



Designated Quality Body
in England

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

Stageworks Productions Ltd
trading as the ICMT: International
College of Musical Theatre



Review Report

September 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 team considers that the standards set for ICMT's courses are in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework. The team also considers that standards described in the course specification documentation are set at levels that are consistent with these sector-recognised standards and ICMT's academic regulations and policies should ensure that standards can be maintained appropriately.</p> <p>The team considers that, based on the evidence scrutinised, the standards that will be achieved by ICMT's students are expected to be in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework. The team also considers that ICMT's academic regulations and policies will ensure that these standards can be maintained. The team considers that staff fully understand ICMT's approach to maintaining these standards and that the evidence seen demonstrates they are committed to implementing this approach.</p> <p>The collaborative framework and academic regulations governing the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance, which was subject to a rigorous approval process involving external expertise, are clear and comprehensive and understood by the ICMT staff responsible for the degree. This is evident in ICMT's own policies and procedures which translate into effective oversight through the ICMT Academic Board, as identified in the terms of reference and associated</p>

				<p>minutes. This approach is expected to ensure that the academic regulations and frameworks used by ICMT support and are consistent with setting and maintaining academic standards at threshold level.</p> <p>Standards described in approved programme documentation are set at levels that are consistent with sector-recognised standards. Careful consideration involving external expertise has been given to setting up the partnership and the accelerated degree course to ensure that threshold standards will be consistent with sector-recognised standards. The use of external specialist expertise to review and advise on the planned development and design of the accelerated degree, such that it is fit for purpose, challenging for learners, but with manageable assessment and marking deadlines, has helped to ensure that the plans for maintaining threshold standards are robust and credible and fully understood by the staff involved.</p> <p>The team's scrutiny of the content of assignment briefs, observation of classes and meetings with ICMT's senior staff and tutors and with University representatives indicate that assessed student work is likely to demonstrate that credit and qualifications will only be awarded where the relevant threshold standards are met. This is because ICMT staff involved in the higher education provision operate within a collaborative framework in which staff understand their respective responsibilities for setting and maintaining standards.</p> <p>The team noted that all 15 students on the Level 4 TCL Diploma course who were examined by TCL examiners in April 2022 were deemed to have achieved threshold standards consistent with sector-recognised standards.</p>
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				<p>On the basis of its scrutiny of the academic regulations and assessment framework, plans for setting and maintaining standards which are credible and robust, approved course documentation and assignment briefs, observations of teaching, and meetings with staff involved in assessment, the team agreed that the arrangements in place should ensure that threshold standards will be consistent with sector-recognised standards and that credit and qualifications will be awarded only where those threshold standards have been met. Based on the evidence available to it, the team concludes that this Core practice is therefore met.</p> <p>In the absence of external examiner reports and assessed student work for the degree course, the team took account of standards-related comments made by an external subject expertise as part of the course approval process; the content of assignment briefs; and the team's findings arising from its observations of teaching and learning and consideration of associated schemes of work. This and other evidence referred to above led the team to have 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	The academic regulations and associated assessment framework for the accelerated degree course are comprehensive and set out clearly the approach to be taken in relation to course and assessment design, marking and moderation and the requirements for awards and approaches to classification. The regulations and the framework, coupled with ongoing monitoring of the course, should therefore ensure that standards beyond the threshold are maintained.

				<p>ICMT has responded positively and productively to conditions, recommendations and suggestions arising from the robust and comprehensive approval processes and external subject specialist report. This provides assurance that students on the accelerated degree course will have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, and that credit and qualifications will be awarded only where those standards are met.</p> <p>Standards beyond threshold level are described in definitive course documentation and are appropriate as they differentiate between different levels of learning outcomes. The design for learning, planning for learning and assessment is of good quality. Students understand what is required of them to meet and potentially exceed threshold standards because of this approach. Consequently, students are expected to have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.</p> <p>ICMT's plans for setting and maintaining comparable standards beyond threshold level are credible and evidence based. They are well documented, understood by staff involved in assessment, and underpinned by constructive internal and external peer engagement and support. Staff understand the College's approach to setting and maintaining standards and have opportunities to engage with peers and external experts in teaching and assessment activities. Lesson planning documents provided and teaching sessions observed demonstrate that ICMT's design of teaching and session</p>
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				<p>planning is effective and explicitly links learning activities back to learning objectives.</p> <p>While no assessed student work or external examiner reports regarding ICMT's standards and award procedures were available, the team noted the rigour of the institutional and course approval processes undertaken and the constructive use made of, and ICMT's engagement with, external subject specialist expertise. The team's observations of teaching and learning also showed that students' learning and module outcomes were closely aligned and the size and nature of the classes enabled tutors to appreciate the ability of students to achieve beyond the threshold level. Based on the evidence available to it, the team concludes that this Core practice is met.</p> <p>The team considers that ICMT will ensure that students who are awarded qualifications will have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other providers. The team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.</p>
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>ICMT has effective arrangements in place to ensure standards of awards are credible and secure. The regulatory and collaborative framework underpinning the partnership is clear and comprehensive and enables staff involved in the partnership to be clear about their respective roles and responsibilities for ensuring that award standards are credible and secure.</p> <p>ICMT's plans for securing standards are credible, robust and evidence-based. The partnership with Coventry University is constructive and supportive, providing opportunities for ICMT staff to further develop their</p>

				<p>understanding of sector-recognised standards. The Collaborative Course Quality Enhancement and Monitoring process is expected to provide scope for ICMT staff to reflect critically on, and learn from, the experience of delivering the course through the annual quality monitoring process.</p> <p>On the basis of its scrutiny of the academic regulations and policies that apply to the accelerated degree, ICMT's plans, the partnership governance arrangements, the views of external specialists involved in approving the provision and the team's meetings with ICMT and University staff, the team concludes that this Core practice is met.</p> <p>While no external examiner reports or assessed student work were available to the team, the detailed course specification and the team's observations of teaching demonstrated the effectiveness of the teaching, learning and assessment strategy in action, leading the team to have 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>ICMT's plans for using external expertise in setting and maintaining academic standards and for assessment and classification processes are credible, robust and evidence-based. The regulations and processes for assessment and classification described in course documentation are clear and transparent, showing the use of clearly defined marking rubrics that align with the intended learning outcomes and detail the classification band to be awarded, reflecting sector-recognised standards. Assessment guidelines and assessment briefs confirm that assessment and classification will be conducted in accordance with Coventry University's</p>

				<p>regulations and the processes set out in the course specifications.</p> <p>Students were highly positive about the support provided by staff to enable them to understand the processes of assessment and classification. Students considered that they were provided with clear assessment guidelines and that the assessment and classification processes would be reliable, fair and transparent.</p> <p>The assessment team considered the institutional and course approval documentation, academic regulations and documentation governing the partnership, the plans for using external expertise in setting and maintaining standards and plans for assessment and classification processes, assignment briefs and spoke to staff and students involved with the accelerated degree course. The team also considered examination reports for the TCL provision. The team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.</p> <p>Coventry University has approved the admissions process and the applications for 2022-23 and the admissions system will be subject to monitoring by Coventry University to ensure that the University's academic requirements are met.</p> <p>ICMT is responsible for student admissions, recruitment and enrolment and its admissions system is reliable, fair and inclusive, and managed in accordance with its Admission and Audition Policy. Admissions records demonstrate that ICMT's policy for this area is implemented as intended.</p>
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				<p>Members of the senior management team are involved in the admissions process and are sufficiently skilled and supported to fulfil their role by Coventry University.</p> <p>The College ensures fairness and consistency by interviewing and auditioning students using standardised selection panels and set criteria. Audition panel members complete detailed feedback forms giving each panellist's comments on the dance, acting and singing capabilities and potential of an applicant using a structured grading system to establish an applicant's suitability for the accelerated degree course.</p> <p>Feedback is provided to auditees, including those who have been unsuccessful, who may be referred to other courses offered at the ICMT. The admission criteria and process for acceptance onto the course are clear and accessible through information provided on the ICMT website.</p> <p>Applicants can access information on the website to support their applications; namely, information on entry requirements, audition and interview arrangements and selection criteria. Students confirmed that they had access to all the information, advice, support and guidance they required during the admissions process. They considered that they were well supported throughout the admissions process and found the admissions system to be reliable, fair and inclusive.</p> <p>Based on the evidence available to it, the assessment team concludes that the ICMT has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system and that this Core practice is met.</p>
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				<p>The team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement because, although assessed work and external examiner reports are not yet available for the degree course, the arrangements that are currently in place provide a sound basis for development and plans to appoint external expertise to support and advise ICMT staff are credible.</p>
Q1	<p>The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.</p>	Met	High	<p>The ICMT admissions system is reliable, fair and inclusive, and managed in accordance with the College's Admission and Audition Policy. The admission criteria and process for acceptance onto the course are clear and accessible through information provided on the ICMT website. The College interviews and auditions students using standardised selection panels and set criteria. Audition panel members complete detailed feedback forms giving each panellist's comments on the dance, acting and singing capabilities and potential of an applicant using a structured grading system to establish an applicant's suitability for the accelerated degree course.</p> <p>Admissions records demonstrate that ICMT's policy for this area is implemented as intended and operates in a manner which takes account of the best interests of applicants, including unsuccessful applicants, who may be referred to other courses offered at the ICMT. Members of the senior management team are involved in the admissions process and are sufficiently skilled and have appropriate experience to fulfil their role.</p> <p>Applicants can access information on the website to support their applications; namely, information on entry requirements, audition and interview arrangements and selection criteria. Students confirmed that they had</p>

				<p>access to all the information, advice, support and guidance they required during the admissions process. They considered that they were well supported throughout the admissions process and found the admissions system to be reliable, fair and inclusive. The admissions requirements are set out in approved course documentation and are consistent with ICMT's Admission and Audition Policy and the admissions system will be monitored to ensure that the requirements of ICMT and the University are met. Based on the evidence available to it, the assessment team concludes that the ICMT has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system and that this Core practice is met.</p> <p>In making the judgement, the team considered evidence including the ICMT admissions policy, student application and audition records and spoke with staff and students from the College and representatives from Coventry University. The team considers that ICMT's admissions-related policies and plans are credible and robust, and the implementation of those plans is likely to result in the admissions system continuing to be reliable, fair and inclusive. The team therefore has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.</p>
Q2	The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.	Met	High	ICMT has robust and credible plans for designing and delivering high-quality courses. The accelerated degree course, which has been designed by ICMT, has been subject to consultation with, and rigorous scrutiny by, Coventry University which has involved external specialist subject expertise in the process. This activity has ensured that module content is appropriate; that teaching, learning and assessment strategies adopted for the course will enable students to achieve the

				<p>intended learning outcomes; and that the course will be of high quality. The course has been benchmarked against appropriate external reference points to ensure that it meets sector-recognised standards. Furthermore, staff development sessions have been held and more sessions are planned. The course will also be subject to monitoring to ensure that it is of high quality.</p> <p>ICMT staff maintain effective oversight of teaching and learning as tutors are required to submit their lesson plans for review to ensure that these are consistent with the teaching, learning and assessment strategies to be applied. Further support is provided through peer observation activities and through staff and tutor meetings to ensure that all those involved in teaching on the higher education provision are enabled to deliver a high-quality academic experience to students. Senior staff and tutors are well equipped to identify potential issues given their own experience as performing artists and can provide appropriate support to students.</p> <p>The team's observations of teaching and review of schemes of work and lesson plans showed that staff consistently demonstrated good planning and organisation leading to high-quality delivery and stimulating learning activities that engage students. Students regarded the course to be of the highest quality and were highly complimentary about staff teaching on the course, highlighting the benefits of being taught by industry professionals. ICMT's annual Course and Tutor Survey results demonstrate that students regard the courses provide at the ICMT to be of high quality, stimulating their interest in musical theatre. The team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.</p>
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				<p>In making the judgement, the team considered evidence including the initial approval processes; learning, teaching and assessment strategies and assignment briefs; the team's observations of teaching; schemes of work and lesson plans; and met staff and students involved with the course. Although information from external examiners or from third party organisations was not yet available for the course, the team considers that ICMT's plans to secure high-quality course design and delivery are credible and robust. The team therefore has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.</p>
Q3	<p>The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.</p>	Met	Moderate	<p>ICMT's approach to the observation of teaching and learning is well established and is aimed at not only checking the quality of teaching but also ensuring that schemes of work and academic learning objectives are clearly labelled and assessed as part of the process. While tutors may not hold formal teaching qualifications, they are effective communicators and develop lesson plans which are reviewed by senior staff to ensure that their approach to teaching delivery is in line with ICMT's expectations that students receive a high-quality experience. Senior staff confirmed their plans to continue conducting peer observations to ensure that tutors are delivering the curriculum at the appropriate level and, as expected, given ICMT's culture and teaching practices. The team's observations of teaching strongly indicate that teaching staff are appropriately qualified and skilled to deliver high-quality courses.</p> <p>ICMT has robust and credible plans for the recruitment, appointment, induction and support of sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff. However, these plans are in their infancy and continue to evolve and, as such, cannot yet be fully tested. The recruitment and</p>

			<p>induction procedures in place are supportive of the practical and operational processes that need to be undertaken but have not yet evolved into firm policy or practice that fully and explicitly considers all relevant academic regulations, including those of the awarding partner. Staff have not yet been fully engaged or received induction using the new procedures but the role of the Operations Manager in the recruitment and induction process has provided sufficient oversight of both processes to ensure that new employees will be appropriately supported into their roles and will become sufficiently familiar with both ICMT's and the University's regulations and associated policies and procedures to be effective in their roles.</p> <p>Staff CVs and the team's own observations of teaching also confirm that staff are appropriately qualified to deliver a high-quality academic experience and student feedback elicited through survey data and in discussion with the team also confirm this to be the case. Students were highly complimentary about the high-quality teaching and learning experience they receive and appreciated the professional experience of their teachers which provides greater clarity and support to them in achieving the intended learning outcomes. In addition, the comprehensive joint staff development plan designed collaboratively between ICMT and Coventry University provides further confidence that new and existing teaching staff will continue to develop their skills.</p> <p>On the basis of the evidence provided, including meetings with staff, students and representatives of the University and the team's observations of teaching, the team concludes that the Core practice is met. However,</p>
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				the evolving practice and fledgling guidance regarding the recruitment, appointment, induction and support of sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff, and the fact that these processes have not yet been fully tested led the team to have a moderate 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.	Met	High	<p>ICMT has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience. The team's tour of facilities and teaching observations confirmed that the bespoke studio space and practice rooms are well equipped and appropriate to support the delivery of the practical components of a performing arts curriculum.</p> <p>Plans to secure additional studio space in response to growth in student numbers are credible as senior staff have discussed these with Coventry University staff and identified suitable additional space within walking distance of ICMT's current facilities. Students have access to a selection of learning resources through an on-site library of materials, an extensive digital collection held on the student intranet and electronic resources available through Coventry University's library in support of the academic components of the curriculum. ICMT is proactive in developing its resources, both in response to student feedback and independently, with plans to secure access to Drama Online by the end of October 2022.</p> <p>ICMT's approach to student support is led by members of the senior management team who ensure that tutors understand their role and responsibility in supporting student wellbeing and learning difficulties. The College operates an open-door policy which is regarded highly</p>

				<p>by students who consider it effective in supporting them to access the resources they need. Information regarding a variety of mental health resources available to students is held centrally on the student intranet to ensure accessibility for all students. Tutors are well placed to support students in overcoming injuries and training challenges due to the tutors' own extensive experience as performing artists. The College supports students who cannot afford private healthcare support in securing appropriate NHS alternatives. It has credible plans to appoint a mental health specialist, should student numbers grow to a point where the senior management team is no longer able to monitor and support students individually. ICMT students consider that the facilities, learning resources and support measures available to them are of high quality. The assessment team therefore concludes that the Core practice is met.</p> <p>Based on the evidence presented, scrutiny of the documentation and the assessment team's direct observation of the facilities, teaching, learning resources and student support measures ICMT has in place and the College's plans for ensuring sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services, the 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	ICMT's approach to engaging students individually and collectively in the quality of their educational experience is clear and effective. Student representatives are invited to Senior Management Team meetings to discuss agenda items which are relevant to the broader student experience and it is clear that student feedback is valued and acted upon. The College also makes use

				<p>of focus groups to elicit specific feedback from current students in a forward-looking manner, taking their views into account as it develops its provision.</p> <p>The College's Student Rep Handbook sets out clear expectations of student representatives who are required to close the feedback loop with their peers after formal meetings, communicating any actions and outcomes to ensure that all students are engaged in the feedback channels. At the time of the visit, new student representatives had been appointed and were scheduled to receive training the following week demonstrating the College's commitment to ensuring that student engagement is effective.</p> <p>In addition to the student representation engagement mechanisms in place, ICMT facilitates individual student engagement by means of an anonymous feedback box, semesterly one-to-one meetings between students with a member of the senior staff team and, annually, through the Course and Tutor Survey. The College's open-door policy additionally facilitates individual student engagement in a confidential manner as students can approach any senior staff member they wish to provide direct feedback about their course or a particular tutor. Students considered that ICMT staff valued student feedback and had shown that they were receptive and responsive to student feedback, citing examples of action taken in response to feedback given.</p> <p>Although the formal student representation structures have only recently been established, they are appropriately sized, resourced and scheduled to support collective student engagement. There are no survey or evaluation results for the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre</p>
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				<p>Performance as this started in September 2022. Nevertheless, on the basis of the evidence available relating to other provision delivered at the ICMT which demonstrated that ICMT does actively engage students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience, the team considers that the Core practice is met and it has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.</p>
Q6	<p>The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.</p>	Met	High	<p>The College has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are clear and accessible to all students. The Student Complaints Procedure, which also covers appeals, has clearly defined stages for informal and formal resolution which promote transparency of the process for complainants. Staff involved in implementing the procedure understand the importance of the timely resolution of complaints.</p> <p>Students are directed towards the procedure through multiple channels including the Student Handbook, the Student Agreement and during their induction. The procedure can be accessed through the ICMT website and through the student intranet. Students are therefore made aware of the procedure from the outset and throughout their studies. Students confirmed that staff are very responsive to the student voice and any feedback students may provide about the facilities, resources or delivery of teaching and so they have not felt the need to use the formal resolution channel to date. Students confirmed that they would be comfortable approaching any staff member for support if they intended to submit a formal complaint in the future.</p> <p>Tutors do not receive formal training regarding the Student Complaints Procedure as they are not involved</p>

				<p>in implementing the procedure. However, they are aware of the procedure and demonstrated their understanding of the expectation that they should direct students to the staff member responsible for the procedure in the event of any student dissatisfaction expressed with any aspect of their course and studies. Training can be provided in the future if there are any concerns about the effectiveness of complaints handling at ICMT.</p> <p>Although no formal complaints or appeals have been received to date, and the effectiveness and timeliness of ICMT's procedures for complaints and appeals could not therefore be tested, staff involved in implementing the procedures were able to clearly articulate how they would conduct an investigation, if required.</p> <p>On the basis of the above, the team concludes that the College does have fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students. This Core practice is therefore met.</p> <p>Although the College has yet to put the Student Complaints Procedure into practice because no formal complaints or appeals have been submitted by students, the procedures are expected to deliver timely outcomes, if implemented as intended. Based on the evidence presented and taking into consideration the size and nature of the provider, the team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.</p>
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	Met	High	There is a formal agreement between Coventry University and Stageworks Productions Ltd (trading as the ICMT: International College of Musical Theatre) relating to the delivery of provision leading to awards of the University. The regulations and policies that apply,

	<p>irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.</p>			<p>and ICMT's adherence to them, demonstrate that ICMT has robust and credible plans to ensure a high-quality academic experience for provision delivered in partnership with the University.</p> <p>A professional development programme has been co-designed by ICMT and the University with a clear focus on developing staff in order to provide a quality product and provides assurance that staff from both ICMT and the University understand their respective responsibilities for quality. ICMT's academic governance arrangements, and the course monitoring arrangements that will apply, are expected to ensure that the College will effectively exercise its responsibilities for ensuring that students' academic experience on the course is of high quality.</p> <p>The team noted the positive comments of the external specialist involved in the development and approval of the course, the effective communication and collaboration between the parties involved, the very positive comments of students relating to their learning experience, which they collectively consider to be of high quality, and formed the view the degree course is expected to deliver a high-quality academic experience for students.</p> <p>The nature of the agreement between TCL and Stageworks Productions Ltd (doing business as the ICMT: International College of Musical Theatre) is of a different order and relates to the establishment of Stageworks as a TCL-registered exam centre for approved TCL awards. The agreements are clear and comprehensive, up-to-date and set out the obligations of the parties involved.</p>
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				Based on the evidence available to it, the team concludes that effective arrangements are in place to ensure that the academic experience of students on provision delivered in partnership will be high quality and the Core practice is met. Furthermore, given students' exposure to professionals working in the industry and, in the case of the provision leading to University awards, noting that the course will be subject to ongoing support and monitoring to support the further development of the accelerated degree course, the team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.
Q9	The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.	Met	High	<p>Although there was no assessed student work relating to the degree course for the assessment team to consider as this course only started in September 2022, the team considers that approaches to lesson planning are well reasoned, with strong links to assessment criteria and intended module outcomes. This approach ensures that the feedback students receive as they progress through their studies is comprehensive and at an appropriate level to support their development.</p> <p>The College's open-door policy is effective and well regarded by students as it enables students to engage with staff and tutors about any concerns they may have and any specific needs that students would like to bring to the attention of staff at ICMT. The Attendance and Performance Policy and Student Behaviour and Code of Conduct set out clear expectations the College has of its students to support them in achieving successful academic and professional outcomes. The close and regular interactions between teaching staff and students, made possible by the small, specialist nature of ICMT, and the detailed assignment briefs provided to students are expected to ensure that students will</p>

			<p>receive comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback. Observations of teaching demonstrated that staff understand their role in supporting student achievement through staff engagement with students to provide helpful feedback, based on individual and collective needs.</p> <p>ICMT's plans to support student development are credible and sufficient to facilitate students in achieving the intended professional and academic outcomes. ICMT senior staff and tutors are well placed to assess and monitor student performance and progression and the size of the student population enables close monitoring of individual students. A staff development plan has been co-designed by ICMT and Coventry University and this is expected to further support staff understanding of their role in supporting student achievement.</p> <p>The professional experience of staff teaching on the degree course is valued by students who confirmed that they are adequately supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes as teaching staff were able to draw upon their own experience as performing artists to anticipate training issues, monitor student progression and respond to student concerns as they arise. Students also appreciated the masterclasses provided by ICMT to facilitate student engagement with a wide variety of external industry professionals, thus providing opportunities to achieve professional outcomes alongside academic outcomes.</p> <p>On the basis of the above, the team concludes that ICMT supports all students to achieve successful</p>
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				<p>academic and professional outcomes. This Core practice is therefore met.</p> <p>Although no assessed student work was available for the team to consider, on the basis of the evidence available to it, including ICMT's academic regulations and policy, plans to support students in achieving academic and professional outcomes, students' views and discussions with staff and students associated with the higher education provision delivered by the College, the 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 September 2022, for Stageworks Productions Ltd trading as the ICMT: International College of Musical Theatre (ICMT).

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: Mark Cooper

Institution: University of Portsmouth

Role in assessment team: Institutional and Subject Assessor (Performing Arts)

Name: Professor Richard Tong

Institution: Neath Port Talbot College

Role in assessment team: Institutional Assessor

Name: Amy Gallacher

Institution: University of St Andrews

Role in assessment team: Student Assessor

The QAA officer for the assessment was: Dr Irene Ainsworth.

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 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 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 team included at least one senior academic leader qualified to doctoral level. Details of team members were shared with the provider prior to the assessment to identify and resolve any possible conflicts of interest.

About the International College of Musical Theatre

Established as the American Musical Theatre Academy in September 2010, the provider changed its name to the International College of Musical Theatre (ICMT or the College hereafter) in November 2018. ICMT operates out of one site in Hackney Wick, East London. Its mission is to provide the best musical theatre training available anywhere in the world.

ICMT's higher education courses and student numbers are as follows:

Programme	Level	Mode of study	Current student numbers
BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance	6	Full-time	13
Diploma in Musical Theatre	4	Full-time	7

The BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance degree is a two-year accelerated degree course which was approved by Coventry University for a six-year period starting in September 2022.

The College also delivers a one-year, non-prescribed Level 4 Diploma in Musical Theatre course, having become an examination centre in 2021-22 for Trinity College London, an examination board whose qualifications are regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual).

In addition to these higher education courses ICMT offers professional training in the form of a Professional Development Musical Theatre course and an EU Bespoke Musical Theatre course which offer one and two-year options, and a three-month top-up in Musical Theatre course.

The ICMT Senior Management Team (SMT), which is also the Governing Body, comprises six members, namely the two co-founders (one who is the Principal); the Operations Manager; the Head of Musical Theatre; the International Communications Manager; and the Student Services Manager. Chaired by the Principal, SMT is the principal management and executive decision-making authority and manages the strategic, operational and academic direction of the ICMT. Due to the size, and specialist nature of the College, many of ICMT's activities are captured, discussed and actioned within SMT meetings. However, SMT has also convened the following subcommittees: Academic Board Committee; Assessment Board (from September 2022 for validated degree courses); Operations Committee; and a Student Representation Committee. The Academic Board Committee is responsible for the development and oversight of the academic work of the ICMT. Its membership comprises the Head of Musical Theatre, Head of Singing, Head of Acting, and the Interim Head of Dance.

ICMT distinguishes between staff who are employees of the College (currently six) and freelance teachers (tutors). ICMT students are taught by a combination of staff (SMT members) and by tutors who are freelance teachers and professional performers.

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](#) (July 2022).

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 College'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 team focused on the principles embedded in the Core practices, and that the evidence it 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, it was not necessary to use a sampling approach given the size of the higher education student population and the fact that only two higher education courses are offered. The team considered examination reports available for 15 candidates (students) assessed by examiners on behalf of Trinity College London in April 2022. No assessed student work was available for students on the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance degree which started in September 2022 and no external examiner has yet been appointed to this course. The College has not received any formal complaints or appeals to date.

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](#) (July 2022).

4 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.

5 The team was unable to scrutinise external examiner reports for the accelerated degree course as no external examiner has yet been appointed for the course. No assessed student work was available as the degree course commenced in September 2022, shortly before the visit took place. No assessed student work was available for the Diploma in Musical Theatre as ICMT operates as an examination centre for Trinity College London, the examining body for this course.

What the evidence shows

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

7 Following an institutional and course approval visit to ICMT by Coventry University in October 2021, [036,037] the University confirmed approval of the two-year BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance for a six-year period starting in September 2022. [067] Consequently, the first students had only been on the course three weeks before the assessment team's visit.

8 ICMT's Academic Board is responsible for developing and overseeing its academic provision through its analysis of the implementation of teaching, learning and assessment activities at its quarterly meetings. [004] Board minutes [038] are extensive and robust and capture discussion and decision-making outcomes and support ICMT's constructive engagement with the University's institutional and course approval processes, as borne out by reports arising from these processes and discussions with ICMT and CU representatives. [036; 037; M1; M3; M4] The institutional approval report [036] was broadly positive with two recommendations relating to widening employer and community engagement. The University representatives confirmed that recommendations had been met. [M4] The degree

course approval report [037] was equally as thorough and robust with a commendation for ICMT regarding the development of course enhancements and four recommendations that are to be monitored to completion by the University's Collaborative Course Quality Enhancement & Monitoring (CCQEM) process throughout the first year of operation.

9 University representatives confirmed that ICMT staff continue to engage constructively with the University to ensure that threshold standards for the University's qualifications are consistent with those of a three-year undergraduate degree programme. [M4] ICMT and University representatives [M1; M4] confirmed that the University will conduct an interim review after 12 months of operation, with the first review taking place in 2023-24 and a periodic review to follow in 2027-28. [Request for additional evidence response form] The programme review process will benchmark success outcomes of the two-year accelerated programme with those of the University's own three-year undergraduate degree programmes. [M1, M4]

10 The BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance course specification [part A 001; part B 007] is aligned with the University Undergraduate Credit Framework of 180 credits per full-time stage, with a maximum of 60 credits delivered per semester. In the absence of an external examiner appointment during the set-up phase of the course, the University sought advice from an external specialist. The External Specialist Report and Response [005] is broadly positive and complimentary regarding the standard of course preparation and development. The external specialist confirmed that the intended learning outcomes are appropriate for the award title and concluded that the aims, level, number of credits and standard of the award are consistent with sector-recognised standards. This view was endorsed by the team. ICMT will also undergo an annual academic and operational review by the University to ensure that standards continue to be consistent with sector-recognised standards.

11 A Collaborative Framework 2022-2023 document [002] between the University and ICMT is in place to ensure that threshold standards for the University's degree qualification are consistent with sector-recognised standards. This document indicates that ICMT has responsibility for the delivery and quality assurance of the course on a day-to-day basis while the University has ultimate responsibility for the standards of the award and for maintaining quality. ICMT and University representatives [M4] confirmed this to be the case.

12 Under the terms of the Collaborative Framework, [002] ICMT is required to ensure that assessment design, marking and moderation adhere to Academic Regulations governing the delivery of the University's awards at the ICMT. [003] The regulations provide the underlying basis for award and classification outcomes, and take account of, and align with, the FHEQ. Students enrolled on a course leading to a Coventry University award at the ICMT are also expected to comply with the ICMT's own student policies, procedures and regulations relating to attendance, behaviour and plagiarism, for example, that are not specific to the University course. [003, 025; M1; M3]

13 An ICMT and Coventry University Table of Responsibilities [012] details the proposed responsibilities of both ICMT and the University for curriculum delivery, moderation and verification activities and the marking of any coursework and examination papers which are clearly understood by the ICMT team. [M1; M3] To further ensure that standards are met, an external assessor is to be present at each assessment week at the end of each semester. [M1] While ICMT may suggest external examiners for the University's consideration, [M4] the Table of Responsibilities indicates that the University is responsible for appointing external examiners who will assess and independently verify the assessment process being delivered by ICMT. While the course approval report [037] noted that an external examiner would need to be appointed before the start of the course, this appointment has not yet been made. However, the University representatives were aware of

this oversight and are working to fill this post as a matter of urgency. [M4]

14 Sample assignment briefs (Singing Core Skills 1A [008], Acting and Voice Core Skills 1A, [040] Dance Core Skills 1A [041] Healthy Performer, Dance Core Skills 1A [042 Jazz] Acting and Voice Core Skills 1B [043 Pre 20th C]) demonstrate ICMT's approach to setting and maintaining standards. All briefs outline the staff involved in the teaching and delivery of the module, assessment methods and the credit value and deadlines for submission. Each brief also includes the marking rubric for assessment staff and for the students to be able to understand. The briefs clearly state that results and feedback will be carried out in accordance with the University's regulations.

15 At the time of the visit no assessed student work was available to test that students' assessed work reflects threshold standards, but the team observed a range of well planned and delivered classes [OBSERVATIONS] supported by lesson-planning documentation which demonstrated that the work ICMT staff are engaged in has the potential, once assessed, to confirm that threshold standards that are consistent with sector-recognised standards can be achieved. The observations demonstrated that staff understand and are committed to implementing ICMT's approach to maintaining standards to ensure that these are consistent with sector-recognised standards.

16 A formal agreement to operate as a Trinity College London (TCL) Registered Examination Centre [035] is in place between Stageworks Productions Ltd and TCL which is an examination board offering a suite of professional examinations for performing artists. The agreement enables Stageworks to use ICMT's premises for the purpose of carrying out TCL examinations and the associated administration. The syllabus for the Level 4 Diploma in Musical Theatre course has been developed by TCL as the awarding body for this course. [006] TCL employs its own external examiners and is solely responsible for assessment design, marking and moderation. The examiners visit the centre to assess students presenting to achieve the Level 4 Diploma award. This is a transactional assessment with no coursework presented. ICMT prepares students for technical examination at which point students' skills are tested under examination conditions. If successful, students achieve the designated award. The TCL Level 4 Diploma in Musical Theatre award is benchmarked against the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), [006] which is mapped across to the FHEQ, demonstrating alignment with sector-recognised standards. Examination reports provided show that all 15 students who took examinations in April 2022 passed, with seven receiving distinctions. [086]

Conclusions

17 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 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.

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

19 The team considers that, based on the evidence scrutinised, the standards that will be

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

20 The collaborative framework and academic regulations governing the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance, which was subject to a rigorous approval process involving external expertise, are clear and comprehensive and understood by the ICMT staff responsible for the degree. This is evident in ICMT's own policies and procedures which translate into effective oversight through the ICMT Academic Board, as identified in the terms of reference and associated minutes. This approach is expected to ensure that the academic regulations and frameworks used by ICMT support, and are consistent with, setting and maintaining academic standards at threshold level.

21 Standards described in approved programme documentation are set at levels that are consistent with sector-recognised standards. Careful consideration involving external expertise has been given to setting up the partnership and the accelerated degree course to ensure that threshold standards will be consistent with sector-recognised standards. The use of external specialist expertise to review and advise on the planned development and design of the accelerated degree, such that it is fit for purpose, challenging for learners, but with manageable assessment and marking deadlines, has helped to ensure that the plans for maintaining threshold standards are robust and credible and fully understood by the staff involved.

22 The team's scrutiny of the content of assignment briefs, observation of classes and meetings with ICMT's senior staff and tutors and with University representatives indicate that assessed student work is likely to demonstrate that credit and qualifications will only be awarded where the relevant threshold standards are met. This is because ICMT staff involved in the higher education provision operate within a collaborative framework in which staff understand their respective responsibilities for setting and maintaining standards. The team further noted the 100% examination pass rate on the Level 4 TCL Diploma course examined by TCL examiners in April 2022 providing additional evidence of threshold standards being met.

23 On the basis of its scrutiny of the academic regulations and assessment framework, plans for setting and maintaining standards which are credible and robust, approved course documentation and assignment briefs, observations of teaching, and meetings with staff involved in assessment, the team agreed that the arrangements in place should ensure that threshold standards will be consistent with sector-recognised standards and that credit and qualifications will be awarded only where those threshold standards have been met. Based on the evidence available to it, the team concludes that this Core practice is therefore **met**.

24 In the absence of external examiner reports and assessed student work for the degree course, the team took account of standards-related comments made by an external subject expertise as part of the course approval process; the content of assignment briefs; and the team's findings arising from its observations of teaching and learning and consideration of associated lesson planning documentation. This and other evidence referred to above led the team to have 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

25 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.

26 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).

27 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.

28 The team was unable to scrutinise external examiner reports for the accelerated degree course as an external examiner for the course has yet to be appointed. As students only started the course in September 2022 no assessed student work was available. There were no relevant third party endorsements to confirm that standards beyond the threshold level are reasonably comparable with those in other UK providers, and credit and qualifications would be awarded only where those standards have been met.

What the evidence shows

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

30 ICMT's Academic Regulations 2022-2023 [003] provide details about the assessment and classification processes to be applied to the accelerated degree course. The process for assessments, marking, and assessment boards is clearly presented and explained in the ICMT-Coventry Collaborative Framework 2022-2023 document. [002]

31 The development of the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance course has been informed by the University's engagement of an external subject discipline specialist. [005] The subject specialist, who was from a notable performing arts conservatoire, was tasked to specifically report on programme module development which resulted in a formal report to the University. [External Specialist Report and Response 005] The report is comprehensive and sets out a range of amendments and recommendations that ICMT should make to ensure course and assessment design, marking and moderation is robust, and evidence-based. Commenting on the Singing Core Skills 1 module, [008] the subject specialist observed that the proposed teaching and learning activities 'are extensive, intensive, and comprehensive' and would 'challenge students in many ways, all of which are appropriate to the aims and outcomes of the module'. [005] In the same section the external specialist also suggests an alternative phraseology to the use of the term 'good control and technique' as a learning objective, as it could be perceived as a little ambiguous at the proposed level.

32 The specialist confirmed that course design, marking and moderation activity has the potential to enable students to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with other UK providers, subject to proposed changes and recommendations offered in the report being addressed. ICMT's responses to the external subject specialist's comments [005] demonstrated constructive peer engagement and understanding of the need to ensure that students are able to achieve standards beyond the

threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

33 Senior staff and tutors at ICMT [M1; M3] demonstrated understanding of the approach to be taken to setting and maintaining standards, explaining how learning objectives are disaggregated into robust and effective session planning to enable students with mixed abilities to achieve beyond the threshold level. For example, each session plan contains three levels of differentiation for learning outcomes. These are labelled as 'All students will be able to...' to 'Most students will be able to...' to 'Advanced students will be able to...'. [Session Plans] The 'All' category meets the threshold, with the 'Most' and 'Advanced' providing the opportunity for students to excel or work towards exceeding threshold standards in their learning. The team agrees that this approach to extension and stretch in learning activities provides students with the opportunity to exceed threshold standards.

34 Course learning outcomes are comprehensive and clearly specified in the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance – Course Specification: Part A [007] which the team confirmed is readily accessible to students on the ICMT website and intranet. [000] Module learning outcomes are detailed in each assignment brief as evidenced in assignment briefs, [008; 040; 041; 042; 043] which are made available to staff and students at the beginning of each semester using the Microsoft Teams platform. [000] Students commented [M2] that assignment briefs are helpful to them in understanding how they will be assessed and what they need to demonstrate to achieve standards beyond the threshold.

35 The ICMT-Coventry Collaborative Framework 2022-2023 [002] outlines the key support and maintenance requirements for the operation of the degree course. The Framework confirms that, while the ICMT is responsible for the delivery and quality assurance of the programme, Coventry University is responsible for the standards of the award and has ultimate responsibility for the maintenance of quality. The process for assessments, marking, and assessment boards is clearly presented and explained in the Framework document and is clearly understood and applied by senior staff and tutors within the supportive culture that exists at the College. [M1; M3] Assignment briefs [008; 040; 041; 042; 043] are clear and easy to understand as they name staff involved in the teaching and delivery of each module, the assessment methods employed to test that learning outcomes have or can be met, the credit value and deadlines for submission.

36 In the absence of an external examiner's perspective on standards, the external specialist report [005] provided an alternative independent view as to whether standards above the threshold were likely to be comparable with those in other providers and credit and qualifications would be awarded only where those threshold standards are met. The use of the external specialist in assessing the module development plans [005] for the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance as a two-year accelerated degree course confirmed that the course should enable students to achieve standards beyond the threshold that are comparable to those of other UK providers. Noting the ambitious nature of the course as designed, the report comments that the course is both 'exceptionally thorough' and 'extremely challenging', 'there is much interweaving of different skills throughout many modules', and the teaching, learning and assessment strategies proposed are 'appropriate, rigorous and valuable, and should develop students with a wide range of required skills, knowledge and experience for a complex and demanding profession'.

37 Permanent, sessional, and freelance staff teaching at ICMT confirmed [M1; M3] that the accelerated programme provides an uninterrupted programme of study that covers all aspects of a three-year degree programme in a shortened more intense timeframe akin to a real-life professional performer's production preparation and work ethic. Representatives from the University [M4] agreed with this appraisal while also commenting that they would be closely monitoring this provision through internal reflective processes, such as the

Collaborative Course Quality Enhancement and Monitoring (CCQEM) process, to ensure that there is no significant negative deviation of outcomes or experience compared to those following any similar three-year degree programme.

38 External examiners will be appointed by Coventry University [M4] to ensure that the measurement and representation of students' achievements that go beyond the threshold is reasonably comparable with those of other UK providers. [000, 002] As indicated in the previous section of this report, an external examiner has yet to be appointed and the University will be working to fill this post as a matter of urgency. [M4]

39 No completed assessed student work was available for the team to consider due to the programme being new and only three weeks into term. However, observations of five teaching sessions [OBSERVATIONS] demonstrated a close alignment between what students were learning and the associated module learning outcomes. The observations also demonstrated staff members' appreciation, knowledge and awareness of the abilities of individual students to achieve beyond the threshold level. Students [M2] confirmed that they were clear about what will be required of them to reach standards beyond the threshold as the course documentation is clear and readily accessible to them.

Conclusions

40 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 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.

41 The academic regulations and associated assessment framework for the accelerated degree course are comprehensive and set out clearly the approach to be taken in relation to course and assessment design, marking and moderation and the requirements for awards and approaches to classification. The regulations and the framework, coupled with ongoing monitoring of the course, should therefore ensure that standards beyond the threshold are maintained.

42 ICMT has responded positively and productively to conditions, recommendations and suggestions arising from the robust and comprehensive approval processes and external subject specialist report. This provides assurance that students on the accelerated degree course will have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, and that credit and qualifications will be awarded only where those standards are met.

43 Standards beyond threshold level are described in definitive course documentation and are appropriate as they differentiate between different levels of learning outcomes. The design for learning, planning for learning and assessment is of good quality. Students understand what is required of them to meet and potentially exceed threshold standards because of this approach. Consequently, students are expected to have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

44 ICMT's plans for setting and maintaining comparable standards beyond threshold level are credible and evidence based. They are well documented, understood by staff involved in assessment, and underpinned by constructive internal and external peer engagement and support. Staff understand the College's approach to setting and maintaining standards and have opportunities to engage with peers and external experts

in teaching and assessment activities. Lesson-planning documents provided and teaching sessions observed demonstrate that ICMT's design of teaching and session planning is effective and explicitly links learning activities back to learning objectives.

45 While no assessed student work or external examiner reports regarding ICMT's standards and award procedures were available, the team noted the rigour of the institutional and course approval processes undertaken and the constructive use made of, and ICMT's engagement with, external subject specialist expertise. The team's observations of teaching and learning also showed that students' learning and module outcomes were closely aligned and the size and nature of the classes enabled tutors to appreciate the ability of students to achieve beyond the threshold level. Based on the evidence available to it, the team concludes that this Core practice is **met**.

46 The team considers that ICMT will ensure that students who are awarded qualifications will have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other providers. The 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

47 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.

48 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](#) (July 2022).

49 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.

50 The team was unable to scrutinise external examiner reports for the accelerated degree course as no external examiner has yet been appointed for the course. Students only started the course in September 2022 and no assessed student work was therefore available. There were no relevant third party endorsements.

What the evidence shows

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

52 ICMT's Senior Management Team (SMT) is responsible for all decisions that might have significant reputational implications for ICMT's sustainability, including partnerships or collaborations. [013] Documentation governing the partnership between ICMT and Coventry University [002] clearly specifies the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved to ensure that the standards of the accelerated degree award are credible and secure. The University has identified a Strategic Lead who is responsible for the overall management of the collaboration with support from a Link Tutor nominated by the University's Faculty of Arts and Humanities, to ensure that students are taught and assessed appropriately to enable them to achieve academic standards that are comparable with those achieved on the University's courses. [002] Staff from both the ICMT and the University demonstrated that they understood their roles and responsibilities, as set out in the Collaborative Framework, and confirmed that staff development opportunities had been provided, and would continue to be available, to support ICMT staff understanding of sectoral expectations relating to standards. [M1, M3, M4, 002]

53 The University made use of external specialists to provide impartial and independent perspectives as part of the approval processes to ensure the credibility and security of ICMT as a partner and the standards of the proposed accelerated degree course at the ICMT. [005, 036, 037] These processes have also served to enable ICMT staff involved in the processes to develop their understanding of sector-recognised standards. The external subject specialists involved confirmed the credibility and standards of the accelerated degree which is governed by regulations for the delivery of Coventry University Undergraduate awards at the ICMT [003] which have been approved by the University. [003] The University is responsible for ensuring ICMT's adherence to the agreed academic regulatory and assessment framework. ICMT's SMT reviews and monitors quality assurance, management systems and programme delivery at the College to ensure high standards are achieved. [013]

54 The course specification (parts A and B) [001, 007] and the course guide [011] provide comprehensive information about the course aims and intended learning outcomes, course design, the relationship of the course to the FHEQ, and the teaching and learning, and assessment strategies, enabling all parties involved in the partnership arrangements to have a clear understanding of their contribution to ensuring that standards are credible and secure. In the absence of assessed student work, observations of teaching sessions [OBSERVATIONS] demonstrated through the nature of staff engagement and interactions with students, collectively and individually, that staff understand their responsibilities for ensuring that the standards of the degree course are credible and secure.

55 ICMT demonstrated that it has robust and credible plans to secure standards, as evidenced by its partnership with the University which has ultimate responsibility for the standards of awards leading to degrees awarded by the University. [010] ICMT is required to submit an annual quality monitoring report to the University as part of the University's Collaborative Course Quality Enhancement and Monitoring (CCQEM) process. While the University is responsible for appointing external examiners for the degree course delivered at the ICMT, the College can offer suggestions. [010] External examiner nominations are submitted to the Faculty Collaborative Provision Committee and Faculty Board for approval. [050] The appointment of an external examiner for the accelerated degree course has yet to be made. [M4]

Conclusions

56 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 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.

57 ICMT has effective arrangements in place to ensure standards of awards are credible and secure. The regulatory and collaborative framework underpinning the partnership is clear and comprehensive and enables staff involved in the partnership to be clear about their respective roles and responsibilities for ensuring that award standards are credible and secure.

58 ICMT's plans for securing standards are credible, robust and evidence based. The partnership with Coventry University is constructive and supportive, providing opportunities for ICMT staff to further develop their understanding of sector-recognised standards. The CCQEM process is expected to provide scope for ICMT staff to reflect critically on, and learn from, the experience of delivering the course through the annual quality monitoring process.

59 On the basis of its scrutiny of the academic regulations and policies that apply to the accelerated degree, ICMT's plans, the partnership governance arrangements, the views of external specialists involved in approving the provision and the team's meetings with ICMT and University staff, the team concludes that this Core practice is **met**.

60 While no external examiner reports or assessed student work were available to the team, the detailed course specification and the team's observations of teaching demonstrated the effectiveness of the teaching, learning and assessment strategy in action, leading the team to have a **high degree of confidence** in this judgement.

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

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

62 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](#) (July 2022).

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 The team was unable to scrutinise external examiner reports for the accelerated degree course as no external examiner has yet been appointed for the course. There were no relevant third party endorsements.

What the evidence shows

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

66 ICMT's Senior Management Team (SMT) is responsible for ensuring that the College has plans or sub-strategies in place to ensure that it has sufficient financial, physical, human and information resources to support ICMT's aims and objectives and enable it to meet academic standards. [013] It aims to do this by working with its Academic Board Committee, which is responsible for 'the development and oversight of the academic work of the ICMT' [004] and with validating partners to provide assurance on academic standards and the integrity of academic qualifications to maintain standards and quality.

67 The accelerated degree course was subject to approval processes which involved the use of external subject specialist expertise to provide an independent perspective on the standards set for the course. [005, 036, 037] The Report of the External Subject Specialist on Course Development/Amendment [005] indicated that the external specialist considered 'all the teaching, learning and assessment strategies proposed to be appropriate, rigorous and valuable, and should develop students with a wide range of required skills, knowledge and experience for a complex and demanding profession'.

68 The ICMT-Coventry University Collaborative Framework [002] indicates that external examiner duties include moderation of examination question papers, assignment briefs and marking schemes; scrutiny of samples of marked scripts and projects; interviews with students prior to the examination board; membership of the assessment board; completion of a report after each assessment board and a full Coventry University external examiner report at the end of each academic year to be submitted to the Coventry Group Quality Unit and the Academic Partnership Unit (APU) which will ensure that copies are lodged with the University and ICMT.

69 ICMT plans to establish an Advisory Committee, comprising SMT and three independent members, by the end of 2022 with a view to strengthening (i) its links with industry and professions within the higher education landscape and (ii) its commitment to providing a high-quality experience for its students [000, 013] as it develops its academic and strategic direction. ICMT's Governance Handbook [013] indicates that the independent members are expected to ensure that SMT's duties are adequately carried out; collaborate with the SMT to support and promote ICMT's vision; contribute to developing strategy proposals by providing independent judgement and expertise to the ICMT; and provide

advice, guidance and support to the SMT in delivering ICMT's mission.

70 ICMT's Academic Regulations 2022-2023 [003] provide details about the assessment and classification processes to be applied to the accelerated degree course and show that the external examiner has yet to be confirmed. This responsibility falls to the University which is responsible for external examiner selection, appointment and induction to provide assurance that assessment and classification processes used in the assessment of student achievement at the ICMT are reliable, fair and transparent. [012]

71 Whilst there are no external organisations who endorse or are involved directly in the accelerated degree course, there is significant involvement with external stakeholders including visits from directors, agents and other external professional organisations. [M3] Examination reports by Trinity College London (TCL) appointed examiners for the 15 students submitting for TCL examination in April 2022 show that all 15 passed. [086]

72 ICMT is responsible for designing assessment tasks, undertaking marking and moderation using classification processes which follow the University's regulations. The BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance course assessment strategies are presented in course specification part B [001] and assignment briefs [008, 039-043] provided to students at the beginning of each semester to ensure that they understand the assessment and classification processes that will apply to them. The team found that the assignment briefs show that module assessments are mapped against learning outcomes and include a clearly defined marking rubric, detailing the criteria to be used in assessment and the determination of classifications to distinguish between different levels of student achievement to ensure fairness, transparency and consistency, and alignment with sector-recognised standards. All assessments will utilise two or more assessors to reinforce the reliability and consistency of the assessment process. [000] Students confirmed that they were provided with clear assessment guidelines and considered that this clarity, coupled with the high level of support they received from staff, should ensure the fairness and transparency of the assessment and classification processes. [M2]

73 While SMT members understood the requirements for the use of external expertise to ensure that assessment and classification processes are reliable, fair and transparent, [M1] it was less clear that tutors on the accelerated degree course understood the importance of such expertise in ensuring that academic standards are maintained and that assessment and classification are robust and credible. [M3] However, some staff development activity has already taken place and is expected to continue to enable those staff involved in the assessment and classification processes to develop their understanding of the processes, as required.

Conclusions

74 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 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.

75 ICMT's plans for using external expertise in setting and maintaining academic standards and for assessment and classification processes are credible, robust and evidence based. The regulations and processes for assessment and classification described in course documentation are clear and transparent, showing the use of clearly defined marking rubrics that align with the intended learning outcomes and detail the classification

band to be awarded, reflecting sector-recognised standards. Assessment guidelines and assessment briefs confirm that assessment and classification will be conducted in accordance with Coventry University's regulations and the processes set out in the course specifications.

76 Students were highly positive about the support provided by staff to enable them to understand the processes of assessment and classification. Students considered that they were provided with clear assessment guidelines and, on their experience of ICMT to date, considered that the assessment and classification processes would be reliable, fair and transparent.

77 The assessment team considered the institutional and course approval documentation, academic regulations and documentation governing the partnership, the plans for using external expertise in setting and maintaining standards and plans for assessment and classification processes, assignment briefs and spoke to staff and students involved with the accelerated degree course. The team also considered examination reports for the TCL provision. The team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is **met**.

78 The team has a **high degree of confidence** in this judgement because, although assessed work and external examiner reports are not yet available for the degree course, the arrangements that are currently in place provide a sound basis for development and ICMT's plans to appoint external expertise to support and advise ICMT's senior staff are credible.

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

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

80 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](#) (July 2022).

81 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.

82 No evidence relating to arrangements with recruitment agents was available as ICMT does not have such arrangements.

What the evidence shows

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

84 ICMT is responsible for student recruitment, admission and enrolment [012, 034] and manages admissions through its Admission and Audition Policy. [014] The policy includes an Equality statement and is designed to inform staff involved in the admission and audition process about their obligations to ensure that the admissions system is reliable, fair and inclusive. A Statement on Equality and Diversity [015] also commits to applicants being treated 'with equality and fairness' with 'access to information and advice throughout the admissions process to assist' an applicant's decision-making.

85 In its commitment to widening access and participation, ICMT prioritises its outreach approach to recruitment by attending regional audition events, graduating showcases, and collaborating with other schools and colleges [016] allowing ICMT to audition groups of applicants closer to their homes at no charge. In addition to this, applicants are welcome to attend the ICMT on any regular teaching day by appointment.

86 Individuals applying to the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance course must meet Coventry University's academic entry requirements. [002] Applicants are required to provide their academic information upon application and, if successful, they are required to provide evidence, for example transcripts and certificates. Where applicants do not meet the standard academic entry requirements, ICMT may, on a case-by-case basis and subject to the University's approval, accept students with non-traditional qualifications, professional experience or those who display exceptional talent, aptitude and ability. [M4] The Collaborative Framework Document [002] indicates that the University Link Tutor will monitor the admissions process at least once a year to ensure the University's requirements are being met. This monitoring may take place during an assessment board visit and will consist of a review of the admission records held by the ICMT.

87 Applications to all courses delivered at the ICMT are made directly through its website at www.theicmt.com and are considered on their individual merits against the course assessment criteria. Applicants who meet the criteria are invited to audition and the audition requirements are available on the ICMT website and at www.theicmt.com/audition-information. Places are offered based on an applicant's performance, aptitude, and ability.

88 ICMT's Admission and Audition Policy [014] indicates that applicants with a

disability or long-term health condition are expected to disclose this information as early as possible in the admissions process, at latest by enrolment, to ensure that necessary arrangements and reasonable adjustments can be put into place. The policy sets out the selection criteria that apply and the academic requirements for admission to the accelerated degree course and students are required to present original academic and personal documentation for verification. The ICMT and Coventry University Table of Responsibilities [012] indicates, and University staff confirmed, [M4] that the University will undertake random sampling of student admissions, twice-yearly as a minimum, to ensure the quality and authenticity of entry qualifications.

89 The audition process may be held in person or online for those unable to attend in person. The process involves ICMT's senior management team members who have professional experience and experience in assessing talent and aptitude. [M1, 018] Decisions following auditions are based on the outcome of the overall suitability of each applicant in dance, acting and singing using set criteria to assess student aptitude. To ensure fairness, audition panel members complete detailed audition feedback forms [033] for each applicant, detailing each panellist's comments on an applicant's dance, acting and singing capabilities and potential. Applicants are graded on a five-point scale ranging from not suitable to outstanding.

90 The admissions requirements set out in approved course documentation [007] are consistent with the ICMT's Admission and Audition Policy [014] and the assessment team's review of ICMT's admissions records, student application forms and completed audition feedback forms [051] demonstrated that staff implemented the Admission and Audition Policy as intended, understand their role and are appropriately skilled and trained to ensure the integrity of the procedure and the interests of applicants. The Admission and Audition Policy [014] ensures fairness and consistency through the use of standardised selection panels and set criteria in the admissions system and, as confirmed by students, through personal contact being made with applicants, including those who are unsuccessful, to provide individual feedback. [M2] Unsuccessful students may be referred to other courses better suited to them. If ICMT were to receive any complaints about the admissions process, these would be considered through the normal complaints procedure. [M1, 026]

91 The admissions criteria and processes for acceptance onto the course are clear and accessible via the course specification [007] and the Admission and Audition Policy [014] on the ICMT website, which students viewed positively as a source of transparent and accessible information and which is fit for purpose. [M2] Students agreed that the admissions system is reliable, fair and inclusive and confirmed that they felt supported throughout the application and admission process. [M2] Several students confirmed that they had been auditioned closer to their home or by video. [M2]

Conclusions

92 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 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.

93 The ICMT admissions system is reliable, fair and inclusive, and managed in accordance with the College's Admission and Audition Policy. The admission criteria and process for acceptance onto the course are clear and accessible through information provided on the ICMT website. The College interviews and auditions students using

standardised selection panels and set criteria. Audition panel members complete detailed feedback forms giving each panellist's comments on the dance, acting and singing capabilities and potential of an applicant using a structured grading system to establish an applicant's suitability for the accelerated degree course.

94 Admissions records demonstrate that ICMT's policy for this area is implemented as intended and operates in a manner which takes account of the best interests of applicants, including unsuccessful applicants, who may be referred to other courses offered at the ICMT. Members of the senior management team are involved in the admissions process and are sufficiently skilled and have appropriate experience to fulfil their role.

95 Applicants can access information on the website to support their applications; namely, information on entry requirements, audition and interview arrangements and selection criteria. Students confirmed that they had access to all the information, advice, support and guidance they required during the admissions process. They considered that they were well supported throughout the admissions process and found the admissions system to be reliable, fair and inclusive. The admissions requirements are set out in approved course documentation and are consistent with ICMT's Admission and Audition Policy and the admissions system will be monitored to ensure that the requirements of ICMT and the University are met. Based on the evidence available to it, the assessment team concludes that the ICMT has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system and that this Core practice is **met**.

96 In making the judgement, the team considered evidence including the ICMT admissions policy, student application and audition records and spoke with staff and students from the College and representatives from Coventry University. The team considers that ICMT's admissions-related policies and plans are credible and robust, and the implementation of those plans is likely to result in the admissions system continuing to be reliable, fair and inclusive. The team therefore has a **high degree of confidence** in this judgement.

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

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

98 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](#) (July 2022).

99 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.

100 The team was unable to scrutinise external examiner reports for the accelerated degree course as no external examiner has yet been appointed for the course. There were no relevant third party endorsements or meetings with third parties to identify their views about the degree course because the course only started in September 2022.

What the evidence shows

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

102 The Academic Board Committee Terms of Reference [004] indicate that the Board's membership comprises the Head of Musical Theatre, Head of Singing, Head of Dance and the Interim Head of Dance. The Board is responsible for overseeing the development of new courses and other academic activities, including resource implications, and advising the Senior Management Team accordingly. It is also responsible for academic standards and oversight of all teaching, learning and assessment quality-related matters at ICMT. The Board's remit also includes the identification, dissemination and promotion of examples of 'best teaching, learning and assessment practices to enhance student retention, achievement, and completion'.

103 The BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance accelerated degree course has been designed and developed by the ICMT in partnership with the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at Coventry University, [002, 012] leading to the University's conditional approval of the course in 2021. [037] ICMT received confirmation that the conditions had been met in December 2021 [067] and an interim review of the course will take place in 2023-24. [067] The approval process involved external subject specialists from other higher education institutions. [005, 037]

104 The Course Specification (Part B) [001] indicates that the course builds upon ICMT's 10 years' experience of teaching with 'a strong focus on practical-based training'. Detailed consideration of the course and module content by one external subject specialist [005] was highly complimentary and confirmed that the intended learning outcomes were appropriate to the course title and that the aims, level and standard of the award were consistent with sector-recognised standards. The external subject specialist confirmed that modules were designed to allow development from module to module and between levels, thus allowing progression throughout the course. [005]

105 ICMT's Two Year Resources Plan [019] includes a calendar of staff development covering the University's teaching and learning practices; internal and external moderation; course assessment strategy and assessment design; and course quality enhancement monitoring practices. [047 ICMT Staff Development Plan v2] These areas reflected the need for both partners to be assured that all tutors understand the expectations and responsibilities associated with delivering the new course. A final staff development

schedule [087] demonstrated that some sessions had already been jointly delivered and staff involved in the delivery of sessions [M4] confirmed that more were to follow.

106 The structure of the scheduled workshops aligns with the demands of the academic year with sessions on providing formative and summative feedback and marking assessments conducted at the beginning of the academic year and later sessions covering the details of specific partnership arrangements such as access to the University's library facilities. [087] Tutors [M3] confirmed that they had received a workshop session covering the above topics before the start of the 2022-23 academic year and that they were clear about the plan for staff development over the next academic year. If the Staff Development Plan [087] is actioned in line with the scheduled dates, it is expected to ensure that the ICMT has sufficiently trained staff to deliver a high-quality course.

107 ICMT and Coventry University plan to secure standards and ensure high quality in provision delivered in partnership through a Collaborative Course Quality Enhancement and Monitoring process involving the submission of annual quality monitoring reports to the University, as stipulated in the Collaborative Framework. [002] These course reports, associated action plans and responses from the University will be considered by ICMT's Academic Board Committee. This arrangement is expected to ensure that course design and delivery continue to be high quality. As the first cohort of students has only just been enrolled, the first review and annual monitoring report will not be available until 2023-24.

108 An ICMT Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategies document [032] indicates that learning and assessment styles 'are heavily practical, focusing on ensemble and individual working methods, developing a student's creative and practical skillset'. It also refers to teacher and activity-led learning being dominant with 'students working collaboratively to create and rehearse scenes, song, and choreography'. Assignment briefs [008, 039-043] explicitly refer to the intended learning outcomes and skills to be developed through a student's course of study. The team noted that the accelerated degree course comprises modules which ICMT has delivered previously [M1] and considered that the College has appropriate experience to set concrete expectations to enable students to meet and demonstrate the intended learning outcomes associated with degree-level provision within the accelerated timeframe of the degree course.

109 Tutors, who are freelance staff members brought in to deliver components of the performing arts curriculum, must submit lesson plans ahead of the semester lessons are to be taught for review by senior staff and are subject to at least one peer observation in a given academic year. [048] This approach enables senior staff to maintain oversight over all aspects of the curriculum delivery and, as such, ensure consistency in the quality of teaching delivered to students. Tutors [M3] confirmed that they had met senior staff to review lesson plans before the start of the semester and that senior staff provided support in the development of the tutors' approach to teaching. They also explained that internal staff communication channels facilitate open dialogue between the departments of acting, dance and music and, as such, tutors are familiar with each other's lesson plans.

110 The assessment team reviewed lesson plans corresponding to its observations of teaching [OBSERVATIONS] and confirmed that these were well reasoned, designed and appropriately paced to support tutors in delivering a high-quality academic experience. Tutors are supported in differentiating between individual student performance, as lesson plans include a section which explains what all, most and advanced students will be able to do by the end of the module. [OBSERVATIONS] This has the additional benefit of supporting tutors in providing comprehensive and helpful feedback to students as they can tailor advice according to student performance and need. This understanding by tutors was evidenced through the observations of teaching [OBSERVATIONS] where tutors explained their expectations, making explicit reference to the previous week's lessons, and how the current

week's content would contribute to meeting the learning outcomes of the module.

111 Tutors [M3] confirmed that staff induction is led by the Head of Musical Theatre and supported by the rest of the senior management team to ensure that tutors understand their roles and responsibilities, the culture of teaching and the expectations relating to assessment and the provision of feedback to students. In addition, they confirmed that support from senior staff was readily available, should they have any further queries. [M3] ICMT uses meetings of senior staff and tutors to ensure that staff understand their responsibilities and conducts peer observations to ensure that practical and academic components of the curriculum are delivered by tutors to a high standard.

112 Senior staff [M5] confirmed that newly recruited tutors will have peer observations conducted every semester whereas well-established tutors will be observed at least once each academic year. The team's scrutiny of Tutor Observation Reports for the 2021-22 academic year [076, 077, 078] found these to be well structured with clear headings relating to pace, engagement, standards, challenge and independence. Summative feedback is provided to the tutor who is required to review the report, provide comments, and co-sign the report with senior staff to jointly agree any outcomes and follow-up actions. The team's observations of teaching [OBSERVATIONS] demonstrated that tutors are teaching in line with ICMT's expectations and that they are appropriately skilled and trained. Student comments [M2, 062-066] also confirmed that the teaching students receive is high quality.

113 The assessment team's observations of classes clearly demonstrated high-quality course delivery by tutors and the effectiveness of the teaching, learning and assessment strategies adopted. Schemes of work and lesson plans underpinned all teaching sessions, and student performance during classes demonstrated the achievement of module aims and learning outcomes. [OBSERVATIONS] Staff are committed to providing a high-quality experience for students based on staff members' own professional experience and understanding of what students need to achieve successful careers in the performing arts. [M1, M3] Small class sizes enable them to address whole-class and individual student learning needs.

114 An annual ICMT Course and Tutor Survey [017] relating to courses pre-dating the introduction of the accelerated degree course demonstrates that students regard their courses as being of high quality (84%) and stimulating their interest in musical theatre (87%). No overall student submission was available but self-taped individual student submissions [062-066] showed that overall student satisfaction was high. Former students and current students [062-066, M2] confirmed that students considered the course to be of the highest quality and taught by well-qualified staff who have significant current industry experience.

115 The provider submission [000] drew attention to the employment success of ICMT alumni in professional musical theatre and noted that graduating students perform at an industry panel showcase at the end of their training which has led to a high success rate in agent representation. The submission further noted that ICMT graduates had also developed careers in a range of related fields such as choreographers, directors, writers, teachers, for example. Staff and students attributed the success of alumni in musical theatre performance to the high esteem in which the quality of the work undertaken at the ICMT is held by other organisations. [M1, M2, M3]

Conclusions

116 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 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.

117 ICMT has robust and credible plans for designing and delivering high-quality courses. The accelerated degree course, which has been designed by ICMT, has been subject to consultation with, and rigorous scrutiny by, Coventry University which has involved external specialist subject expertise in the process. This activity has ensured that module content is appropriate; that teaching, learning and assessment strategies adopted for the course will enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes; and that the course will be of high quality. The course has been benchmarked against appropriate external reference points to ensure that it meets sector-recognised standards. Furthermore, staff development sessions have been held and more sessions are planned. The course will also be subject to monitoring to ensure that it is of high quality.

118 ICMT staff maintain effective oversight of teaching and learning as tutors are required to submit their lesson plans for review to ensure that these are consistent with the teaching, learning and assessment strategies to be applied. Further support is provided through peer observation activities and through staff and tutor meetings to ensure that all those involved in teaching on the higher education provision are enabled to deliver a high-quality academic experience to students. Senior staff and tutors are well equipped to identify potential issues given their own experience as performing artists and can provide appropriate support to students.

119 The team's observations of teaching and review of schemes of work and lesson plans showed that staff consistently demonstrated good planning and organisation leading to high-quality delivery and stimulating learning activities that engage students. Students regarded the course to be of the highest quality and were highly complimentary about staff teaching on the course, highlighting the benefits of being taught by industry professionals. ICMT's annual Course and Tutor Survey results demonstrate that students regard the courses provided at the ICMT to be of high quality, stimulating their interest in musical theatre. The team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is **met**.

120 In making the judgement, the team considered evidence including the initial approval processes; learning, teaching and assessment strategies and assignment briefs; the team's observations of teaching; schemes of work and lesson plans; and met staff and students involved with the course. Although information from external examiners or from third party organisations was not yet available for the course, the team considers that ICMT's plans to secure high-quality course design and delivery are credible and robust. The team therefore 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

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

122 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](#) (July 2022).

123 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.

124 No relevant third party endorsements identifying other organisations' views about the sufficiency, qualifications and skills of staff were available.

What the evidence shows

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

126 ICMT often recruits new staff through word of mouth [000] and advertisement. It does not have a formal recruitment policy but does have Staff Recruitment Guidance [046] which indicates that, due to the specialist nature of its business, the posting of jobs externally is considered case-by-case based on the type of job being advertised. At a minimum, all jobs will be posted on the ICMT's website and social media platforms. [046; M1]

127 The staff guidance document [046] details the shortlisting process, indicating that selection and employment judgements will be made on the basis of the associated job descriptions. The guidance also details the need to convene an interview panel of at least two, namely the recruiting manager and another staff member. [046] ICMT's Operations Manager has strategic and operational oversight of the entire process. [M1] The guidance appropriately details that no-one can begin working as a staff member until eligibility for work has been checked and original documentation presented. [046; M1] Prospective teachers are required to send their CVs to the Head of Musical Theatre for scrutiny and potential interview, [000; M1] and candidates' CVs are submitted to Coventry University for approval. [046; M1; M4] The Staff Recruitment Guidance [046] has yet to be fully tested [M1; M3] but senior staff confirmed that the panel engaged in a recent interview of the new ICMT Head of Dance used formal scoring sheets as part of the appraisal process to add rigour to the selection process. [M1]

128 ICMT does not have a formal induction policy but it has produced Staff Induction Guidance. [071] This outlines ICMT's expectation in relation to practical induction such as IT set-up, mandatory training such as data protection (General Data Protection Regulation), consumer rights and a range of other critical functions that employees need to complete. It outlines the probationary period, lists essential policies and provides a new staff summary induction checklist. The guidance makes no mention of specific induction activities related to academic activities and/or the understanding of the arrangement with Coventry University and the University's academic regulations. Currently, senior managers indicated that the Operations Manager effectively carries out the bulk of staff induction activity. [M1] For example, following the recruitment of the new Head of Dance, senior staff had a 'handover' period of several days to support the new employee into their role and an upcoming staff training day is to be used as part of the induction process to ensure that the new employee

is fully acquainted with the policy and procedures of ICMT and the University. [M1] ICMT recognises that effective induction forms a critical part of demonstrating robust and credible plans for induction. [M1]

129 ICMT does not currently publish a staff handbook but instead signposts new employees to the Tutor Agreement 2022-2023 [048] which it currently terms as its Employee Handbook that is currently being re-worked into a new Staff Handbook. [Request for additional evidence response] The Tutor Agreement 2022-2023 [048] is a formal contract between the employee and ICMT and cannot be considered a handbook in its current format.

130 ICMT's process for identifying staff and their skills is strategic and linked to its growth and development plans. [000; M1] It has a comprehensively defined Two-Year Resource Plan [019] which sets out a high-level resource strategy as the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance two year accelerated degree course commences delivery. This plan includes staffing resource requirements which indicate that in year one, all current staff will remain in place with an additional Head of Dance and a new, qualified permanent Wellbeing Officer who will double as a tutor. At the time of the review, a new Head of Dance had just been appointed. The BA (Hons) Course Leader (the Head of Musical Theatre) will be supported by additional freelance tutors who will be hired where necessary. In addition, other new staff to be recruited include a Marketing Manager and an administrator. In year two of the plan, three senior tutors will be recruited, and other permanent staff and freelance tutors will be recruited, as required.

131 The University's institutional and course approval reports [036,037] noted that the majority of teaching staff do not have a formal teaching qualification but did not consider this to be of concern because of the level of ICMT's oversight of teaching delivery through student feedback and peer observations, which enables assessment, monitoring and appropriate intervention, if required. ICMT staff observe and plan to continue to observe teaching and learning sessions on a regular basis with each member of staff being observed at least once a year and new staff being observed more regularly. [M5] The observations not only serve to check on the quality of teaching but also ensure that schemes of work and academic learning objectives are delivered to the highest standard. [000; M1; M3]

132 All tutors are required to submit their lesson plans to senior staff for review which enables ICMT to maintain oversight of each tutor's approach to teaching. [036] Tutors [M3] endorsed the level of support provided to them by ICMT's senior staff and confirmed that they meet ahead of the semester to review lesson plans and that senior staff check in with them to ensure that they are comfortable delivering the curriculum. From the team's own observations of teaching [OBSERVATIONS] and scrutiny of associated lesson planning documentation, it was clear that planning for learning was of the highest quality and designed to support the achievement of learning outcomes. Tutors [M3] confirmed that they make use of imagery, different fonts, or teaching styles to accommodate individual student needs. This culture of inclusion was evident in the teaching observations as tutors invested time in each individual student to coach them through the difficulties at their stage of development and maintained dialogue with the entire class to ensure that all students were happy to progress before moving on to the next topic. [OBSERVATIONS] Tutors responded to all student questions and used live music, supporting resources (such as a whiteboard or chairs), or provided 'real world' practical examples to ensure that students understood their explanation which made the classes engaging. [OBSERVATIONS]

133 Staff CVs [018] demonstrate that all staff have experience that is relevant to the provision offered. Staff have a wealth of high-quality professional experience and professional qualifications in the field in which they are expert and teach, which support them in delivering a high-quality practical experience for students. [000; M1] Many freelance staff

who teach at the ICMT also teach at other leading institutions within the sector offering BA, MA and diploma courses while working professionally. [Request for additional evidence response form] Coventry University retains oversight of tutor recruitment, reviewing CVs ahead of the interview process to ensure that any new appointments are appropriately qualified to provide students with a high-quality student experience. [037]

134 Staff meetings and departmental meetings ensure that academic processes within modules are understood and delivered as intended. [Request for additional evidence response form] This enables current practices to be shared and students benefit from being taught by those they wish to emulate. Students commented positively on how being taught by professionals provides them with high-quality teaching and learning that is relevant to the industry in which they intend to work. [M2] This staffing model also ensures that staff are familiar with the academic structures, requirements, and expectations within higher education and are well practised in nurturing and facilitating critical thinking, self-reflection, and the academic practices required. [059-061, Request for additional evidence response form]

135 ICMT staff are able to access continuing professional development and training opportunities to ensure academic rigour. [M1; M3; 000] ICMT and the University have co-produced a Staff Development Plan [047; 087] that aims to cover the critical areas of Teaching and Learning Practices, Assessment and Feedback Practices, Student Experience and Quality Assurance and Enhancement. This comprehensive package is extensive and well designed and is expected to enable all academic staff to deliver a high-quality learning experience. University staff [M4] confirmed that they have regular contact with senior staff to provide support, and will create bespoke staff training sessions, as required, should any additional development needs be identified through formal monitoring procedures.

136 Course and Tutor Survey Results 2021-2022 [017] demonstrate that all tutors, with one exception, received a score in excess of 80% satisfaction for the teaching and tutoring students receive, including positive scores relating to the question 'I've learnt a lot from this teacher'. This was corroborated by students who were very complimentary about the quality of teaching they receive. [M2] Student submissions [062-066] also showed that students consider that ICMT delivers high-quality courses.

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 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 ICMT's approach to the observation of teaching and learning is well established and is aimed at not only checking the quality of teaching but also ensuring that schemes of work and academic learning objectives are clearly labelled and assessed as part of the process. While tutors may not hold formal teaching qualifications, they are effective communicators and develop lesson plans which are reviewed by senior staff to ensure that their approach to teaching delivery is in line with ICMT's expectations that students receive a high-quality experience. Senior staff confirmed their plans to continue conducting peer observations to ensure that tutors are delivering the curriculum at the appropriate level and, as expected, given ICMT's culture and teaching practices. The team's observations of teaching strongly indicate that teaching staff are appropriately qualified and skilled to deliver high-quality courses.

139 ICMT has robust and credible plans for the recruitment, appointment, induction and support of sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff. However, these plans are in their infancy and continue to evolve and, as such, cannot yet be fully tested. The recruitment and induction procedures in place are supportive of the practical and operational processes that need to be undertaken but have not yet evolved into firm policy or practice that fully and explicitly considers all relevant academic regulations, including those of the awarding partner. Staff have not yet been fully engaged or received induction using the new procedures but the role of the Operations Manager in the recruitment and induction process has provided sufficient oversight of both processes to ensure that new employees will be appropriately supported into their roles and will become sufficiently familiar with both ICMT's and the University's regulations and associated policies and procedures to be effective in their roles.

140 Staff CVs and the team's own observations of teaching also confirm that staff are appropriately qualified to deliver a high-quality academic experience and student feedback elicited through survey data and in discussion with the team also confirm this to be the case. Students were highly complimentary about the high-quality teaching and learning experience they receive and appreciated the professional experience of their teachers which provides greater clarity and support to them in achieving the intended learning outcomes. In addition, the comprehensive joint staff development plan designed collaboratively between ICMT and Coventry University provides further confidence that new and existing teaching staff will continue to develop their skills.

141 On the basis of the evidence provided, including meetings with staff, students and representatives of the University and the team's observations of teaching, the team concludes that the Core practice is **met**. However, the evolving practice and fledgling guidance regarding the recruitment, appointment, induction and support of sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff, and the fact that these processes have not yet been fully tested led the team to have a **moderate 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

142 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.

143 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](#) (July 2022).

144 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.

145 The team was unable to scrutinise third party endorsements identifying other organisations' views about facilities, learning resources and student support services as none were available.

What the evidence shows

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

147 ICMT moved premises in 2018 to its current location in Hackney Wick, London, and completed a 'fit-out of purpose-built studios' to ensure the appropriateness of the new facilities. [000] A Resources Overview document [020] indicates that bespoke studio space and practice rooms are made available for students to use during breaks, lunch and after timetabled hours until 7pm and Wi-Fi is accessible through the entire premises. This was confirmed by students. [M2]The assessment team's tour of the studio space and practice rooms confirmed the appropriateness of the on-site facilities which were of sufficient size and equipped for the delivery of practical components of the curriculum. [TOUR]

148 ICMT's Academic Board Committee is responsible for making proposals to the Senior Management Team on infrastructure, organisational and resource needs for the development of teaching, learning and assessment at ICMT. [004] Its remit also includes keeping academic support services, general student services and services which have an impact on the quality of the student experience under review to ensure that these continue to be appropriate and fit for purpose.

149 To accommodate the additional student intake due to the launch of the new two-year accelerated degree and, through its discussions with Coventry University about expansion options with Coventry University, [M4] ICMT has developed a Two-Year Resource Plan [019] to ensure that it continues to have sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services. The plan describes the steps that the ICMT will take in response to different levels of student intake on the degree course, ranging from 12 students set as the lower estimate to 70 at the upper limit. Should student intake approach the maximum estimate, ICMT plans to secure bespoke studio space off-site to ensure that it has sufficient studio space to continue to accommodate small class sizes which it knows to be a major contributing factor to supporting a high-quality academic and professional experience for its students. [M1] The Resource Plan indicates that, in the event of the highest estimate being achieved, the BA (Hons) course will be based at the current premises and non-BA provision would take place at facilities it has identified within walking distance of its current location. [M1] The assessment team considered this approach to be

credible and sound.

150 The Senior Management Team, which meets on a monthly basis, is responsible for ensuring that ICMT has sufficient financial, physical, human and information resources to support ICMT's aims and objectives; meet academic standards; and protect the collective student interest. It therefore maintains oversight of the Two-Year Resource Plan, [019] which shows how the staffing structure would need to change to respond to different levels of potential student intake, including an expected increase in the number of full-time teaching staff and the need to recruit a Student Services Assistant to support existing staff in running student-related services.

151 Students have access to approximately 2,000 items of sheet music, 250 pieces of acting material (including plays and monologues) and 1,000 pieces of piano tracks and backing music, enabling them to engage with a wide variety of material. [020 Resources Overview] Students receive access to these learning resources through a small on-site library of materials and digitally through the student intranet [TOUR] and staff signpost students to particular scripts or music they should familiarise themselves with ahead of the following week's classes. [M3] Students also have access to a limited sub-set (due to licensing restrictions) of additional electronic resources available through Coventry University to broaden the variety of academic texts available to students on the degree course. [020]

152 The Resources Overview [020] indicates that ICMT intends to invest in its on-site and digital learning resources to ensure that students continue to have access to books, journals, and databases necessary to support their studies. Senior staff confirmed that they have invested in the learning resources in response to student requests and that they use feedback provided by students to ensure that the learning resources reflect the interests of students at the ICMT. [TOUR] Moreover, if students cannot access a particular playscript or piece of sheet music through ICMT's on-site or digital collection, or do not have free access through other means, ICMT will secure access and add the new material to its collection. [TOUR] Senior staff have engaged with Drama Online to secure trial access to a digital library which provides a research tool for drama (and literature) students and teachers in order to make an informed decision about which subscription plan is the most appropriate for ICMT students and anticipates facilitating student access to this resource by the end of October 2022. [TOUR]

153 The majority of learning resources are readily accessible through the student intranet [TOUR] which the team found was helpfully laid out with learning resources held in folders corresponding to the modules, assignments or a particular style of musical theatre performance which readily facilitates students' ability to find and access materials. [TOUR] Careful review of the digital learning resources held on the student intranet demonstrated that they are sufficient and diverse enough to allow ICMT to provide a high-quality academic experience for students. [TOUR] The College has invested in self-taping resources to enable students to create their own tapes in-house with tutor support. [037, TOUR] The team viewed the self-taping equipment available for students to use through their studies in Self-Tape, a module which supports them in developing their skills to create industry standard audition tapes, and in their self-study periods or after hours when preparing individually for auditions. [TOUR]

154 The Student Handbook 2022-2023 [021] provides students with information about the facilities, learning resources and student support services they will have access to at the ICMT. It refers to the College's open-door policy and encourages students to make senior staff and tutors aware if they are struggling with their studies or their physical or mental health. The Handbook indicates that senior staff and tutors can 'offer coping strategies and advice on managing stress and anxiety' but they are not qualified therapists and will

recommend professional help when they feel students require significant intervention and professional support. The Handbook also directs students to a list of dedicated health and wellbeing resources on the readily accessible student intranet.

155 Senior staff [M1] and tutors [M3] explained that the ICMT seeks to facilitate student access to the right support, whether that is an informal conversation with a member of staff who understands the pressure of their studies or a more formal medical intervention through the NHS. Furthermore, the College commits to regular check-ins with students to support them in overcoming the challenges associated with training, workload management and the creation of achievable and quantifiable goals to ensure training is focused and positive. Part of this check-in process involves the random sampling of student journals to ensure that students are managing to consistently engage with their studies and progress at an appropriate pace. [M1]

156 The ICMT has also adopted a Physical and Mental Health Tenet, [\[https://www.theicmt.com/blog/physical-and-mental-health-tenet\]](https://www.theicmt.com/blog/physical-and-mental-health-tenet) which describes the impact that students' physical and mental health can have on their ability to lead a successful career as a performing artist and the ICMT's commitment to increasing awareness of personal wellbeing in musical theatre training. ICMT provides wellbeing sessions, bringing students together to discuss performance anxiety and provides classes to promote a healthy body and mind including yoga, Pilates and mindfulness.

157 Two senior staff act as Safeguarding and Deputy Safeguarding Leads to act as main points of contact for 'any student suffering emotionally or mentally'. [M5] Senior staff [M5] confirmed that they had considered creating a full-time counsellor or mental health adviser to support student welfare as this would ensure its approach to student support was fully aligned with other performing arts providers, but the current student numbers at the College means that this is not financially viable at this time. The team considered that the current arrangements for student support provided by the safeguarding lead and deputy, as well as the mental health and performance anxiety sessions provided, are sufficient and appropriate to meet the needs of students currently studying at the ICMT.

158 The Course Specification [001] states that, if a student is injured and requires specialised care and assistance beyond what the ICMT can offer, the College will utilise its links with 'physiotherapists, chiropractors, vocal doctors, leading vocal coaches and vocal therapists, life coaches, and counsellors' to provide students with the support they require. For example, a physiotherapist could attend a student's classes to observe and support ICMT in creating a tailored support plan. [M1] In such a case, the College would be unable to support the student financially but would support the student in engaging with local NHS services to receive equivalent services and support. The team's observations of teaching demonstrated tutor awareness of any physical limitations and regular checking to ensure student comfort with tasks, modified as appropriate. [OBSERVATIONS] The team noted that the ICMT is not able to admit non-UK citizens to the accelerated degree course and recognised that current support arrangements would need to be re-evaluated, should it seek to admit international students to the course in the future. [M1]

159 Students confirmed that the current facilities were sufficient for their needs, and that they can make use of the studio space and practice rooms to socialise during breaks, outside of timetabled hours to practise. [M2] They also confirmed the ICMT's open-door approach to student support and the willingness of all senior management staff and tutors to support them with any issue impacting their educational experience. They have also received two sessions on overcoming performance anxiety as an aspiring performing artist. Students knew which senior staff members acted as the main points of contact for student welfare and confirmed that these contacts were accessible and that they felt well supported.

160 The student submissions [062-066] showed that students consider that ICMT delivers high-quality courses, supported by appropriate facilities, learning resources and support measures. Students' views about the facilities, learning resources and support services are sought through an annual Course and Tutor Survey [017] which is used to collect student feedback regarding their programme delivery and teaching provision. As the accelerated degree only started in September 2022, the data available corresponds to the Level 4 Diploma and other courses delivered by ICMT. Additionally, as the survey is conducted anonymously it was not possible to extract the data corresponding to only the Level 4 Diploma students. [M5] For questions Q4 'I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course'; Q7 'My institution provides an appropriate environment in which to learn'; Q9 'There is sufficient provision of welfare and student services to meet my needs'; and Q10 'When needed, the information and advice offered by welfare and student services has been helpful', between 75%-85% of students agreed.

161 The survey results [017] also provided insight into how effective tutors are in supporting students on a number of metrics including whether students feel they have been appropriately challenged, overall approachability, and how effective staff are in communicating expectations during lessons. They show that students regard their tutors as appropriately skilled as no tutor was rated lower than 74% with the median sitting much higher. In response to one tutor receiving particularly low student feedback, ICMT investigated, conducting meetings with students and with the individual tutor to discuss the student feedback, and ultimately replaced the tutor. Newly enrolled students studying on the Level 4 Diploma and the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance [M2] confirmed that they have had no issues so far with the quality of teaching provided by any of their tutors.

Conclusions

162 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 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.

163 ICMT has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience. The team's tour of facilities and teaching observations confirmed that the bespoke studio space and practice rooms are well equipped and appropriate to support the delivery of the practical components of a performing arts curriculum.

164 Plans to secure additional studio space in response to growth in student numbers are credible as senior staff have discussed these with Coventry University staff and identified suitable additional space within walking distance of ICMT's current facilities. Students have access to a selection of learning resources through an on-site library of materials, an extensive digital collection held on the student intranet and electronic resources available through Coventry University's library in support of the academic components of the curriculum. ICMT is proactive in developing its resources, both in response to student feedback and independently, with plans to secure access to Drama Online by the end of October 2022.

165 ICMT's approach to student support is led by members of the senior management team who ensure that tutors understand their role and responsibility in supporting student wellbeing and learning difficulties. The College operates an open-door policy which is regarded highly by students who consider it effective in supporting them to access the

resources they need. Information regarding a variety of mental health resources available to students is held centrally on the student intranet to ensure accessibility for all students. Tutors are well placed to support students in overcoming injuries and training challenges due to the tutors' own extensive experience as performing artists. The College supports students who cannot afford private healthcare support in securing appropriate NHS alternatives. It has credible plans to appoint a mental health specialist should student numbers grow to a point where the senior management team is no longer able to monitor and support students individually. ICMT students consider that the facilities, learning resources and support measures available to them are of high quality. The assessment team therefore concludes that the Core practice is **met**.

166 Based on the evidence presented, scrutiny of the documentation and the assessment team's direct observation of the facilities, teaching, learning resources and student support measures ICMT has in place and the College's plans for ensuring sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services, the 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

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

168 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](#) (July 2022).

What the evidence shows

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

170 The Senior Management Team (SMT) Terms of Reference [023] indicate that it is responsible for ensuring that all students and staff have opportunities to engage with the governance and management of the institution. Consequently, a student representative may attend certain meetings where SMT wishes to consider the views of students. Senior staff [M1] indicated that students have been invited to provide feedback on the design or delivery of assessments, the quality of teaching provided by tutors or, generally, to provide feedback on operational aspects of course delivery. The Student Rep Handbook [055] indicates that, in addition to attending and participating in Student Representation Committee meetings, they could also be invited to attend other committee meetings, for example, SMT meetings, where student input is required for specific topics.

171 SMT Away Day Minutes (July 2022) [058] showed that student comments were included and considered as part of the agenda, being allocated a specific agenda item where student feedback was provided by a nominated student representative. The minutes cover a diverse range of areas, including improving the delivery of teaching, highlighting the desire to provide more interdisciplinary performance opportunities, and introducing extra vocal and dance classes, staff peer monitoring and professional development. [058] The minutes demonstrate the commitment of senior staff to engaging with student representatives about the quality of their educational experience and action taken in response to student feedback received.

172 ICMT's Student Representation Committee (SRC) was established in 2021 to formally enable students to actively engage in discussions and decisions relating to the quality of their educational experience with senior staff. [000] The SRC document [024] contains summary information about the purpose of forming the committee, membership of the group and the responsibilities of senior staff and elected student representatives. The document details how, through this committee, students can directly influence the 'design, delivery and evaluation of many aspects of their educational experience'. The SRC meets twice a year and participating student representatives are encouraged to close the feedback loop with their peers following SRC meetings to provide a student perspective on the ideas, suggestions and outcomes of any discussions with senior staff. [024] The SRC document states that two ICMT staff members, usually the International Relations Manager and the Operations Manager, facilitate the SRC, and ideas, suggestions and actions requiring further discussion by the SMT will be taken to the next meeting of the SMT.

173 ICMT coordinates the election of a maximum of two student representatives per course in the first week of an academic year with successful candidates immediately taking up post. [024] Students [M2] confirmed that they were first made aware of the opportunity to get involved in student representation during their induction week, at which time they received information about the scope of the role and associated responsibilities. Students

considering nominating themselves can find additional information hosted on the student intranet. By hosting this information in a centralised location, ICMT ensures that candidates understand the responsibilities of the role. The team found the information on the student intranet to be well laid out in a manner that supported student understanding.

174 The SRC document [024] indicates that successful candidates can expect to receive training on their roles and responsibilities and how to obtain feedback from their peers. It also refers to support for skills-based training on effective communication, chairing meetings, and mediation. Newly elected student representatives confirmed that their training would be completed the week after the review visit and that they had received documentation to review ahead of the formal training session. [M2]

175 ICMT's Student Rep Handbook [055] provides newly elected student representatives with clearly outlined explanations of the responsibilities of their role and helpful advice about how to effectively fulfil them. It provides student representatives with a helpful glossary of terms that they can expect to encounter through their role and the types of meetings they can expect to attend, including Senior Management Team meetings, Academic Board Committee, and the Operations Committee when there are agenda items relevant to students. [055] Through this handbook, student representatives are advised of effective methods to collect feedback, including distributing online surveys, corresponding with students via email or informally through social media groups. The size of the College and the student population means that student representatives are accessible to students after classes or in the social spaces available within the College, should a student wish to quickly provide feedback informally.

176 The Student Rep Handbook [055] encourages student representatives to set healthy boundaries by clearly stating the types of feedback they are expected to handle and advising them to signpost students to the appropriate senior staff member if students approach with concerns beyond this. It also outlines the expectation that student representatives close the feedback loop with their peers and describes the importance of doing so in a timely fashion. As stated in the handbook, this is essential to ensure that students provide feedback in future as they will have confidence that their voice is heard and understand that the College is responsive to any concerns. [055]

177 Scrutiny of the (redacted) records of three SRC meetings involving student representatives and staff since the Committee's establishment in the 2021 academic year [054] show feedback provided by student representatives, indicating that students feel their voice is valued and are happy to provide feedback through student representative channels, and a positive response by senior staff members. SRC minutes [054] show that action is taken in the event of negative feedback, with oversight of follow-up actions maintained by senior staff to ensure resolution. Where student feedback is not possible to action, due to semester timeframes or is not financially viable, student representatives are informed with a supporting explanation provided by senior staff, demonstrating ICMT's commitment to student engagement. SRC minutes [054] also include frequent praise for teaching staff, which supports the team's view that ICMT's approach to student engagement has a demonstrably positive impact as comments are largely clarification questions or suggestions to improve existing provision. Students considered that the frequency of SRC meetings was sufficient to facilitate collective student engagement in the quality of their educational experience. [M2]

178 Staff have engaged with student representatives to act on feedback relating to minor issues such as studio temperature or slippery floors, which are readily resolved, to high-level decisions on auditioning or provision on part-time diplomas. [054] Other examples included adding hooks on the back of toilet doors and extending the building opening hours to allow students to make use of the studio space outside scheduled teaching time. Students

also confirmed that the College had responded quickly to student feedback about the class size for a particular studio being too large as the following week the timetable had been revised to accommodate the class in a larger studio space. [M2]

179 ICMT has also engaged students in specific-issue focus groups, for example, 'two-year versus three-year degrees and re-designing the ICMT's website'. [000] The Focus Group minutes for the Two-Year versus Three Year Degree [056] and Website Redesign [057] provide examples of ICMT collectively engaging with students to inform and shape decision-making on core aspects of course delivery or information accessibility. The first focus group, [057] conducted in March 2022, was part of an ongoing website re-design to give ICMT's website a modern look that is attractive to students and improve overall accessibility. The College used the student feedback to structure the re-design, simplifying both the administrative burden to maintain the website and streamline information by course rather than location, as requested by students. Follow-up feedback from the students endorsed these changes as positive and confirmed that the new website was easier to navigate. [057]

180 The second focus group [056] in May 2022 consisted of senior management staff and 12 participating students to examine the feasibility of delivering the accelerated two-year degree and the level of interest in such a course. This group noted that students would save money on accommodation and that contact time would remain the same as a traditional three-year degree with shorter breaks in the academic calendar. Students agreed, noting rental costs and longer breaks being counter-productive given the need to maintain training momentum. Students felt that the College would be able to deliver the practical training required and had sufficient industry connections to support them in securing successful professional outcomes in the compressed timeframe.

181 ICMT has progressed to deliver the two-year accelerated degree which started in September 2022. While the Two Year versus Three Year Degree [056] focus group minutes demonstrate engagement with the student body on decisions that impact the quality of their educational experience, the team noted that the focus group took place after the course had been approved. In this respect, the decision had already been made with students being involved retrospectively to provide support for the decision. It is not clear from the minutes whether contributing students were aware that ICMT had already secured approval from Coventry University during this meeting.

182 Students on the 2022-23 Level 4 Diploma in Musical Theatre and the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance courses have yet to engage with the Course and Tutor Survey and had only recently elected their student representatives. [M2] However, they were aware of the various methods available to them to engage in the quality of their educational experience and were confident that individual and collective student engagement would be readily facilitated due to the close and regular interactions between students, staff and tutors and ICMT's open-door policy. They indicated that they view the one-to-one meeting they will have with the Head of Musical Theatre at the end of the semester as another opportunity to provide individual feedback on the quality of their educational experience. Students confirmed that the current arrangements are appropriate to facilitate collective engagement due to the approachability of senior staff, the accessibility of student representatives, and the small cohort sizes.

183 The Student Handbook 2022-2023 [021] provides students with an overview of the feedback channels they can access throughout their studies, including collective channels such as the SRC and individual feedback channels, such as informal student-staff discussions, an anonymous feedback box located outside the senior staff office and annual surveys such as the Course and Tutor Survey. The Handbook states that students can expect their elected representatives to collect both positive and negative feedback about the

quality of their educational experience which will then be used to work in partnership with staff to explore issues and identify solutions. It directs students to the student intranet where they can find more information about the role and responsibilities of their elected representatives. This ensures that students understand the role of their elected representatives and have reasonable expectations of their peers.

184 Course and Tutor Survey Results 2021-22 [075] invites student feedback on the quality of students' educational experience. Three questions in this survey provide insight, namely: Q13 'within my course, I feel my suggestions and ideas are valued'; Q14 'I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback as part of my course'; Q15 'It is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on'. The survey data shows that students feel engaged in the quality of their educational experience, as between 74%-78% agreed with these statements. [075] None of the comments provided in response to the Course and Tutor Survey [075] specifically addressed the opportunities to provide feedback on their course so this could not be confirmed. However, given students' views indicating the receptiveness of senior staff to student feedback, the team did not consider this to indicate a broader underlying issue with the current arrangements. [062-066]

185 Tutor Surveys from 2018-19 and 2019-20 [073-074] only provided students with the opportunity to provide feedback on the quality of their tutors rather than the entirety of their educational experience and the 2018-19 survey did not include comments. By expanding the survey content to include broader questions that consider the course and student experience as a whole, ICMT facilitates student engagement in the quality of their educational experience. While the earlier data could not be used to establish the effectiveness of ICMT's approach to individually engaging students, as the earlier surveys did not include relevant questions, the data available does indicate that students regard their tutors as high quality and extremely supportive of their individual development. Students consistently rated individual tutors above 90% across all questions including knowledge of subject and professionalism. The Course and Tutor Survey Results have been used by the senior staff team to identify the student perspective of the quality of teaching delivery leading to a change of tutor, in response to student feedback received, demonstrating the College's commitment to improving its students' learning experience, engendering confidence that the current arrangements for engaging students individually and collectively in the quality of their educational experience are effective.

186 The College had plans to introduce a 'you said, we did' display to coincide with the intake of students on the accelerated degree in September 2022 but indicated at the visit that it had decided to host this display on the student intranet to increase accessibility. [TOUR]

Conclusions

187 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 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.

188 ICMT's approach to engaging students individually and collectively in the quality of their educational experience is clear and effective. Student representatives are invited to Senior Management Team meetings to discuss agenda items which are relevant to the broader student experience and it is clear that student feedback is valued and acted upon. The College also makes use of focus groups to elicit specific feedback from current students

in a forward-looking manner, taking their views into account as it develops its provision.

189 The College's Student Rep Handbook sets out clear expectations of student representatives who are required to close the feedback loop with their peers after formal meetings, communicating any actions and outcomes to ensure that all students are engaged in the feedback channels. At the time of the visit, new student representatives had been appointed and were scheduled to receive training the following week demonstrating the College's commitment to ensuring that student engagement is effective.

190 In addition to the student representation engagement mechanisms in place, ICMT facilitates individual student engagement by means of an anonymous feedback box, semesterly one-to-one meetings between students with a member of the senior staff team and, annually, through the Course and Tutor Survey. The College's open-door policy additionally facilitates individual student engagement in a confidential manner as students can approach any senior staff member they wish to provide direct feedback about their course or a particular tutor. Students considered that ICMT staff valued student feedback and had shown that they were receptive and responsive to student feedback, citing examples of action taken in response to feedback given.

191 Although the formal student representation structures have only recently been established, they are appropriately sized, resourced and scheduled to support collective student engagement. There are no survey or evaluation results for the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance as this started in September 2022. Nevertheless, on the basis of the evidence available relating to other provision delivered at the ICMT, which demonstrated that ICMT does actively engage students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience, the team considers that the Core practice is **met** and it 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

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

193 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](#) (July 2022).

194 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.

195 The team was unable to consider examples of complaints and appeals as ICMT reported that it had not received any formal complaints or appeals.

What the evidence shows

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

197 ICMT is responsible for handling complaints and appeals in a manner that is accessible to all students. [000, 002] The Student Complaints Procedure, [026] introduced in 2021, sets out how the College deals with both complaints and appeals. It is hosted on the ICMT website to ensure that it is accessible to all applicants and students. ICMT's academic regulations 2022-23 [003] indicate that the ICMT will submit a summary of any complaints, appeals and disciplinary proceedings to the University within 30 days of receipt. ICMT students will only have the right to appeal to the University on procedural matters once all other avenues within the College have been exhausted. [010, 034]

198 The Complaints Procedure [026] clearly outlines what can be considered as a complaint, including issues with the quality of facilities, quality of teaching, unfair treatment, inappropriate behaviour by a member of staff, concerns about the quality and standard of a given service provided or dissatisfaction with a policy or procedure operated by the College. The procedure sets out clearly defined stages for complaint resolution, ranging from informal resolution of complaints and appeals within the College to formal review by the Group Registrar and Chief Governance Officer at Coventry University. Students may also write directly to the Registrar and Secretary of the University if they wish to submit comments relating to the course that cannot be considered as a formal complaint. [010]

199 A template complaint form, to be populated with relevant information, including action taken on particular dates and why previous attempts to resolve issues have been unsatisfactory, is available to complainants at Stage 1 of the process. Complainants are required to email this to the named senior staff contact using the email address issued to them by the College. This template may also be used at Stage 2 of the complaints procedure to enable complainants to structure their response to the ICMT Principal or they may email the Principal directly following the guidance in the procedure. [M1] The procedure [026] clearly describes the responsibilities of the complainant and the College at each of the formal stages of resolution, which supports the fairness and transparency of the process.

200 ICMT has not received any formal complaints to date, consequently the assessment team explored with senior staff involved in handling student complaints what they considered to be essential elements of a complete investigation. [M5] The staff explained that they

would review the submitted evidence and expect to conduct interviews with the complainant and any relevant staff members named in the complaint to establish the circumstances that led to a formal complaint being submitted. They confirmed that they would not expect to take longer than one to two working days to complete this process and noted that it would be important to resolve complaints in a timely manner to minimise disruption to a student's studies and any impact on their wellbeing.

201 Students are signposted to the Students Complaints Procedure [026] through several channels including the Student Agreement 2022-2023, [027] which they are required to review and sign before joining the College, and through the Student Handbook 2022-2023. [021] Additionally, ICMT directs students to the procedure at induction and they receive supplementary information in the form of a presentation to support them in developing their understanding of what may be considered through this formal channel for resolution. [M1] Students [M2] confirmed that these arrangements were effective in supporting their understanding of the procedure. Although they have had no reason to engage with the procedure to date, having not encountered any potential issues at this early stage of their studies, they stated that they view the staff as being open to supporting them and would feel comfortable seeking help in submitting a formal complaint if they needed to do so in the future.

202 Comments provided in student submissions [062-066] were also helpful in identifying the mechanisms that support successful provision and informal resolution of potential issues. All five student submissions commented on the responsiveness of staff in providing support to students and resolving potential issues in a timely fashion when students have provided feedback. Due to the small size of the College and the tight-knit student-staff community, any potential issues have been addressed before they escalate in a way that would warrant addressing through the formal resolution channel.

203 Tutors are not involved in handling student complaints directly but they are signposted to the procedure by senior staff during a team meeting at the start of the academic year. [M1] Tutors [M3] were able to clearly articulate ICMT's expectation that they should direct students to the relevant staff member rather than try to support a student directly. ICMT's response to a request for additional evidence (August 2022) indicated that, while no formal training on handling complaints had taken place, the College would be open to providing training for staff involved in the process, should this be required, liaising with Coventry University accordingly, as the University has appropriately experienced staff with relevant experience to facilitate training sessions. [M4]

Conclusions

204 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 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.

205 The College has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are clear and accessible to all students. The Student Complaints Procedure, which also covers appeals, has clearly defined stages for informal and formal resolution which promote transparency of the process for complainants. Staff involved in implementing the procedure understand the importance of the timely resolution of complaints.

206 Students are directed towards the procedure through multiple channels including

the Student Handbook, the Student Agreement and during their induction. The procedure can be accessed through the ICMT website and through the student intranet. Students are therefore made aware of the procedure from the outset and throughout their studies. Students confirmed that staff are very responsive to the student voice and any feedback students may provide about the facilities, resources or delivery of teaching and so they have not felt the need to use the formal resolution channel to date. Students confirmed that they would be comfortable approaching any staff member for support if they intended to submit a formal complaint in the future.

207 Tutors do not receive formal training regarding the Student Complaints Procedure as they are not involved in implementing the procedure. However, they are aware of the procedure and demonstrated their understanding of the expectation that they should direct students to the staff member responsible for the procedure in the event of any student dissatisfaction expressed with any aspect of their course and studies. Training can be provided in the future if there are any concerns about the effectiveness of complaints handling at ICMT.

208 Although no formal complaints or appeals have been received to date, and the effectiveness and timeliness of ICMT's procedures for complaints and appeals could not therefore be tested, staff involved in implementing the procedures were able to clearly articulate how they would conduct an investigation, if required.

209 On the basis of the above, the team concludes that the College does have fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students. This Core practice is therefore **met**.

210 Although the College has yet to put the Student Complaints Procedure into practice because no formal complaints or appeals have been submitted by students, the procedures are expected to deliver timely outcomes, if implemented as intended. Based on the evidence presented and taking into consideration the size and nature of the provider, the 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

211 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.

212 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](#) (July 2022).

213 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.

214 No external examiner reports were available as the degree course only began in September 2022. No relevant third party endorsements were available to assess how other organisations regard the quality of the course delivered in partnership with Coventry University.

What the evidence shows

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

216 The Collaborative Framework document 2022-2023 [002] and Programme Approval Agreement between Coventry University and Stageworks Productions Ltd (trading as the ICMT: International College of Musical Theatre) [010] clearly set out the responsibilities of ICMT and Coventry University in ensuring that this collaborative partnership delivers a high-quality academic experience for students on the accelerated degree course. The Academic Partnership Unit (APU) at Coventry University manages and coordinates the operation between the University and ICMT [000; 002] and a productive and positive working relationship has been established. [M4] The engagement and close working relationships between ICMT and the University in the development of the accelerated degree course has acted as a positive precursor to the operational, day-to-day running of the course and effective communication lines have developed between each party. For example, both parties have worked to design a programme of professional development for ICMT staff to further enhance the development of the course and support the College in understanding sectoral requirements and expectations relating to the quality assurance of a degree course. [M4; 047; 087] This approach is expected to ensure that the academic experience students receive will be high quality and is also borne out by the team's observations of teaching and learning and the positive comments of students about their educational experience. Staff from both ICMT and the University understand their respective responsibilities for quality.

217 ICMT and the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance have been subject to robust institutional and course approval processes managed by Coventry University [030] and the Institutional Partner Approval report [036] and degree programme approval event report [037] detail how the approval panel reached the decision that ICMT has an effective base for the maintenance of a high-quality partnership. Under the agreement between ICMT and the University, [010] ICMT is required to operate against its own academic regulations for awards and progression, and course specific requirements, and these have been approved by the University. [003]

218 ICMT's Academic Regulations 2022-2023 [003] indicate that ICMT is required to submit an annual Collaborative Course Quality Enhancement and Monitoring (CCQEM) report to the University, and the University Link Tutor and ICMT Programme Leader are required to produce a joint report and action plan for the course. ICMT staff [M1; M3] and representatives of the University, [M4] including the Link Tutor, commented that this is an ongoing process and that, initially, the University had been concerned about potential burn-out and fatigue that students might experience on the accelerated degree course. Staff maintained, however, that the limited downtime should help to ensure that momentum is maintained and, as a consequence, students would be better able to maintain their fitness at an appropriate level. [M1] As part of the CCQEM process, ICMT will be encouraged to provide examples of good practice in the management and delivery of the degree provision and to highlight areas of success and achievement by the staff delivering, and students on, the course. [000; 002] ICMT's Senior Management Team is responsible for ensuring that the College fulfils its academic partnership responsibilities and is informed by assurance from its Academic Board Committee that specific academic risks relating to partnerships and collaboration, recruitment and retention, data provision, and quality assurance are effectively managed.

219 As the BA(Hons) Musical Theatre Performance degree is a two-year, accelerated programme which had only been running for three weeks at the time of the visit, no external examiner had been appointed. In the absence of an external examiner report, an External Specialist Report and Response [005] provided an independent perspective on the anticipated quality of the accelerated degree course delivered at the ICMT. The report [005] notes that the course is 'innovative and exciting' and 'forward-looking' with 'the capacity to train students for excellence in the profession'. The report, teaching observed by the assessment team [OBSERVATIONS] and the positive comments of students about the quality of their experience [M2] who were very complimentary about the fact that they are taught by professional performing arts practitioners who bring extra currency to their learning and provide greater insight into the industry, provide an acceptable level of certainty that the experience students will have will be of high quality.

220 While ICMT does not currently offer any formal placements for students and has no plans in the foreseeable future to do so, [M1; M3] it provides an equivalent experience for students through visiting professionals who are invited to give sessions to students at the College. Once the degree course is more established, ICMT plans to join other industry-recognised bodies such as the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre, which offers quality assurance and membership services to institutions delivering training, education and assessment in the performing arts, and the Federation of Drama Schools, which brings together established conservatoire training providers to develop discussion, strategy and projects around shared challenges. Both bodies require the course to be running for two to three years before an application for membership can be made. [Request for additional evidence response]

221 Under the terms of the Registered Exam Centre Agreement between Trinity College London and Stageworks Productions Ltd (doing business as The ICMT: International College of Musical Theatre), [035] the College serves as a provider of examination services to TCL for specified awards including a Level 4 Diploma in Musical Theatre course. [006] This includes preparing candidates for TCL examinations, 'including making the relevant exam specifications available to teachers' and 'offering Trinity exams at approved venue(s) and hosting exams sessions' which are assessed and confirmed using TCL's own external examination processes. [000; 006; 086] The team noted that all 15 students who were examined in April 2022 passed the examination. [086]

Conclusions

222 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 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.

223 There is a formal agreement between Coventry University and Stageworks Productions Ltd (trading as the ICMT: International College of Musical Theatre) relating to the delivery of provision leading to awards of the University. The regulations and policies that apply, and ICMT's adherence to them, demonstrate that ICMT has robust and credible plans to ensure a high-quality academic experience for provision delivered in partnership with the University.

224 A professional development programme has been co-designed by ICMT and the University with a clear focus on developing staff in order to provide a quality product and provides assurance that staff from both ICMT and the University understand their respective responsibilities for quality. ICMT's academic governance arrangements, and the course monitoring arrangements that will apply, are expected to ensure that the College will effectively exercise its responsibilities for ensuring that students' academic experience on the course is of high quality.

225 The team noted the positive comments of the external specialist involved in the development and approval of the course, the effective communication and collaboration between the parties involved, the very positive comments of students relating to their learning experience, which they collectively consider to be of high quality, and formed the view the degree course is expected to deliver a high-quality academic experience for students.

226 The nature of the agreement between TCL and Stageworks Productions Ltd (doing business as the ICMT: International College of Musical Theatre) is of a different order and relates to the establishment of Stageworks as a TCL-registered exam centre for approved TCL awards. The agreements are clear and comprehensive, up-to-date and set out the obligations of the parties involved.

227 Based on the evidence available to it, the team concludes that effective arrangements are in place to ensure that the academic experience of students on provision delivered in partnership will be high quality and the Core practice is **met**. Furthermore, given students' exposure to professionals working in the industry and, in the case of the provision leading to University awards, noting that the course will be subject to ongoing support and monitoring to support the further development of the accelerated degree course, the team has a **high degree of confidence** in this judgement.

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

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

229 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](#) (July 2022).

230 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.

231 The team was unable to scrutinise assessed student work to test whether students are given comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback because the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance course started in September 2022. No assessed student work was available for the Diploma in Musical Theatre as ICMT operates as an examination centre for Trinity College London, the examining body for this course.

What the evidence shows

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

233 No assessed student work was available to demonstrate that students are given comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback as the accelerated degree course started shortly before the visit in September 2022. The team therefore considered assignment briefs [008, 039-043] which demonstrated that they explicitly refer to the intended learning outcomes in the marking criteria ensuring that, not only the mark, but any feedback provided is relevant to the skills students have been developing through their studies. The team also noted that a staff development plan of activities, which includes staff development activity relating to assessment and feedback practices, has been co-designed by ICMT and the University. [047]

234 Student submissions [062-066] confirmed that the existing arrangements in place at the ICMT are effective in providing comprehensive, helpful, and timely feedback. Furthermore, the team's observations of teaching and learning [OBSERVATIONS] demonstrated that tutors are providing students with comprehensive feedback to support students' development needs on an ongoing basis in line with ICMT's expectations. [001] The feedback provided to students was appropriate for the stage of development of the individual student, with tutors demonstrating awareness of each student's semester goals. [OBSERVATIONS]

235 The commitment to invest in students as individuals was a strong theme in the team's meeting with tutors [M3] who confirmed that their goal is to provide students with all necessary tools to succeed in their chosen area. Tutors commented that they are conscious of their language choice when providing feedback to students as they appreciate how a student's confidence can be negatively impacted if feedback is provided in a non-constructive manner.

236 For the accelerated degree course, the CVs of potential new staff must be submitted to Coventry University for approval in accordance with ICMT's Staff Recruitment Guidance, [046] with a view to ensuring that all candidates are appropriately qualified to support students in achieving successful academic and professional outcomes. Beyond this

built-in check, and as corroborated by the team's scrutiny of teaching staff CVs, [Request for additional evidence, August 2022] in addition to being professional performers, staff teaching at the ICMT also teach at other institutions offering BA, MA and diploma courses. As such, tutors are familiar with academic structures, requirements, and expectations of higher education providers and are well placed to facilitate students' critical thinking and support self-reflection within the context of their discipline.

237 The team's scrutiny of Tutor Observation Reports for the 2021-22 academic year [076, 077, 078] found these to be well structured with clear headings relating to pace, engagement, standards, challenge and independence to support staff involved in supporting student achievement. At the end of the report, summative feedback is provided to the tutor who is required to review the report, provide comments, and co-sign the report with senior staff to jointly agree any outcomes and follow-up actions. Senior staff [M5] confirmed that newly recruited tutors will have peer observations conducted every semester whereas well established tutors will be observed at least once each academic year. The team's observations of teaching [OBSERVATIONS] demonstrated that tutors are teaching in line with ICMT's expectations and that staff understand their role in supporting student achievement. They also showed that tutors and students freely discussed lesson content, challenged each other with questions and students were at ease when completing peer working exercises.

238 Course and Tutor Survey results [075] pre-dating the introduction of the accelerated degree course invited students to indicate whether they agreed with the statements 'Feedback on my work has been timely' and 'I have received helpful comments on my work' - 75% agreed with the former and 77% for the latter. No comments were included to indicate why students did not agree with these statements at higher rates. 82% of students agreed with the statement 'I feel part of a community of staff and students'. [075] While students who joined the College in September 2022 were unable to comment on the timeliness of feedback as they have not yet submitted an assessed piece of work, [M2] they were able to confirm that tutors provide ongoing formative feedback during classes and readily provide additional support if asked for further clarification. Student submissions [062, 063] also confirmed that tutors consistently provide constructive feedback and none of the student submissions [062-066] raised any concerns about the timeliness of feedback provided. These submissions also confirmed that course design and module content were appropriate to develop the required skills to enable students to succeed as performing artists.

239 ICMT's Attendance and Performance Policy requires students to meet a 'threshold of 90% attendance to guarantee successful completion of training and passing of their respective course'. [025] It also expects students to inform the College of non-attendance by 08:30 and to provide a medical note if they are absent for more than three consecutive days. This policy cross-refers to a Student Behaviour and Code of Conduct document [https://global-uploads.webflow.com/61e088f050fcc741f4167323/624eea100ec332224fcd2805_Student_Behaviour_%26_Code_of_Conduct.pdf] which sets out ICMT's expectations of course conduct to ensure 'a safe and positive space where everyone feels able to achieve their best'. The expectations are reasonable given the performing arts curriculum focus and support students in developing time management skills that they would be expected to have as professional performing artists.

240 As part of ICMT's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, [032] Heads of Departments or the Head of Musical Theatre will meet students individually after assessments to discuss progress, observations, thoughts and concerns, ensure wellbeing, and set goals for the upcoming semester. These arrangements provide students with an opportunity to receive personalised feedback on their academic and practical development as well as the opportunity to formally discuss personal wellbeing and any challenges they

have encountered. Students on other courses delivered at the ICMT [062,066] indicated that meetings with senior staff were effective in ensuring that they were on track to achieve intended learning outcomes as the meetings were used to analyse their performance and overall development. Although oversight and responsibility for ensuring successful student progression is held by senior staff, all tutors have extensive experience within the performing arts sector and are well placed to monitor student development and provide coping mechanisms and strategies when discussing challenges students face.

241 ICMT's open-door approach is integral to supporting students and students are made aware of this approach through the Student Handbook, [021] through an induction week presentation and reminded of it throughout their studies. [001] Students on the Level 4 Diploma and accelerated degree courses confirmed that staff and tutors are approachable and felt that they could speak openly about any support needs. A common theme from the student submissions [062-066] was the overall responsiveness of senior staff and tutors to support individual student growth and a desire to enable students to meet their long-term goals.

242 Students on the higher education courses at ICMT are required to maintain a training journal, updated on a daily basis to 'record all class information, research, and document personal thoughts and experiences'. [001] Each level of study makes use of student training journals to provide a different function, with the expectations at each level building on the groundwork laid the year prior culminating, at Level 6, in the journal being subject to summative assessment as part of the Professional Practice module and used to develop professional planning. This approach enables students to develop critical reflection skills that is expected to support them in their subsequent careers. The training journals are considered in semesterly student review meetings to check that students are appropriately engaging with their studies. [001] Training journals for the 2021-22 academic year demonstrated that the students involved had consistently engaged with their studies throughout the year and confirmed, through notes from classes attended and documented feedback provided by tutors regarding their individual performance, that the journals acted as tools to support students throughout their studies and enable them to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. [059, 060, 061]

243 ICMT students have practical performance opportunities through, for example, an end of course show at a local theatre with professional sound, lighting and external stage managers hired to support the performances. [036-037] ICMT also plans to develop one of the practice rooms to further support students in gaining real-world experience, involving performance opportunities with professional lighting and sound equipment. [TOUR] The College does not currently offer any formal placements for students and it has no plans in the foreseeable future to do so. [M1; M3] Instead, and to provide an equivalent experience for students, a range of visiting professionals attend the College to deliver talks and masterclasses. [Request for additional evidence response; M1; M3] Students appreciate these activities and confirmed that they add value to their learning experience. [M2] In addition, the students commented that, since senior staff and tutors actively engage in performing alongside their teaching duties, their knowledge of the industry is current and the teaching staff are therefore well placed to support students to achieve successful professional outcomes. This view was endorsed by former students. [065,066]

244 The use of 'masterclasses' supports student engagement with external industry professionals specialising in each core component of the curriculum. Masterclass content focuses on different stages of the students' development, focusing initially on the technicality of performing to develop students' technical skills and discipline, progressing to more varied content with the focus on ensuring students are industry-ready performers, through specific sessions and workshops delivered by active performing artists. [072] Specific masterclasses are also scheduled to cover audition techniques for both singing and dance, with follow-up

mock interview sessions led by external visiting staff to ensure that students understand the expectations of the industry prior to graduation. [072]

245 Two masterclasses had been held at the time of the visit and students [M2] described how the sessions provided real-life examples of how to juggle finding time to eat and sleep while continuously performing on tour. For the 2022-23 academic year, senior staff [M5] confirmed that they would be looking to structure the masterclass content similarly to the previous academic year and that they were in the process of finalising dates with industry links. They also indicated that they would be able to facilitate external visitors 'every other day' in semester two to enable students to regularly engage with casting directors, thereby enabling students to benefit from professional networking opportunities before completing their studies. The focus on providing a professional experience for students by exposing them to professionals working in the industry is clearly critical to students' success on their course and future employment opportunities in a particularly challenging employment sector.

246 ICMT also engages with other external bodies such as Spotlight, which is considered the industry standard for casting in the UK. Spotlight visits the College to explain the Spotlight platform for students, and how to use it when starting to look for castings. Equity also visits the College to explain to students how it operates and the value it provides to members. [Request for additional evidence response; M1; M3] The arrangements in place with industry professionals and industry bodies enable students to be well prepared and equipped to secure professional opportunities once they graduate.

247 To establish the credibility of ICMT's plans to support students in achieving academic and professional outcomes, the team explored the ways in which ICMT senior staff expect the accelerated two-year BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance degree to match or out-compete established three-year courses. Senior staff [M1] confirmed that students will receive equivalent contact hours, with shorter term breaks being used to make up the additional hours. They also noted that, since the course is made up of modules which ICMT has delivered previously, the College has appropriate experience to set concrete expectations relating to student progression to ensure that students will be able to secure equivalent academic and professional outcomes in the accelerated timeframe.

248 Senior staff [M1] explained that they have considered the possibility of students becoming fatigued or suffering burn-out given the intensity of the training schedule, but did not consider this to be a significant risk. This is because of the first-hand experience of senior staff and tutors who are performers themselves and who are therefore well equipped to support students in achieving successful and professional outcomes, given their knowledge of the industry students wish to enter. Senior staff also explained that the training intensity of the two-year accelerated degree will more closely reflect the expectations of the performing arts sector and therefore better equip students to join the industry. Student achievement of academic and professional outcomes is to be closely monitored through Coventry University's formal monitoring processes and through ICMT's internal academic governance processes. [M4]

249 Students support the accelerated approach as they value being industry-ready in less time and because of the reduced costs involved. [056] They did not view the intensity of the training required to deliver the accelerated degree as being of concern as they felt that the long spells without training were of detriment to their overall stamina and fitness, which they would then have to re-build when training re-commenced.

250 ICMT has plans to further develop its industry links, once the accelerated two-year degree is more established, with other industry bodies such as the Council for Dance, the Drama and Musical Theatre, and the Federation of Drama Schools. However, membership

requires accredited courses to be running for two to three years before applying. [Additional evidence request response]

Conclusions

251 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 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.

252 Although there was no assessed student work relating to the degree course for the assessment team to consider as this course only started in September 2022, the team considers that approaches to lesson planning are well reasoned, with strong links to assessment criteria and intended module outcomes. This approach ensures that the feedback students receive as they progress through their studies is comprehensive and at an appropriate level to support their development.

253 The College's open-door policy is effective and well regarded by students as it enables students to engage with staff and tutors about any concerns they may have and any specific needs that students would like to bring to the attention of staff at ICMT. The Attendance and Performance Policy and Student Behaviour and Code of Conduct set out clear expectations the College has of its students to support them in achieving successful academic and professional outcomes. The close and regular interactions between teaching staff and students, made possible by the small, specialist nature of ICMT, and the detailed assignment briefs provided to students are expected to ensure that students will receive comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback. Observations of teaching demonstrated that staff understand their role in supporting student achievement through staff engagement with students to provide helpful feedback, based on individual and collective needs.

254 ICMT's plans to support student development are credible and sufficient to facilitate students in achieving the intended professional and academic outcomes. ICMT senior staff and tutors are well placed to assess and monitor student performance and progression and the size of the student population enables close monitoring of individual students. A staff development plan has been co-designed by ICMT and Coventry University and this is expected to further support staff understanding of their role in supporting student achievement.

255 The professional experience of staff teaching on the degree course is valued by students who confirmed that they are adequately supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes as teaching staff were able to draw upon their own experience as performing artists to anticipate training issues, monitor student progression and respond to student concerns as they arise. Students also appreciated the masterclasses provided by ICMT to facilitate student engagement with a wide variety of external industry professionals, thus providing opportunities to achieve professional outcomes alongside academic outcomes.

256 On the basis of the above, the team concludes that ICMT supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. This Core practice is therefore **met**.

257 Although no assessed student work was available for the team to consider, on the basis of the evidence available to it, including ICMT's academic regulations and policy, plans to support students in achieving academic and professional outcomes, students' views and

discussions with staff and students associated with the higher education provision delivered by the College, the team has a **high degree of confidence** in this judgement.

Annex 1

- 000 - Provider Submission for the QAA.pdf
- 001 - BA (Hons) MTP - Course Specification Part B.pdf
- 002 - ICMT-Coventry Collaborative Framework 2022-2023.pdf
- 003 - Academic Regulations 2022-2023.pdf
- 004 - Academic Board Committee Terms of Reference.pdf
- 005 - External Specialist Report and Response.pdf
- 006 - Trinity College London Diplomas in Drama & Speech Subjects Syllabus.pdf
- 007 - BA (Hons) MTP - Course Specification Part A.pdf
- 008 - Assignment Brief - Singing Core Skills 1A.pdf
- 009 - Academic Calendar.pdf
- 010 - Programme Approval Agreement.pdf
- 011 - BA (Hons) MTP - Course Guide 2022-2023.pdf
- 012 - ICMT-Coventry Table of Responsibilities.pdf
- 013 - Governance Handbook.pdf
- 014 - Admission and Auditions Policy.pdf
- 015 - Statement on Equality and Diversity.pdf
- 016 - Access and Participation Statement.pdf
- 017 - Course & Tutor Survey Results 2021-2022.pdf
- 018 - Current Teaching Staff CV's.pdf
- 019 - Two Year Resources Plan.pdf
- 020 - Resources Overview.pdf
- 021 - Student Handbook 2022-2023.pdf
- 022 - Safeguarding Children, Vulnerable Adults and Students.pdf
- 023 - Senior Management Team Terms of Reference.pdf
- 024 - Student Representation Committee.pdf
- 025 - Attendance and Performance Policy.pdf
- 026 - Student Complaints Procedure.pdf
- 027 - Student Agreement 2022-2023.pdf
- 028 - Tuition Fees & Refund Policy.pdf
- 029 - Whistleblowing Policy.pdf
- 030 - Coventry University New Partner Approval Process.pdf
- 031 - Student Protection Plan.pdf
- 032 - BA (Hons) MTP Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy.pdf
- 033 - ICMT Audition Form.pdf
- 034 - QAA Responsibilities Checklist.pdf
- 035 - Trinity College London Agreement.pdf
- 036 - ICMT_Coventry Institutional Approval Report.pdf
- 037 - ICMT_Coventry New course Approval Report.pdf
- 038 - Academic Board Minutes.pdf
- 039 - Assign. Brief - Singing Core Skills 1B.pdf
- 040 - Assign. Brief (Char. Study) - Acting and Voice Core Skills 1A.pdf
- 041 - Assign. Brief (Healthy Perf.) - Dance Core Skills 1A.pdf
- 042 - Assign. Brief (Jazz) - Dance Core Skills 1A.pdf
- 043 - Assign. Brief (Pre 20th C.) - Acting and Voice Core Skills 1B.pdf
- 044 - Level 4 Assessed Student Work.pdf
- 045 - Term 1 Schedule, 2022-2023.pdf
- 046 - Staff Recruitment Guidance.pdf
- 047 - ICMT Staff Development Plan v2.pdf
- 048 - Tutor Agreement 2022-2023.pdf
- 049 - CCQEM Template 2021.pdf
- 050 - External Examiner Application.pdf

- 051 - Audition Forms_Redacted.pdf
- 052 - Student Handbook 2020-2021.pdf
- 053 - Student Handbook 2021-2022.pdf
- 054 - Student Rep Committee Minutes (Redacted).pdf
- 055 - Student Rep Handbook.pdf
- 056 - Focus Group Minutes - Two year versus three year degree_Redacted.pdf
- 057 - Focus Group Minutes - Website redesign_Redacted.pdf
- 058 - SMT Away Day Minutes, July'22_Redacted.pdf
- 059 - Student journal 1.pdf
- 060 - Student Journal 2.pdf
- 061 - Student Journal 3.pdf
- 062 - Student Submission 1.mp4
- 063 - Student Submission 2.mp4
- 064 - Student Submission 3.mp4
- 065 - Student Submission 4.mp4
- 066 - Student Submission 5.mp4
- 067 - ICMT_Coventry Course Approval Letter, 16122021.pdf
- 068 - RE_ICMT approval event - outcome.pdf
- 069 - ICMT_Coventry Institution Approval Letter 16122021.pdf
- 070 - Tutor Interview Evaluation Form_Redacted.pdf
- 071 - Staff Induction Guidance.pdf
- 072 - Masterclass List 2021-2022.pdf
- 073 - Tutor Survey Results 2018-19_Redacted.pdf
- 074 - Tutor Survey Results 2019-20, w-comments_Redacted.pdf
- 075 - Course & Tutor Survey Results, w-comments 2021-22 - London_Redacted.pdf
- 076 - Tutor Observation Report 1.pdf
- 077 - Tutor Observation Report 2.pdf
- 078 - Tutor Observation Report 3.pdf
- 079 - Operations Manager Job Description.pdf
- 080 - Head of Musical Theatre Job Description.pdf
- 081 - Student Services Manager Job Description.pdf
- 082 - International Relations Manager Job Description.pdf
- 083 - Head of Dance Job Description.pdf
- 084 - Office Assistant Job Profile (London).pdf
- 085 - Cleaner Job Description.pdf 16/09/2022
- 086 - TCL Candidate Reports 2021-2022.pdf 16/09/2022
- 087 - ICMT & Coventry University Staff Development Plan
- 088 - Institution Liaison Report University of Chichester Conservatoire and ICMT

Requests for additional evidence

Response from ICMT to additional evidence request (post initial desk-based analysis received 26 August 2022)

Response from ICMT to further additional evidence request received 16 September 2022

Team Visit to the ICMT on 27 and 28 September 2022

M1 - Meeting with the Senior Management Team

M2 - Meeting with students, including student representatives on the Level 4 Diploma in Musical Theatre and the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance

M3 - Meeting with staff teaching and/or otherwise supporting students on the higher education programmes

M4 - Meeting with Coventry University representatives

M5 - Final clarification meeting with the provider facilitator and other key staff

Other evidence available relating to the two-day visit to ICMT

OBSERVATIONS - Observations of teaching and learning (five)

Schemes of work – Contextual Studies; Dance; Singing; Voice

Session Plans

TOUR – Tour of facilities

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