formal partnership, [M4] although the School also maintains arrangements with other organisations that provide venues for the national tour undertaken by Level 6 students. This tour forms a 30-credit National Tour module with specific learning outcomes in the BA top-up course. [031 BA Top-up Course Handbook] The School provided a clarification statement to the assessment team that details how the module and tour is planned and delivered to ensure as far as possible the equivalence of opportunity for students taking part, for example in repertoire and casting, and to ensure they meet the needs of the curriculum. The clarification statement confirms the role of the School's staff in the teaching and assessment of the module. Examples of other relevant documentation for conducting the tours were also scrutinised by the assessment team, including risk assessments [140, 141] and relating to the visiting production agreement with venues. [142, 143] These establish the terms and conditions for the School's company, Ballet Central, to perform at venues so that students can be supported by the School and that their experience is high quality, for example in ensuring that the technical requirements and facilities provided at venues are appropriate. These documents are comprehensive and reflect a credible approach to ensure a high-quality academic experience for students. Students who met with the assessment team [M2,

M2a] commented positively on their Ballet Central experience including confirmation that there are clear health and safety protocols in place when visiting performance venues.

297 The School has established structures and processes for annual monitoring in place that are in line with the University's quality assurance framework, as detailed in its formal written agreement [008] and outlined in the Code of Practice. [040 Annex E Annual Monitoring] The School's annual review processes culminate in the production of Annual Course Monitoring Reports for the University, the most recent of which were examined by the assessment team from 2019-20 [048] and 2020-21. [094, 095] These make use of a template provided by the University and the reports draw on external examiner feedback and data on student achievement [095] to evaluate the quality of the provision. The annual review process is complemented by an annual report provided by the Academic School Liaison Officer on the outcomes of meetings between School staff and the officer through the academic year. The assessment team inspected the last two of these reports from October 2020 and 2021, which make use of a template provided by the University, in which the University's officer commented that the liaison process runs smoothly, and that the School's staff are very supportive of the process. The reports confirm specifically that the School meets the requirements of the University in terms of its admissions, internal marking and moderation processes, staffing and internal committee oversight of quality assurance procedures such as external examining and annual monitoring.

298 The most recent periodic programme review report [010] dates from 2017. The University's panel expressed confidence in the quality of the validated programmes offered by the School and found that students were provided with excellent teaching, supervision and support. The report was also complementary about the way the School's staff had engaged with its collaborative partner in the review process.

299 External examiners submit annual reports to the University. The assessment team inspected the full set of six external examiner reports from all programmes covering the last two completed academic years [049-053, 096] as well as examples of the responses sent from the School to the external examiners' comments in 2021. [054, 055] External examiners uniformly confirmed that the experience provided to students is of a high quality.

300 In their meetings with the assessment team, teaching and support staff [M3] demonstrated an understanding of application of School processes when working in partnership with the University, such as complaints, course design and the accreditation of prior or experiential learning. This included explanations of how such processes work and when and how such processes might involve communication with the University; for example, when in the process a student would be able to make a complaint to the University. Senior staff [M1, M4] were able to articulate how the School makes use of its annual monitoring to reflect upon and enhance the provision including aspects of the School's curriculum design and widening its approach to modes of assessment used on courses. Through these discussions staff demonstrated a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities for quality when working in partnership.

## **Conclusions**

301 As described above, the assessment team considered all of the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the assessment team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing the assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

302 Where the School works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them. This is because it has clear and comprehensive policies that support its partnership agreement with the School's validating University. There are also robust and credible plans for the management of its responsibilities in supporting the above agreement, for example in ensuring the School's Quality Handbook is in line with the University's Code of Practice for Quality Assurance. Where the School works with venues in the delivery of its Level 6 National Tour module, there are robust and credible plans in place to ensure a high-quality academic experience for students. Students also confirmed their positive experience of this module. External examiner reports and reports from the University's Liaison Officer and most recent periodic review confirm that the academic experience is high quality. Staff from the School understand their responsibilities for quality. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

303 In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of processes relating to the working of partnerships, external examiners and annual monitoring reports, risk assessments and spoke with staff and students at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.



## Q9 The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes

304 This Core practice expects that the provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

305 The QAA assessment team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### The evidence the assessment team considered

306 The QAA team assessed the evidence presented, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if the provider could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the assessment team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The assessment team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other assessments and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the assessment team below:

- a CSB submission [000]
- b Student submission [128]
- c Access and Participations Plan [006]
- d Strategic Plan Executive Summary [005]
- e Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures [011]
- f Undergraduate Terms and Conditions [014]
- g MA Terms and Conditions [015]
- h Study Skills - An Overview [024]
- i Staff Training Week Schedule September 2021 [025]
- j Student Handbook 2021-22, [028]
- k Foundation Degree Course Handbook 2021-22 [029]
- l BA Top-up Course Handbook 2021-22 [031]
- m MA choreography Handbook [033]
- n Annual Programme Monitoring Report 2019-20 for CDD [046]
- o Annual Programme Monitoring Report 2020-21 for CDD [047]
- p External Examiner Report UG (SM) 2020 [049]
- q External Examiner Report UG (DLA) 2020 [050]
- r External Examiner Report PGT 2020 [051]
- s External Examiner Report UG (DLA) 2021 [052]
- t External Examiner Report PGT 2021 [053]
- u Response to External Examiner Report UG 2021 [055]
- v Response to External Examiner Report PGT 2021 [054]
- w Yr1 Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21 [056]
- x Yr2 Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21 [057]
- y Yr3 Module and Overall Feedback 2020-21 [058]
- z CSB303 VPP2 Feedback [062]
- aa CSB103 Dance Studies Feedback [066]
- bb CSB203 PDP4 Feedback [067]
- cc Academic Board Spring 2021 Part A [071]
- dd Academic Board Spring 2021 Part B minutes [072]
- ee SVF Summer Term 2020 minutes [078]
- ff CDD Terms and Conditions [080]

gg	CDD Support Through Studies Policy and Procedure [088]
hh	Extension to Learning Agreement [099]
ii	Support Through Studies Template [100]
jj	Annual Student Cases Reporting 2019 [108]
kk	Annual Student Cases Reporting 2020 [109]
ll	APEL for Direct Entry Students [114]
mm	Role Profiles related to the delivery of HE courses [115]
nn	Action Plan 2021-22 [117]
oo	Discussion of module and overall feedback reports [118]
pp	CPD and Training for New Academic Staff 2020-2021 [133]
qq	Masterclass Series and Guest Lectures 2020-21 [137]
rr	Full and part-time staff and highest level of qualification [138]
ss	National Tour Ballet Central [139]
tt	Strategic Framework [126]
uu	Central Workplan [122]
vv	QSR Request for additional information 120122 Q7 [152]
ww	Learning Resources Presentation [157]
xx	Assessed Coursework Sample folder
yy	Observations of Teaching TO1-7
zz	Presentation Learning Development and Virtual Tour
aaa	Meeting with senior staff [M1]
bbb	Meeting with students [M2 and 2a]
ccc	Meeting with teaching and support staff [M3]
ddd	Final meeting. [M4]

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

307 To test whether students are given comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback the assessment team viewed a random sample of assessed student work which was considered to be representative of the provision. A further explanation of the sampling details is provided in How the Assessment was Conducted.

### **Why and how the assessment team considered this evidence**

308 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by the provider [Annex 1] was considered by the assessment team either prior to the visit, or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the assessment team to make its judgement regarding the provider's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the assessment team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below:

309 To identify the provider's approach to student support, including how it identifies and monitors the needs of individual students, the assessment team considered the Strategic Framework, [126] Central Workplan, [122] Role Profiles Related to the Delivery of HE Courses, [115] Student Handbook 2021-22, [028] Foundation Degree Course Handbook 2021-22, [029] BA Top-up Course Handbook 2021-22, [031] MA Choreography Handbook, [033] Study Skills - An Overview, [024] Learning Resources Presentation, [157] Extension to Learning Agreement, [099] CDD Support Through Studies Policy and Procedure, [088] Support Through Studies Template, [100] Masterclass Series and Guest Lectures 2020-21, [137] National Tour Ballet Central, [139] Annual Programme Monitoring Report 2019-20 for CDD, [046] Annual Programme Monitoring Report 2020-21 for CDD, [047] APEL for Direct Entry Students, [114] Academic Board Spring 2021 Part B minutes, [072] Annual Student Cases Reporting 2019, [108] Annual Student Cases Reporting 2020, [109] Discussion of

Module and Overall Feedback Reports, [118] Academic Board Spring 2021 Part A, [071] Undergraduate Terms and Conditions, [014] MA Terms and Conditions, [015] CDD Terms and Conditions. [080] The School also provided the Presentation on Learning Development and the Virtual Tour of Facilities, and the team met with senior staff [M1, M4] and teaching and support staff. [M3]

310 To assess whether the provider has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that all students are supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes, the assessment team considered Study Skills - An Overview, [024] QSR Request for Additional Information 120122 Q7, [152] External Examiner Reports, [049-053] and Role Profiles Related to the Delivery of HE Courses. [115] The assessment team also met with senior staff, [M1, M4] students [M2, M2a] and teaching and support staff. [M3]

311 To test whether students are given comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback, the assessment team considered CSB303 VPP2 Feedback, [062] CSB103 Dance Studies Feedback, [066] CSB203 PDP4 Feedback, [067] External Examiner Report UG (DLA) 2021, [052] Student submission, [128] Assessed Coursework Sample folder student submission, [128] Sample of Assessed Coursework, [061-067] and the Learning Resources Presentation. [157] The assessment team met with senior staff, [M1, M4] students [M2, M2A] and teaching and support staff. [M3]

312 To test whether staff understand their responsibilities, are appropriately skilled and will be supported in delivering student support, the assessment team met senior staff [M1, M4] and teaching and support staff. [M3]

313 To assess students' views about student support mechanisms and assess whether students who have made particular use of student support services regard those services as accessible and effective, the assessment team scrutinised module feedback, [056-058] the student submission [128] and met with students. [M2, M2a]

### **What the evidence shows**

314 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

315 The School's approach to supporting its students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes is outlined in the School's Quality Handbook. [004] This establishes nine guiding principles to enable student achievement. These include the allocation of training and resources to student support services to enable their effective delivery and evaluation, establishing equality of opportunity for all students to develop academic and professional skills, and facilitating a supporting environment for students through the provision of an inclusive and engaging community. Further information about some aspects of student support, including the School's approach to providing assessment feedback, is provided elsewhere in the handbook, and discussed below. The guiding principles to enable student achievement are supported by some of the School's Strategic Priorities for 2021-26 that are listed in its Strategic Framework. [126] These include specific actions such as to create a Diversity and Inclusion Plan, as well as more broadly defined priorities such as to develop 'a culture of care and respect across the organisation, actively supporting health and wellbeing in all activities'.

316 Students are informed about the specific support that is available to them through the Student Handbook [028] with further details being provided in the course handbooks for the School's three programmes. [029, 031, 033] Together, these provide information about the support available for students with disabilities, as well as academic support, financial assistance, English language support, counselling, and support for individuals' mental health and wellbeing. These handbooks also remind students that a dancer's training is physically demanding, and so advice and support is also detailed for this aspect of their development in

terms of injury prevention and recovery. The handbooks also detail how the School's courses are designed to support successful professional outcomes. These provide professional preparation for entry into a career in professional dance including programme aims and outcomes that support professional development. Examples include the programme aimed to equip students with the ability to make informed choices regarding employment in the national and international dance community, and a course outcome to be able to research, identify and respond to employment opportunities including the ability to demonstrate appropriate performance skills at audition. [031 BA Top-up Course Handbook 2021-22]

317 The Central Workplan, [122] an institutional-level action plan, supports some elements of the above approach to student support with specific actions, indicators to evaluate success and timescales. Actions relevant to the support of successful academic and professional outcomes for students include the ongoing Support through Studies policy and procedure, [088] discussed below, the development of new digital resources to support academic good practice by February 2022, and an action to introduce a Pilates programme as a preventative measure to support the health and wellbeing of students which has been established on the School's timetable. The assessment team agreed that the above strategic documents, handbooks and action plan provide evidence of a credible institutional approach to student support that facilitates successful academic and professional outcomes.

318 Student support services are overseen by the Head of Studies and the Learning Development Manager. [115 Role Profiles related to the Delivery of HE courses] The two postholders have responsibility for coordinating the delivery of a variety of tutorials for students to support their technical and academic learning. These include weekly sessions that develop good academic practices for all students and specific additional weekly tutorials for those students who have been identified as requiring specialist support. The Learning Development Manager has responsibility for coordinating the administration for those with Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) arrangements, and the additional support for students with a specific learning difference (SpLD). A Student Support Officer provides a focal point for all students to discuss matters on a confidential basis. Senior staff [M1] and teaching and support staff [M3] explained that students with additional learning needs are also able to receive additional one-to-one tutorials with staff who have expertise in specific areas including mental health and disability. All teaching staff received training in the Autumn of 2021, as part of the School's approach to continuous professional development, in approaches to learning for students with SpLDs and how to apply those approaches in the context of the School's provision. [025 Staff Training Week Schedule September 2021] Ongoing training for staff to support students includes Prevent and mental health first-aid training, assessing student work, and unconscious bias professional development programmes.

319 The assessment team was provided with a Learning Resources Presentation [157] which demonstrated how the School's VLE is used to support students. The VLE is also overseen by the Learning Development Manager and is being developed, in line with the Central Workplan action, [122] to further support study skills with digital resources for academic skills such as academic writing, referencing and critical analysis. These resources are available to all students; however, the School also uses them in the provision of the specialised support it provides, described below.

320 All incoming students are screened for dyslexia. [157] The Learning Development Manager organises full assessments where the screening suggests this would be appropriate and, should the resulting report confirm dyslexia, students are supported to apply for DSA. These students are provided with a needs assessment for their studies at the School, and with the one-to-one tutorials referred to above. Students who declare an SpLD during the admissions or induction processes, or who are identified by staff, are also

supported through the above process to identify the additional arrangements that are required. These are detailed in an Extension to Learning Agreement, an example of which was inspected by the assessment team, [157] which sets out the additional support or other individual adjustments agreed to help with the achievement of the programme learning outcomes. This is agreed between the student and the Learning Development Manager including a record of the staff who are informed to ensure that the relevant individual support is provided effectively.

321 The School has identified and seeks to support students recruited from overseas, for whom English is not a first language, as needing specialised support. [024 Study Skills – An Overview] These students receive specific additional study skills classes each week. The School has found that its overseas students are more likely to make the most of such support in specific classes with their peers with similar language needs. Two or three students a year may gain direct entry to the second year of the Foundation degree course. These students gain entry through the Approved Prior Educational Learning (APEL) process [114] and are also assessed by the School, as part of this process, to identify any additional needs that should be provided to support them to bridge any gap in their studies to be successful on the course. Teaching and support staff who met the assessment team [M3] emphasised the importance of the School's diagnostic processes and confirmed that they are informed of any specific needs in advance so that they can support students as much as possible.

322 The School operates a Support Through Studies policy and procedure [088] to proactively support individual students to engage as fully as possible with their course to be successful. The procedure is designed to encourage a holistic approach to tracking student support, encompassing informal frontline resolution such as learning agreements and reasonable adjustments. But the procedure can also be used by staff to raise concerns about any individual student's progress, including those already receiving additional support. The progress of all students is regularly monitored by staff and reviewed termly by programme teams. The Support Through Studies procedure allows for staff to incrementally discuss and record any concerns regarding a student's ability to be successful on the course, through an informal and three formal levels of concern. The School can engage with the student to agree on an approach to assist them in recognising when they might need additional support and to provide a framework for any measures that are agreed to be appropriate. The procedure makes use of a template [100] to record the details of action plans with dates for review and possible next steps if actions are not met which may result in the level of concern being raised. Actions will be agreed on an individual basis, but the template suggests that common measures include the provision of academic support meetings, pastoral support, or measures to support students with specific aspects of their studies such as time management or attendance.

323 Teaching and support staff [M3] explained to the assessment team that the process was designed to ensure an equitable approach towards all students through identifying problems as early as possible, such as absences from classes. Staff look to intervene with intensive tutor support as soon as indicators are noticed to ensure that most cases are resolved without the procedure being elevated to the higher formal levels of concern. However, should this approach not be successful, the Support Through Studies policy notes that students can be referred to either the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy or the School's Emergency Powers of Exclusion and Suspension, which are also referred to in the School's terms and conditions that are provided to students prior to enrolment. [014]

324 The provision of medical support for students for injury prevention and recovery is managed by the Head of Medical and Wellbeing with physical wellbeing services including a physiotherapist, Pilates instructor, performance psychologist and Injury Prevention and Recovery Tutor. [028 Student Handbook 2021-22] Sessions with these professionals are

arranged through direct student bookings, or through tutor referrals. The work of this team is reinforced by dedicated resources; the School has its own gym and treatment facilities onsite. [157 Learning Resources Presentation] All students must also have medical insurance to cover the cost of any additional external physical or psychological support. The cost of this requirement is made clear to students as part of the application process. [014 Undergraduate Terms and Conditions, 015 MA Terms and Conditions 015]

325 Oversight of the School's support for students is provided by the Academic Board. The assessment team inspected minutes from the March 2021 [072] and July 2021 [074] meetings of the Board where summary data relating to student progress was reviewed and discussed. The assessment team agreed that the different modes of support provided to students, described above, ensure that support is provided for all students. However, the School also effectively targets its support to different groups of students or individuals and provides access to this support for students with different characteristics. These plans to support students to achieve successful academic outcomes are therefore credible and robust.

326 The School's approach to assessment feedback is detailed in the Quality Handbook. [004] All written work is processed through Turnitin which includes tools for tutors to provide feedback to students. Feedback on performance assessments is provided in individual tutorials. Feedback is normally provided within a week of the assessment to allow for tutors to collate the responses of the assessors who graded the work. The School intends for its feedback to provide for students to reflect and set realistic goals for their future learning. The assessment team examined examples of feedback for students' written assessments as part of the School's submission [062, 066, 067] and sampled 85 assessments from the Foundation degree, 44 assessments from the Level 6 top-up degree, and three MA assessments which showed individual, comprehensive, and helpful developmental comments are provided by staff. The assessment team found that staff provide generally consistently helpful feedback to students within agreed timescales, both after a practical assessment and through coursework. The assessment team found no instances of unwarranted or unhelpful criticism of students. They agreed, therefore, that their examination of assessed student work demonstrates that students are given comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback.

327 The School evaluates the effectiveness of its student services through its annual monitoring process. This includes the consideration of student views regarding assessment feedback and individual support services. [056, 057, 058] This data is combined with data on student attainment, deferrals and withdrawals in Annual Course Monitoring, [046-048; 094; 095] which the assessment team could see from the relevant minutes is discussed at meetings of the Learning and Teaching Committee [116] and the Academic Board. [071]

328 To support students to achieve successful professional outcomes, the School provides a detailed schedule of masterclasses, [137] a Professional Development Portfolio, a Vocational Preparation Portfolio, [157 Learning Resources Presentation] and the Third Year National Ballet Tour [139] - all giving students a thorough understanding, and providing experience, of professional dancing. Students also have access to audition opportunities through the VLE and are supported with the preparation of showreels and CVs, professional photo-shoots and stage make-up workshops, as well as careers advice provided by the Artistic Director, external experts and senior teaching team. Employment outcomes of students are monitored and documented in Annual Monitoring Reports, with the School reporting on how students have worked with industry over the academic year. [046, 047] The assessment team noted that external examiners also complimented the way in which the School uses professional mentors to improve access to careers advice and guidance. [049-053] The assessment team agreed that the School's approach to supporting all its students to achieve successful professional outcomes was credible because it is appropriate to the

niche employment market that its students will be working within.

329 Students tend to agree that they are adequately supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. The student video submission [128] referred to the accessibility of support and included students who had made particular use of student support services who commented that these were effective, although there was one comment regarding a lack of clarity about examining arrangements. In meetings with the assessment team, [M2, M2a] students confirmed this view of the School's support mechanisms including the additional study skills sessions and support for injury prevention and recovery. The assessment team noted one comment about the occasional variability with the quality of some tutor feedback but agreed that this was outweighed by the volume and quality of the feedback gathered from all of the samples of coursework, external examiner reports, meetings with students, and the student submission.

330 In their meetings with the assessment team, senior staff [M1, M4] and teaching and support staff [M3] were able to articulate a detailed understanding of their responsibilities for student support and their passion for ensuring that all students regardless of their prior background are able to succeed on both the academic and technical components of the course. They also conveyed how they work together to develop a comprehensive support system making use of the small group sizes and effective communication between staff at the School.

## **Conclusions**

331 As described above, the assessment team considered all of the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the assessment team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing the assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

332 The School supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. This is because it has robust and credible plans and policies to support students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. While support is provided for all students, there are specific interventions for students under 18, international students, and students with additional learning needs to support them to achieve in the academic and technical components of their course. Staff understand their roles in providing support to students, and students and external examiners are complimentary about the approach the school takes.

333 The School facilitates successful academic and professional outcomes through the design of its courses, ensuring that students have the necessary technical skills to succeed in their chosen dance discipline and have additional skills useful to their chosen profession. Assessed student work demonstrates that students are given comprehensive, developmental, and timely feedback. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

334 In making the judgement, the assessment team considered extensive evidence in the form of strategies and handbooks, external examiner and annual monitoring reports, student feedback and assessed student work, and spoke with staff and students at the School. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## Annex 1

### QSR Evidence Documents

000\_Central\_School\_of\_Ballet\_QSR\_Submission\_Revised1.pdf  
001\_QSR\_Evidence\_Documents\_Contents\_revised130122.docx  
001\_QSR\_Evidence\_Documents\_Contents\_revised130122.pdf  
002\_Responsibilities\_Checklist-Conservatoire\_for\_Dance\_and\_Drama.pdf  
003\_Responsibilities\_Checklist-Univeristy\_of\_Kent.pdf  
004\_Quality\_Handbook.pdf  
005\_5-year\_Strategic\_Plan\_2022-27\_Executive-Summary.pdf  
006\_Access\_and\_Participation\_Plan\_2022-23\_to\_2026-27.pdf  
007\_Organisational\_Chart.pdf  
008\_Memorandum\_of\_Agreement\_October\_2019.pdf  
009\_Interim\_LTAS\_2021-22.pdf  
010\_Conjoint\_Periodic\_Programme\_Review\_Report\_June\_2017.pdf  
011\_Child\_Protection\_and\_Safeguarding\_Policy\_and\_Procedures.pdf  
012\_Whistleblowing\_Policy.pdf  
013\_Complaints\_Policy.pdf  
014\_Undergraduate\_Courses\_Terms\_and\_Conditions.pdf  
015\_MA\_Choreography\_Course\_Terms\_and\_Conditions.pdf  
016\_Diversity\_and\_Inclusion\_Forum\_ToR.pdf  
017\_UKVI\_Sponsor\_Licence\_Renewal.pdf  
018\_Admissions\_Policy.pdf  
019\_Recruitment\_Policy.pdf  
020\_Learning\_and\_Teaching\_Committee\_ToR.pdf  
021\_Research\_and\_Ethics\_Committee\_ToR.pdf  
022\_Access\_and\_Participation\_Committee\_ToR.pdf  
023\_Application\_Audition\_and\_Admissions-An\_Overview.pdf  
024\_Study\_Skills-An\_Overview.pdf  
025\_Staff\_Training\_Week\_Schedule\_September\_2021.pdf  
026\_Academic\_Board\_ToR.pdf  
027\_A\_brief\_History\_of\_CDD.pdf  
028\_Student\_Handbook\_2021-22.pdf  
029\_Foundation\_Degree\_Course\_Handbook\_2021\_2022.pdf  
030\_Foundation\_Degree\_Course\_Summary\_Document\_2021-2022.pdf  
031\_BA\_Top-up\_Course\_Handbook\_2021-2022.pdf  
032\_BA\_Top-up\_Course\_Summary\_Document\_2021-2022.pdf  
033\_MA\_Choreography\_Course\_Handbook\_2021-22.pdf  
034\_MA\_Choreography\_Course\_Summary\_Document\_2021-22.pdf  
035\_Code\_of\_Practice\_for\_Quality\_Assurance\_Introduction.pdf  
036\_Annex\_2\_Qualification\_Level\_Descriptors.pdf  
037\_Annex\_6\_Marking.pdf  
038\_Annex\_13\_Academic\_Appeals.pdf  
039\_Annex\_C\_Approval\_and\_Withdrawal\_of-Taught\_Courses.pdf  
040\_Annex\_E\_Annual\_Monitoring.pdf  
041\_Annex\_F\_Periodic\_Review.pdf



042\_Annex\_J\_Board\_of\_Examiners.pdf  
043\_Annex\_P\_Approval\_and\_Quality\_Assurance\_Procedures\_for\_Collaborative\_Partnerships.pdf  
044\_Credit\_Framework\_for-Taught\_Courses\_of\_Study.pdf  
045\_Guidance\_for\_Examiners\_2020-21.pdf  
046\_Annual\_Programme\_Monitoring\_Report\_2019-20\_for\_CDD.pdf  
047\_Annual\_Course\_Monitoring\_Report\_2020-21\_for\_CDD.pdf  
048\_Annual\_Course\_Monitoring\_Report\_2019-20\_for\_UoK.pdf  
049\_External\_Examiner\_Report\_UG\_(SM)\_2020.pdf  
050\_External\_Examiner\_Report\_UG\_(DLA)\_2020.pdf  
051\_External\_Examiner\_Report\_PGT\_2020.pdf  
052\_External\_Examiner\_Report\_PGT\_2020.pdf  
052\_External\_Examiner\_Report\_UG\_(DLA)\_2021.pdf  
053\_External\_Examiner\_Report\_PGT\_2021.pdf  
054\_Response\_to\_External\_Examiner\_Reports\_UG\_2021.pdf  
055\_Response\_to\_External\_Examiner\_Report\_PGT\_2021.pdf  
056\_Yr1\_Module\_and\_Overall\_Feedback\_2020-21.pdf  
057\_Yr2\_Module\_and\_Overall\_Feedback\_2020-21.pdf  
058\_Yr3\_Module\_and\_Overall\_Feedback\_2020-21.pdf  
059\_CSB103\_Dance\_Studies\_Module\_Brief.pdf  
060\_CSB201\_Contemporary\_Dance\_Module\_Brief.pdf  
061\_CSB305\_Dissertation\_First\_Draft\_Feedback.pdf  
062\_CSB303\_VPP2\_Feedback.pdf  
063\_CSB101\_Continuous\_Assessment\_Reports\_Ballet\_Autumn\_2020.pdf  
064\_CSB201\_Continuous\_Assessment\_Reports\_Contemporary\_Autumn\_2020.pdf  
065\_CSB301\_Continuous\_Assessment\_Reports\_Contemporary\_Autumn\_2020.pdf  
066\_CSB103\_Dance\_Studies\_Feedback.pdf  
067\_CSB203\_PDP4\_Feedback.pdf  
068\_MA\_Choreography\_CSB403\_Summer-term\_2020-21.pdf  
069\_MA\_Choreography\_CSB401\_Spring-term\_2020-21.pdf  
070\_Academic\_Board\_Spring\_2021\_Extraordinary\_Minutes.pdf  
071\_Academic\_Board\_Spring\_2021\_Part\_A\_Minutes.pdf  
072\_Academic\_Board\_Spring\_2021\_Part\_B\_Minutes.pdf  
073\_Academic\_Board\_Summer\_2021\_Part\_A\_Minutes.pdf  
074\_Academic\_Board\_Spring\_2021\_Part\_B\_Minutes.pdf  
075\_Minutes\_of\_Board\_of\_Examiners\_2021.pdf  
076\_SVF\_Autumn\_Term\_2020\_Minutes.pdf  
077\_SVF\_Spring\_Term\_2021\_Minutes.pdf  
078\_SVF\_Summer\_Term\_2020\_Minutes.pdf  
079\_SVF\_Summer\_Term\_2021\_Minutes.pdf  
080\_CDD\_Terms\_and\_Conditions.pdf  
081\_CDD\_Fee\_Policy.pdf  
082\_CDD\_Admission\_Appeals\_and\_Complaints\_Policy.pdf  
083\_CDD\_Admissions\_Policy.pdf  
084\_CDD\_Access\_and\_Participation\_Plan.pdf  
085\_CDD\_Criminal\_Records\_Policy.pdf  
086\_CDD\_Policy\_on\_Sexual\_Misconduct\_Harassment\_and\_Related\_Behaviours.pdf  
087\_CDD\_Prevent\_Policy.pdf

088\_CDD\_Support\_Through\_Studies\_Policy\_and\_Procedure.pdf  
089\_CDD\_Student\_Complaint\_Policy\_and\_Procedure.pdf  
090\_CDD\_Working\_With\_Others\_Handbook.pdf  
091\_Minutes\_of\_Board\_of\_Examiners\_2020.pdf  
092\_Minutes\_of\_Board\_of\_Examiners\_UG\_2019.pdf  
093\_Minutes\_of\_Board\_of\_Examiners\_PG\_2019.pdf  
094\_Annual\_Course\_Monntoring\_Report\_2020-21\_for\_UoK.pdf  
095\_Annual\_Course\_Monntoring\_Report\_2020-21\_for\_UoK\_Statistical Data.pdf  
096\_External\_Examiner\_Report\_UG\_(SM)\_2021.pdf  
097\_Audition\_Panel\_and\_Criteria.pdf  
098\_Student\_Visa\_Guide.pdf  
099\_Extension\_to\_Learning\_Agreement\_Template.pdf  
100\_Support\_Through\_Studies\_Template.pdf  
101\_Academic\_Liaison\_Ofiicer\_Report\_2019-20.pdf  
102\_Statement\_from\_the\_Conservatoire\_for\_Dance\_and\_Drama\_on\_CSB\_facilities\_&\_Resources.pdf  
103\_Annual\_Student\_Cases\_reporting\_template-for\_2020\_report\_in\_2021.pdf  
104\_Marksheets\_for\_the\_UoK\_email.pdf  
105\_Conjoint\_Periodic\_Programme\_Review\_Critical\_Evaluation\_Document\_2017.pdf  
106\_Internal\_processes\_of\_module\_course\_evaluation.pdf  
107\_Student\_Complaints\_procedure.pdf  
108\_Annual\_Student\_Cases\_Reporting\_2019.pdf  
109\_Annual\_Student\_Cases\_Reporting\_2020.pdf  
110\_Governance\_Structure\_Chart.pdf  
111\_Board\_of\_Governors\_ToR.pdf  
112\_Annex\_R\_Recognition\_of\_Prior\_Learning.pdf  
113\_Academic\_Liaison\_Officer\_Report\_2020-21.pdf  
114\_APEL\_for\_Direct\_Entry\_Students.pdf  
115\_Role\_Profiles\_related\_to\_the\_delivery\_of\_HE\_courses.pdf  
116\_Unconfirmed\_Minutes\_Learning\_and\_Teaching\_Committee\_Autumn\_2021.pdf  
117\_Action\_Plan\_2021-22.pdf  
118\_Discussion\_of\_module\_and\_overall\_feedback\_reports.pdf  
119\_Appointment\_of\_new\_External\_Examiners.pdf  
120\_Assessment\_and\_Moderation\_of\_Student\_Work.pdf  
121\_QSR\_QAAO\_request\_to\_CSB\_for\_additional\_evidence\_DBA (revised 30 Nov).pdf  
122\_Central\_Workplan.pdf  
123\_Incorporation\_of\_Recommendations\_in\_the\_Strategic\_Plan.pdf  
124\_Spring\_Term\_Timetable.pdf  
125\_Notes\_of\_Drama\_Board\_Meeting\_UoK.pdf  
126\_Strategic\_Framework.pdf  
127\_Request\_for\_additional\_evidence\_following\_the\_TPM.pdf  
128\_Student\_Submission\_Video.mp4  
129\_Update\_on\_Action\_8.pdf  
130\_Estates\_and\_Accomodation\_Strategy.pdf  
131\_Action\_Plan\_2021-22.pdf  
132\_Training\_for\_Recruitment\_and\_Admissions\_staff.pdf  
133\_CPD\_and\_Training\_for\_New\_Academic\_Staff\_2020-2021.pdf  
134\_Summary\_of\_The-Wells\_Agreement.pdf

135\_Agreement\_for\_Auditions\_in\_Japan\_2021.pdf  
136\_Partnership\_with\_Southwark.pdf  
137\_Masterclass\_Series\_and\_Guest\_Lectures\_2020-21.pdf  
138\_Full\_and\_part-time\_staff\_and\_highest\_Level\_of\_qualification.pdf  
139\_National\_Tour\_Ballet\_Central.pdf  
140\_BC\_Tour\_Risk\_Assessment\_2021\_Overview.xlsx  
141\_Risk\_Assessment\_Filming\_of\_The\_Nutcracker.pdf  
142\_Visiting\_Production\_Agreement\_with\_Yvonne\_Arnaud\_Theatre.pdf  
143\_Deal\_Memo\_with\_Yvonne\_Arnaud\_Theatre.pdf  
144\_Visit\_Schedule.pdf  
145\_People\_to\_Meet\_FINAL.pdf  
146\_Zoom\_links\_for\_Observations\_of\_Teaching\_and\_Learning\_Resources\_Presentation\_and\_Tour\_of\_Facilities.pdf  
147\_CSB\_Request\_for\_additional\_evidence\_11012022.pdf  
148\_Artistic\_Director\_recruitment\_ad\_Jun\_21.pdf  
149\_Course\_Lead\_MA\_Choreography\_advert\_Oct\_20.pdf  
150\_Director\_of\_Higher\_Education\_Advert.pdf  
151\_QSR\_Request\_for\_additional\_information\_120122\_Q5.pdf  
152\_Central\_QSR\_Supplementary\_Information\_110122\_Q7.pdf  
153\_Stage\_1\_Report\_Form.pdf  
154\_Stage\_2\_Resolution\_by\_Agreement\_Record\_08\_Nov\_21.pdf  
157\_Learning\_Resources\_Presentation.pdf

Assessed student work sample  
Observations of teaching: TO1 – TO7  
Facilities Tour

### **Meetings**

M1 Meeting with Senior Staff  
M2 Meeting 2 and 2a with Students  
M3 Meeting 3 with Teaching and Support Staff  
M4 Final Meeting

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