DQB

Designated Quality Body in England

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

Contemporary Dance Trust Limited

Review Report

January 2022

Contents

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	The School operates its programmes according to the academic regulations of its awarding bodies, and its programme specifications reflect the awarding bodies' expectations in respect of the setting and maintenance of threshold standards. From the evidence seen, the team considers that the standards set for the courses as described in the approved programme documentation are aligned with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework. The team also considers that standards described in the approved course documentation are set at levels that are consistent with these sector-recognised standards and that the policies that apply to the School's courses should ensure that standards are maintained appropriately. The School's Academic Board exercises oversight of academic provision and as specified in the School's quality assurance handbook: the policies expressed in this handbook should ensure that standards are maintained appropriately because they are aligned with awarding bodies regulations. External examiners confirm that threshold standards of qualifications are maintained, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where those threshold standards are met. Examples of assessed student work reflects that the descriptors for higher education qualifications at FHEQ levels (as articulated in the sector-recognised standards) are taken into account in marking, showing that the School is consistent in maintaining threshold standards. Staff of the School have shown that they understand and apply the School's approach to maintaining standards. Therefore, based on scrutiny of the evidence provided, the team concludes that this Core practice is met.

| 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 | Moderate | In respect of courses validated by UoK, assessment outcomes beyond threshold levels are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers in relation to mark ranges, and the awarding of marks above the threshold is congruent with the university's expectations as expressed in its grade descriptors. The sample of assessed work examined by the team shows that the School adheres to these descriptors and therefore maintains standards beyond the threshold that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

No evidence of assessment processes on UAL-validated provision was available at the time of the assessment, although the team noted that UAL Validation Reports confirm the university's view that the School sets standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those in other UK providers.

The School has acknowledged that the proportion of 'good' degrees awarded exceeds the national average, while also affirming its view that this reflects high levels of student achievement. External examiners' reports expressed mixed views about students' achievement above the threshold. While some drew attention to the very high quality of student work, one report indicated in 2018-19 a concern about 'grade inflation' in relation to some written work: this concern was addressed by the School in discussion with the external examiner. The School has affirmed that it tracks trends in relation to the classification of degrees and monitors the number of first class honours degrees awarded each year. However, the available evidence of this did not show evidence of action planning or of robust evidence-based processes for conducting comparative analysis with other providers to ensure that such standards continue to be secure.

In conclusion the team noted that mark ranges for assessed work are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, that samples of assessed work show adherence to |

					nationally-recognised standards beyond the threshold and that recent external examiners' reports comment positively on the levels of achievement. Accordingly, based on the evidence presented, the team concludes that students have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers and this Core practice is met.
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		The team concludes that the School's staff mostly understand their responsibilities in relation to academic standards, with the exception of the issues reported under S4. The team also concludes that partnership agreements are clear and comprehensive, up-to-date and reflect the School and awarding bodies' regulations or policies for the management of partnerships. This is because memoranda of agreement with awarding bodies clearly stipulate which regulations apply, and specify the School's responsibilities and the composition of important shared structures such as Board of Examiners. It is also because the partnership agreements and placement log used by the School collectively meet the awarding bodies' regulatory expectations and clearly distinguish the employer's responsibility for facilitating the placement from the School's exclusive responsibility for assessment of standards. The team therefore confirms that the Core practice is met.
S4	The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.	Met	Moderate		The team concludes that the School has a secure approach to the use of external expertise in setting and maintaining academic standards, because this is governed by its awarding bodies' regulations which set out requirements for the appointment and use of external examiners and of external expertise in programme approval. The School gives due consideration to its external examiners' reports because it systematically responds to them based on the review of student work and course documentation. External examiners explicitly confirm that assessment is reliable because it is designed to enable students to demonstrate their

| | | | | achievement of the intended learning outcomes and fair because marks are awarded in accordance with the marking criteria.

The School has a clear and comprehensive approach to assessment and classification because its programmes are governed by regulations which set out how marking and moderation should operate, how credit is awarded, how classification decisions are reached and how credit may be condoned or compensated.

Nearly all aspects of the School's assessment processes are reliable, fair, and transparent. This is because unit documentation outlines the tasks students must complete in detail and assessments effectively test unit and programme learning outcomes. Panel marking and double-blind marking are transparent except in relation to the recording of how some agreements are reached between first and second markers. However, the team found that a moderation process which applies to two 15-credit units has not been carried out appropriately leading to a potential risk to the fairness and reliability of any classification decisions where students are narrowly eligible or ineligible for a particular classification under the regulations. In mitigation, the team noted that there was no evidence of students receiving a failing mark without their work being double-marked, and that the impact of this weakness was small, being limited by the number of students whom it potentially affected and by the fact that the units concerned were discontinuing. While in general staff understand the classification and assessment regulations, both teaching staff and senior staff did not recognise that an aspect of moderation practices on two units were in breach of the University's regulations, and had not identified the risks to fairness or the potential risk to the award of classifications associated with non-compliant moderation practices.

In determining whether the Core practice is met, the team carefully considered the concept of proportionality using their professional judgement. The team noted that the School's use of external |

				expertise is conducted reliably and that all other assessment and classification processes were considered to be reliable, fair and transparent. While the weakness identified has led to a risk of unfairness to students, the mitigations to this risk identified by the team led it to conclude that its effect on the judgement was outweighed by the strengths which were apparent in this Core practice. The team therefore concludes that the Core practice is met.
Q1	The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.	Met	High	The team concludes that the College has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system. This is because the School has a credible and robust approach through its policies and plans and follows UAL's academic regulations for the recruitment and admissions of students that demonstrate reliability, fairness and inclusivity. The information given to applicants is transparent and fit for purpose, and students tend to agree that the information is helpful and that the process of audition at workshop and interview is supportive and implemented fairly. Entry requirements are aligned with the overall regulations and policies of the School and the University, and admissions decisions reflect the published entry requirements agreed with the University and published in programme specifications and on the School website. Admissions records demonstrate that the School's policies are implemented in practice and that admissions decisions are reliable, fair and inclusive. Staff involved in admissions understand their role and are appropriately skilled and trained. Based on the evidence available to it, the team concludes that the Core practice is met.
Q2	The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.	Met	High	The School has credible and robust arrangements for ensuring delivery of high-quality courses: the Academic Board undertakes robust scrutiny of the quality of the School's provision and the Learning and Teaching Committee carries out continued appraisal of the quality of its courses. The School's draft learning and teaching strategy is not yet fully developed but forms a credible approach to course delivery. Course documentation shows that

				units are well conceived, drawing on current thinking and practices related to dance as a discipline and performance art, and enabling students to demonstrate intended learning outcomes. Observations of a sample of teaching sessions show that tutors deliver high-quality learning and teaching with clear objectives, well-planned sessions and sound use of technology. Students and external examiners support the view that the quality of course delivery is high. Teaching staff were able to offer examples of active engagement in the external dance sector and of best practices from industry being brought into daily practices.
				Therefore, the assessment team concludes that the School designs and delivers high-quality courses, and this Core practice is met.
Q3	The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.	Met	High	The School has a clear strategy for staffing its courses, supporting a staffing structure which is sufficient to deliver high-quality learning experiences. Job descriptions are sufficient to support credible and robust arrangements for the recruitment of staff and there are transparent, robust and credible arrangements for the recruitment and appointment of appropriately qualified and skilled staff. There are a sufficient number of staff to support the School's students, and staff are appropriately qualified and skilled to carry out their roles and responsibilities.
				The School has an effective approach to the professional support of its staff, and students expressed positive views of the academic support provided by staff to support their learning. Observations of sampled teaching sessions show that staff deliver a high-quality learning experience with skilled learning and teaching strategies to support student progress and achievement. The team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.
Q4	The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support	Met	High	The team concludes that strategies and plans for facilities, learning resources and student support services are credible, realistic and demonstrably linked to the delivery of successful academic and

	services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.			professional outcomes for students. This is because organisation-level strategies articulate detailed strategic aims, objectives and deliverables which show an informed understanding of how facilities and student service investment can result in educational benefits to students and their discipline-specific needs. Its plans are credible, robust and realistic because they are supported by detailed budget planning that accounts for different scenarios. The team concludes that the School has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience because its observations of teaching and facilities showed an appropriate range of services and facilities specific to the needs of its dance programmes. Student services are provided by qualified staff and students tend to regard the facilities, support services and learning resources offered as facilitating a high-quality academic experience. The team considers that the roles of those engaged in supporting students are consistent with the delivery of a high-quality learning experience because roles and management structures are clearly defined and align the purpose of roles, teams, and projects to be undertaken with the aim of supporting students' learning. The team therefore confirms that the Core practice is met.
Q5	The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.	Met	High	The College actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience through a variety of mechanisms. This is because the representation of students on School committees and the student voice committee ensure that students can raise matters or concerns about their educational experience and enable staff to consult with students about proposed changes to modules or programmes, and because there are effective arrangements for gathering and responding to students' views about module and course delivery. These arrangements are credible and robust because meetings are consistently well attended and the impact of this student

				engagement is evidenced through various examples of change arising.
				Arrangements for consideration of internal surveys and the NSS are well documented in reports and the minutes of School committees and evidence of outcomes confirm the credibility and effectiveness of the approach taken. Students who met the team reported that the School engages them in the quality of their educational experience and expressed satisfaction with their involvement in School committees such as the Board of Governors. The team concluded that the School has credible arrangements for engaging students in the quality of their educational experience based on effective operation of a student representation system and on the consideration of outcomes from student engagement within course teams and through the committee structure. The team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.
Q6	The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.	Met	High	The team concludes that the School has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to students. The School follows CDD's policy and procedures to handle complaints raised by students, and these are robust and credible. The School's plans for developing its own procedures for handling complaints are credible and robust because they are based on effective existing policy. Examples of complaints reviewed by the team were dealt with according to these procedures. Complaints by students are handled by the School fairly and investigated in a timely manner. Responses are detailed and clearly communicated. Appeals are handled by the validating University and the single appeal that had been received had been referred to the university according to its regulations. The team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.
Q8	Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective	Met	High	The team concludes that the School has clear and comprehensive policies for the management of partnerships with other organisations to ensure that the academic experience is high quality

	arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.			irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them. It has detailed agreements with degree-awarding bodies and staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities arising from those agreements. In respect of placement partnerships, there is a clear and effective process for the approval of placements and for the support of students while on placement which is aligned with the awarding bodies' regulations. The team concludes that the Core practice is met.
Q9	The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.	Met	High	The team concludes that the School supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes and that it has policies and processes in place that facilitate successful academic and professional outcomes. Its approaches to student support, including physical support, are well tailored to the needs of students. The personal tutor system in particular ensures that the individual needs of students can be identified and monitored. There is evidence of timely and comprehensive feedback that helps students to understand how they can improve or maintain performance levels. Academic and support staff understand their roles in supporting student achievement and the various approaches used for this. They are fully committed to delivering successful academic and professional outcomes for their students. Students reported that they were satisfied with the support mechanisms available, in particular personal tutors, and that they received helpful and timely feedback. The team therefore concludes that the School supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes and that the Core practice is met.

About this report

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

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

The team for this assessment was:

Name: Dr James Freeman
Institution: University of Bristol
Role in assessment team: Institutional assessor

Name: Dr Michelle Groves
Institution: Royal Academy of Dance
Role in assessment team: Subject assessor, Dance

Name: Professor Alan Howard
Institution: University of Reading
Role in assessment team: Institutional assessor

The QAA officer for the assessment was Dr Stephen Ryrie.

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 Contemporary Dance Trust Limited

The Contemporary Dance Trust (the School/CDT) has offered higher education programmes in dance training, creation and performance since 1982 from its premises in London. In addition to its higher education provision, the CDT's activities include a programme of public performances and other forms of outreach. The department within CDT which is responsible for higher education provision is known as the 'London Contemporary Dance School' (LCDS).

Since 1982 its programmes have been validated by the University of Kent (UoK) as its degree-awarding body. In 2020 it began a partnership with the University of the Arts London (UAL). Following an approval event conducted by UAL in December 2020, one undergraduate programme and two taught postgraduate programmes have been validated

by UAL. As a result, all students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, enrolling from September 2021 onwards are registered for the award of a degree from UAL. Students enrolled prior to September 2021, specifically students studying at Level 5 and 6 of the BA Contemporary Dance, continue their registration with UoK with a view to the award of a degree from that institution. The relationship with UoK will end once those students have completed their studies. The School's relationships with its awarding bodies are governed by partnership agreements dating from 2018 with UoK and from 2020 with UAL, and the CDT provided checklists detailing the responsibilities of each party in respect of each awarding body.

The School is a member school of the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama (CDD), a federal collaboration of specialist schools delivering education and training in the performing arts since 2001. CDD is registered with the Office for Students (OfS) and has developed an academic framework to maintain academic standards and manage the quality of learning and teaching across its member schools. The framework is overseen by the CDD Senate and the Board's reporting committees and working groups which include representation from member schools. Ownership of academic standards and quality is shared through CDD's committees, policies and procedures and its Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy has been designed to develop a high-quality student learning and assessment experience across its member schools. The School has hence adopted the CDD's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy for use within the School, but has also taken steps to establish its own Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy for implementation on assuming responsibility for its own registration. The School intends to take steps to cease membership of CDD if it gains its own registration with OfS.

The School's only formal partnerships with other organisations are those with its two validating universities and the CDD, and a small number of ad hoc partnerships with providers of professional placements for Level 6 students: these providers are not responsible for the assessment of students or for the award of credit. In addition, the School has relationships with Wimbledon College of Arts and with Guildhall School of Music and Drama which enables students from the three institutions to collaborate in the final year of their undergraduate degrees; since all teaching and assessment is undertaken by staff of the School, these relationships were not considered to be within the scope of this assessment.

At the time of the visit the School had a total of 183 full-time students on its undergraduate programmes and 67 on its postgraduate programmes; the School has no part-time students. The numbers of students enrolled and the awarding body for each programmes are as shown in the table. No new students were enrolled in 2021 on the two postgraduate programmes validated by UoK: the students currently enrolled on those programmes will complete upon submission of their dissertations on 31 January 2022. The School's relationship with UoK will come to an end in July 2023 when the final cohort of the undergraduate course will have completed.

Programme title	Awarding body	Student numbers
BA (Hons) Contemporary Dance Level 4	UAL	71
BA (Hons) Contemporary Dance Level 5	UoK	63
BA (Hons) Contemporary Dance Level 6	UoK	49
Undergraduate total		**183**

Programme title	Awarding body	Student numbers
MA Expanded Dance Practice	UAL	10
MA Screendance	UAL	7
MA Screendance	UoK	10
MA Contemporary Dance	UoK	40
Postgraduate total		**67**
TOTAL		**250**

The School's education programmes are managed by the Director of Dance Studies, reporting to the Chief Executive of the School. The Academic Board, reporting to the Board of Governors, is the primary decision-making body in respect of its educational provision.

The School employs a total of 21 staff for the delivery of its higher education programmes, comprising five in management or leadership roles, 13 teaching staff and three learning support staff of whom two are also teachers. Of the teaching staff, two are employed on a full-time basis while the remainder work on a part-time basis; two are employed on fixed-term contracts, while the remainder are on permanent contracts.

How the assessment was conducted

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

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

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

- Admissions records: a sample of records of admissions decisions, in order to verify whether the School's policies are implemented in practice. The team selected the BA Contemporary Dance for sampling as being representative of the School's provision, and considered a random sample of 106 records taken from the total of ▮▮▮ applicants to this programme in 2021.

- Assessed student work: a sample of assessed student work in order to test whether this work reflects threshold standards, whether marks and awards are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, whether the standards of awards are credible and secure, and to verify whether students are given comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback. The team considered a representative sample of student work from the School's provision by selecting one module at each of Level 4, 6 and 7 and considering a random sample of the assessed work carried out in 2020-21 by students on each of these three modules as follows: for the Level 4 module 'Introduction to Critical Studies', the work of 50 students of the total of 62 students; for the Level 6 module 'Negotiated Project', the work of 42 students of the total of 47 students; for the Level 7 module 'Reflections on Practice', the work of 29 students of the total of 30 students.

- Observations of teaching and learning: the team observed a representative sample of the teaching and learning sessions carried out during the visit, comprising a total of four sessions, specifically for Level 4 Project, Level 5 Music and Choreography, Level 6 Ballet and Level 7 Making Screendance, in order to test whether academic staff deliver a high-quality learning experience.

- Job descriptions of persons holding specific posts: in order to determine whether roles are consistent with the delivery of a high-quality learning experience, the team requested and considered the job descriptions of a total of five staff in management roles, specifically of the Director of UG Programmes and International Development, the Director of Research and PG Programmes, the Director of Registry and Student Wellbeing, the Quality and Compliance Manager and the Head of Learning and Teaching, and also considered the generic job descriptions for a lecturer and for a guest lecturer.

- Records of recruitment of staff: in order to verify that staff were recruited according to the School's policies and procedures, the team considered the records of recruitment of a lecturer and of a guest lecturer.

The assessment team held four meetings with staff and students in the course of its onsite visit. It met a group of seven senior staff accompanied by a member of staff from UAL, a group of 14 teaching and professional support staff, a group of nine students comprising two postgraduate students and seven undergraduate students in which each level of undergraduate studies was represented. In addition the team met a group of senior staff for a clarification meeting towards the end of the visit.

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

Explanation of findings

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

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

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

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

The evidence the team considered

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

a   UAL Validation Reports [005]
b   UAL Course Regulations [007]
c   UoK Regulations and Guidance [008]
d   Programme specifications [009]
e   External Examiner Reports and Responses [010]
f   Course handbooks [011]
g   UAL Classification/Marking Scale [012]
h   UoK Level Descriptors and Marking Scale [013]
i   Terms of References [016]
j   Academic Board minutes [020]
k   Quality Assurance Handbook [022]
l   CDD ACMR [028]
m   UoK ACMR [029]
n   Collaborative Modifications Procedures [094]
o   University of Kent Board of Examiners [096]
p   Learning and Teaching Strategy [129]
q   Approval of Module Changes [147]

r   CDD Senate Terms of Reference and minutes [149]
s   Meeting with senior staff [M1]
t   Meeting with teaching staff and professional support staff [M3].

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

6   The team did not consider third party endorsements because the School does not make use of any third parties in setting or maintaining standards such as professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

7   The team considered samples of student assessed work as outlined in the 'how the assessment was conducted' section above.

8   The team did not conduct any sampling of external examiners' reports or approved course documentation as the volume of documentation was such that all evidence could be assessed.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

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

10   To identify the approach to course and assessment design, marking and moderation, requirements for awards and approaches to classification as the underlying basis for the standards of awards and in ensuring that threshold standards for its qualifications are commensurate with sector-recognised standards, the team assessed UAL Validation Reports, [005] programme specifications [009] for BA Contemporary Dance (UAL and UoK), MA in Screendance (UAL and UoK), MA Contemporary Dance (UoK), and MA Expanded Dance Practice (UAL), and course handbooks [011] against UAL Course Regulations [007] and UoK Regulations and Guidance. [008]

11   The team also consulted the Terms of Reference of committees, [016] Academic Board minutes, [020] the quality assurance handbook, [022] CDD Annual Monitoring Reports, [028] Annual Course Monitoring Reports, [029] Approval of Module Changes, [147] CDD Senate Terms of Reference and minutes [149] and Collaborative Moderation Procedures [094] to identify how the School ensures the setting and maintenance of academic standards and tracking of changes to modules through its monitoring procedures. Additionally, the team met with senior staff [M1] to test their approach to setting and maintaining standards against sector-recognised standards and to clarify the role of the Board of Governors and CDD Senate in maintaining quality and standards.

12   To check that external examiners confirm that threshold standards are consistent with sector-recognised standards, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where those threshold standards have been met, the team referred to the UoK Regulations and Guidance, [008] external examiner reports [010] and the UoK Code of Practice for Quality Assurance of Taught Programmes. [096]

13   To confirm that threshold standards of qualifications are consistent with sector-recognised standards and that these threshold standards have been met, the team reviewed UoK Regulations and Guidance [008] and the UoK Code of Practice for Quality Assurance of Taught Programmes: Meetings of Boards of Examiners. [096]

14   To test that students' assessed work meets relevant threshold standards, a sample of assessed work was considered, as described in 'How the assessment was conducted'. In doing so, cross-reference was made to UoK Level Descriptors and Marks Scales [013] as well as to the standards set out in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) as articulated in the sector-recognised standards.

15   To assess that teaching staff are made aware of the School's expectations on how to operate level descriptors and marking and assessment procedures, the team reviewed Level Descriptors UAL Classification and Marking Scales, [012] UoK Level Descriptors and Marking Scales [013] and the CDD Learning and Teaching Strategy. [129]

16   To test that staff understood and applied the School's approach to setting and maintaining standards, the team met with teaching and professional support staff [M3] to test their knowledge, understanding and application of assessment processes.

What the evidence shows

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

18   The School's courses follow the course and assessment design, marking and moderation requirements for awards and classifications as outlined by its two degree-awarding bodies. The School operates its programmes according to the academic regulations of these awarding bodies, [007, 008] and the UAL Validation Reports [005] reviewed by the team confirm that courses delivered by the School are considered by UAL to comply with the threshold standards set for its qualifications as mapping to the FHEQ in the sector-recognised standards had taken place.

19   Programme specifications [009] for BA Contemporary Dance (UAL and UoK), MA Extended Dance Practice, PGDip/MA Contemporary Dance and MA Screendance outline the structure, content and delivery approach of the validated courses in accordance with UAL Course Regulations [007] and UoK Regulations and Guidance, [008] reflecting the awarding bodies' expectations in respect of the maintenance of standards through assessment processes and the awarding of classifications. Programme specifications [009] and course handbooks [011] demonstrate alignment because the handbooks refer to the regulations and procedures of the relevant degree-awarding body, and the language used in these documents is consistent and aligned with that of the sector-recognised standards in terms of programme learning outcomes and the professional skills and attributes the programmes aim to develop. Programme specifications [009] also provide details of the course structure and qualifications that are consistent with the sector-recognised standards, as well as including information on learning, teaching and assessment methods demonstrating use of the FHEQ, as articulated in the sector-recognised standards, as a key reference point in the design of courses. Where the degree-awarding body requires it, programme specifications contain a detailed mapping of programme learning outcomes to individual units. [Programme specifications 009]

20   The quality assurance handbook [022] describes the policies and procedures for all validated courses, and how these align to UAL regulations and to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. The Handbook shows that the School is aware of its requirements in maintaining threshold standards because it outlines procedures for course design and approval, learning and teaching, assessment, external examining and annual monitoring reviews which meet sector-recognised standards because they are based on awarding

bodies' requirements.

21   Terms of reference of the School committees [016] and the committee structure [175] show that the Academic Board has oversight of academic provision and of quality management systems as in the quality assurance handbook, [022] and that the Academic Board is accountable to the School Chief Executive and to the Board of Governors: in confirmation of this arrangement, minutes of the Board of Governors show that it receives minutes of meetings of the Academic Board. The Academic Board is also overseen by the CDD Senate as confirmed in the terms of reference of the Senate. [149] Academic Board minutes [020] show that it oversees the maintenance of academic standards through consideration of external examiners' reports [010] and of annual course monitoring reports. [029] Oversight by the CDD Senate takes place by means of the submission to the Senate of the School's annual monitoring report. [028] The Learning and Teaching Committee Terms of Reference [016] show that this committee makes recommendations to the Academic Board regarding approval of new courses and major revisions to existing courses in respect of those courses meeting threshold standards. The Link Liaison Committee provides a forum for the staff of the School and UAL staff to discuss the link between the partners: the purpose and effectiveness of this committee in supporting the maintenance of standards is discussed in Core practice S3. The team concludes that arrangements for ensuring accountability for academic standards are supported by a governance structure that is credible because it has clear lines of reporting and clear arrangements for oversight to CDD Senate and Board of Governors.

22   Records of the approval of module changes [147] for courses validated by UoK show evidence of robust processes for seeking approval of changes to course outlines because it identifies, in a table, changes to units being recommended to UoK and evidence of approval from UoK for changes to be actioned. This process allows for changes to courses to be tracked, and for the changes to be transparent to staff. The example seen by the team [147] specifically included details of changes to the wording of learning outcomes and adjustments of learning hours hence enabling continuing alignment with sector-recognised standards to be considered.

23   In respect of provision validated by UAL, the processes outlined in the Collaborative Moderation Procedures [094] show that the School has procedures in place to maintain academic standards when changes are proposed to courses. In liaison with UAL, and through the Link Liaison Committee and as indicated in its Terms of Reference, [016] the School has in place processes through which amendments to units or courses are documented, with final approval given by UAL: the purpose of the Link Liaison Committee is described in Core practice S3. These processes show that the School's approach to course and assessment design, marking and moderation, requirements for awards and approaches to classification are likely to be maintained because there are clear lines of accountability to the Academic Board as the basis for the maintenance of standards. Currently there is no evidence available to show how robust these processes are because no changes to courses validated by UAL have yet been proposed. Senior staff [M1] confirmed that changes to UAL-validated programmes would follow the Collaborative Moderation Procedures [094] in order to ensure that threshold academic standards continue to be aligned to the FHEQ when there are changes to courses.

24   Based on the evidence scrutinised, the team concluded that the School's approach to course design as the underlying basis for the setting of threshold standards of awards are aligned with the expectations of its two degree-awarding bodies and results in courses that are consistent with sector-recognised standards.

25   External examiners' reports for UoK provision [010] confirm that the setting and assessment of student work and student achievement is consistent with the threshold standards of the FHEQ, as presented in the sector-recognised standards. This is because the reports explicitly include confirmation that academic standards are appropriate for the qualifications awarded, are comparable with similar provision and that assessments and examinations are fairly conducted. [008] They confirm the credibility and robustness of examination boards in confirming assessment outcomes and the award of credit and qualifications because they confirm that Board of Examiners' meetings are managed in accordance with the expectations of the UoK Regulations and Guidance [008] and the UoK Code of Practice for Quality Assurance of Taught Programmes Annex J Meetings of Boards of Examiners. [096] No external examination of courses validated by UAL has yet taken place. Based on the evidence scrutinised, the team concludes that external examiners confirm that threshold standards of qualifications are maintained, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where those threshold standards are met.

26   The UAL Level Descriptors Classification and Marking Scales, [012] UoK Level Descriptors and Marking Scales [013] and (CDD) Learning and Teaching Strategy [129] outline expectations for staff involved in the assessment of student work. These documents provide staff with a clear and comprehensive academic framework to support the setting and maintenance of academic standards that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. This is because they detail the criteria that assessed work needs to demonstrate to be awarded marks as set against level descriptors and award classifications. In discussion, [M3] teaching staff affirmed that they are aware of and make use of level descriptors in course design in order to set expectations when marking student work and to align with teaching methodology, as well as in giving feedback to students on their assessed work. The team concluded that staff of the School understand and apply the School's approach to maintaining threshold standards through assessment marking.

27   To test that students' assessed work for UoK courses reflects the relevant threshold standards, the team scrutinised 50 of 62 scripts from Introduction to Critical Studies (UGCD46) at Level 4, and 42 of 47 scripts for Negotiated Project (UGCD36) at Level 6 in accordance with the sampling methodology. The team was unable to consider assessed work for UAL courses because no such work was available at the time of the visit.

28   In reviewing assessed work for Introduction to Critical Studies (UGCD46), the team concludes that the assessments meet the relevant threshold standards. This was because the assessment of work and awarding of marks aligns to the threshold standards of awards as presented in the FHEQ for Level 4. In addition, cross-referencing of marks awarded with the UoK Level Descriptors and Marks Scales [013] showed that for all 50 of the pieces of work sampled the marking and assessment outcomes align to the UoK Level Descriptors and Marks Scales. [013] Similarly, in reviewing assessed work for Negotiated Project (UGCD36), the team was able to conclude that the marks awarded for assessments in this Level 6 unit reflects the relevant threshold standards of awards at FHEQ Level 6. This was evidenced by the cross-referencing of the marks awarded to the UoK Level Descriptors and Marks Scales. [013] This showed that for 45 of the 47 pieces of work sampled the marking and assessment outcomes align to the UoK Level Descriptors and Marks Scales. [013] The team formed the view that assessed student work for courses validated by UoK reflects sector-recognised standards, that the School is consistent in ensuring that threshold standards of qualifications are maintained, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where those threshold standards have been met.

Conclusions

29   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.

30   The School operates its programmes according to the academic regulations of its awarding bodies, and its programme specifications reflect the awarding bodies' expectations in respect of the setting and maintenance of threshold standards. From the evidence seen, the team considers that the standards set for the courses as described in the approved programme documentation are aligned with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework. The team also considers that standards described in the approved course documentation are set at levels that are consistent with these sector-recognised standards and that the policies that apply to the School's courses should ensure that standards are maintained appropriately.

31   The School's Academic Board exercises oversight of academic provision and as specified in the School's quality assurance handbook. The policies expressed in this handbook should ensure that standards are maintained appropriately because they are aligned with awarding bodies' regulations. External examiners confirm that threshold standards of qualifications are maintained, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where those threshold standards are met. Examples of assessed student work reflect that descriptors for higher education qualifications at FHEQ levels (as articulated in the sector-recognised standards) are taken into account in marking, showing that the School is consistent in maintaining threshold standards. Staff of the School have shown that they understand and apply the School's approach to maintaining standards.

32   Therefore, based on scrutiny of the evidence provided, the team concludes that this Core practice is met.

33   The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all of the relevant evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix for this Core practice. Therefore, the team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

34   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.

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

The evidence the team considered

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

a   Student submission [000S]
b   UAL Validation Reports [005]
c   UAL Course Regulations [007]
d   UoK Regulations and Guidance [008]
e   Programme Specs [009]
f   External Examiner Reports and Responses [010]
g   Course handbooks [011]
h   UAL Classification/Marking Scale [012]
i   UoK Level Descriptors and Marking Scale [013]
j   CDD ACMR [028]
k   UoK ACMR [029]
l   Unit Guides [069]
m   LCDS Board of Examiners Meeting minutes 2020-21 [078]
n   Extracts of discussions around high degrees [150]
o   Unit briefing sessions [153]
p   Meeting with senior staff [M1]
q   Clarification meeting [M4]
r   Assessed student work.

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

•   The team did not consider third party endorsements because the School does not make use of any third parties in setting or maintaining standards such as professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

38   The team considered samples of assessed student work as described in 'How the assessment was conducted'.

39   The team did not conduct any sampling of external examiners' reports or approved course documentation as the volume of documentation was such that all evidence could be assessed.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

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

41   To understand the School's approach to ensuring that students have the opportunity to demonstrate standards beyond the threshold level, the team considered the UAL Course Regulations, [007] UoK Regulations and Guidance, [008] UAL Classification/Marking Scale, [012] UoK Level Descriptors and Marking Scale, [013] Unit Guides [069] and UAL Validation Reports. [005]

42   To test that specified standards set beyond the threshold are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, and that assessed student work demonstrates that credit is awarded only where the relevant standards have been met, the team sampled assessed work from Introduction to Critical Studies (UGCD46) Level 4 (50 of 62 scripts), Negotiated Project (UGCD36) Level 6 (42 of 47 scripts) and Dissertation: Reflections on Practice (LCDSPG12) Level 7 (29 of 30 scripts). The team also cross-referenced assessed outcomes against UoK Level Descriptors and Marks Scales [013] to ensure marking was compliant with the degree-awarding body's expectations on assessment outcomes and the FHEQ level descriptors in the sector-recognised standards.

43   To check that external examiners confirm that standards beyond the threshold for the courses sampled are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where those standards have been met, the team consulted external examiner reports [010] for all validated courses. The team also met senior staff [M4] to discuss the views of external examiners about the award of grades and classifications.

44   To test that marks and awards given to students are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, the team examined CDD Annual Monitoring Reports, [028] Annual Course Monitoring Reports UoK, [029] LCDS Board of Examiners Meeting minutes 2020-21, [078] the UAL Validation Reports [005] and a document provided by the School entitled Extracts of discussions around high degrees. [150] The team also met with senior staff [M1] to assess their understanding and operation of assigning marks and granting awards.

45   To assess whether students understand what is required of them to reach standards beyond the threshold, the team examined the student submission, [000S] programme specifications, [009] course handbooks, [011] and the LCDS Student Handbook. [021] The team also met students [M2] from the BA Contemporary Dance, MA Screendance and MA Contemporary Dance to assess their understanding of what was required of them to

reach standards beyond the threshold.

What the evidence shows

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

47   To ensure standards above the threshold are appropriately set and achieved, the School's approach is to adopt the awarding bodies' grade descriptors, [012, 013] which provide categorical marking scales used to measure achievement above the threshold. These reference points for marking set out the qualities expected of student work in order to be awarded specific grades at Level 4 to 7. The UAL Validation Reports [005] provide additional evidence that the School sets appropriate standards beyond the threshold level because it affirms the university's view that standards are reasonably comparable with those in other UK providers through scrutiny of the School's ability to develop and implement types of assessment that are appropriate to the aims and outcomes of its courses.

48   In considering the implementation of the School's approach to its UoK-validated courses, the team considered moderation reports and accompanying examples of moderation. [077] These show that tutors use the full range of marks available and marks awarded align to the expectations of UoK Level Descriptors and Marking Scales. [013] This provided evidence that staff understand and apply the School's approach to the awarding of marks because they comply with this given reference point. [013] Marking criteria are accessible to students via Unit Guides. [069] At the pass threshold, the criteria created by the School for use on UoK programmes are helpfully structured around the extent to which intended learning outcomes have been achieved. However, the criteria for higher levels are not fully transparent to students because they characterise achievement (such as 'Very Good with Excellent elements') rather than specify what will have been evidenced. [UoK Level Descriptors and Marking Scale 013] While this may mean that the grading system alone may not be sufficient for students to be fully aware of what achievement has been identified, the team also noted that students confirmed at the visit that they understand what is required of them to achieve above the threshold, and that, as described in Criterion S3, the School has introduced assessment briefing sessions designed to make assessment more transparent by talking students through the criteria. [Unit Briefing Sessions 153]

49   The sampling exercise revealed that assessment outcomes beyond threshold levels are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers in relation to mark ranges. The team cross-referenced these assessment outcomes against UoK Level Descriptors and Marks Scales [013] and found that the awarding of marks above the threshold is congruent with the University's expectations as expressed in its grade descriptors. The team concluded that the sample of assessed work indicates that the School maintains standards beyond the threshold that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, and that assessed student work demonstrates that credit is awarded only where the relevant standards have been met.

50   The team consulted external examiners' reports [010] for all validated courses for the period 2018 to 2021, focusing in more depth on those for the BA Contemporary Dance and MA Contemporary Dance because of the sampling exercise for units on these two courses. These reports confirm that all external examiners considered that assessed student work demonstrates that credit and qualifications are awarded only where the relevant standards have been met and that the quality of student work is often very high and is deserving of high grades. Although some reports did not clarify the basis on which this judgement was reached, other reports were more explicit in affirming the high levels of achievement attained by students. For instance, an examiner for the MA Contemporary Dance in 2020 commented that 'there is exemplary work that arguably could have been awarded higher grades' and that 'There is room to move higher with discrimination and

without generating grade inflation'. An examiner for the BA Contemporary Dance commented in 2019 that 'The quality of student work is very high' and noted her view that 'Performance standards can sometimes be higher at conservatoires due to the time invested in performance training. The students [at CDT] are highly invested and motivated in their training'. An examiner for the BA Contemporary Dance commented in 2020 that Level 6 work 'was at a very high standard throughout' and drew attention to the high standards of teaching and the time invested by students and staff as reasons for this.

51   In reviewing reports [010] for the MA in Contemporary Dance, the team noted the view of the external examiner in 2018-19 that 'I have in previous years fully agreed with the highest marks awarded - this year I noted some concerns as to grade inflation in relation to some (but by no means all) written work'. The description [010] of subsequent discussions between the external examiner and the School shows that a consensus was arrived at where it was agreed that marks were appropriate to the grade boundaries, and subsequently in 2019-20 and 2020-21 the external examiner made no comments on this topic. In discussion with the team, senior staff [M4] affirmed their view that the percentage of first-class honours marks are in line with other providers delivering dance programmes and with other CDD partner organisations and cited evidence that a member of senior staff has externally examined at other institutions.

52   The School's submission noted that the proportion of 'good' degrees at the School exceeds the national average. In this regard, the team noted that the Board of Examiners Meeting minutes 2020-21 [078] show that discussions took place regarding the number of high-classification degrees for the BA Contemporary Dance. The conclusions of this discussion were that, due to the highly intensive nature of the course and because students are admitted only through audition, achievement is often higher than the national average. The subsequent CDD Annual Monitoring Report [028] for 2020-21 states that senior management review achievement levels on an annual basis and will continue to monitor the number of first-class honours degrees awarded against previous years and against the national average.

53   At the meeting with senior staff, [M1] the team raised the proportion of high degree classifications awarded and sought the School's view on the proportion of first-class honours degree classifications. Staff responded that they considered the proportion of higher degree classifications awarded justifiable and that they see it as a positive feature of the School's provision, arising from the selective audition processes, because students excel in practical assessments over written assessment, and because students are committed to their studies and are supported by highly skilled and knowledgeable staff. Senior staff additionally affirmed [M1] that tracking of trends in relation to the classification of degrees had been in place for some years, and that there had been only minor fluctuations in the proportions of high classifications over that period.

54   Evidence of the data on the awarding of degree classifications is presented in Annual Course monitoring reports UoK [029] and LCDS CDD Annual Monitoring Reports, [028] and that discussion takes place at, for example, Boards of Examiners (LCDS Board of Examiners Meeting minutes 2020-21 [078]). In addition, and in response to a request for evidence of this, the School provided [150] extracts of discussions at examining boards and at Senior Management Team meetings of trends in the award of high classifications. While this evidence included views of external examiners, this did not include evidence of action planning or of objective and comparative internal and external analysis of the awarding of degree classifications. The team noted that the Terms of Reference [016] for the Link Liaison Committee show that this committee will be responsible for scrutinising achievement trends on the UAL courses. While the team's view was that this scrutiny was likely to identify any concerns related to the award of classifications, it noted that this committee has not been in place for long enough to provide evidence of such scrutiny. The team concluded that while

there is no evidence that standards relating to the award of high classifications have been at risk, there is also a lack of evidence of robust processes to ensure that such standards continue to be secure, for instance through comparison with other providers.

55   Programme specifications [009] provide concise summaries of the main features of courses, and the learning outcomes that a student is expected to demonstrate to be awarded a qualification. More detailed information on learning outcomes, unit content, teaching, learning and assessment methods, and how standards of attainment are differentiated is found in course handbooks. [011] The student handbooks [021] contain hyperlinks to assessment resources focused specifically at student readership. These resources offer students clear and helpful information because they provide students with accessible information about what is required to reach standards beyond threshold levels, with hyperlinks to additional information resources specifically created with students in mind.

56   The student submission [000S] states that students perceive that the School makes clear what students need to do to achieve different grades, and affirms that the means by which this information is given to students is through clear assessment criteria which identify differentiated achievement outcomes, resources on the virtual learning environment and regular discussions throughout the delivery of units as to how learning relates to final assessment tasks. In its meeting with students, [M2] the team asked how students know what they must do in assessment tasks, and what is needed to achieve different levels of study. Students responded that at the start of units there are dedicated sessions where tutors take students through the structure, content and assessment requirements of the unit. Students stated that throughout the unit tutors make clear to students what is expected of them to demonstrate assessment criteria beyond threshold levels of achievement. From the student responses, the team concludes that students understand what is required of them to achieve above the threshold because they can confidently articulate their knowledge of how they understand what is required of them in assessments to reach standards beyond the threshold. Based on the evidence scrutinised, and in consideration of the explanations given by students, the assessment team concludes that students understand what is required of them to reach standards beyond the threshold.

Conclusions

57   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.

58   In respect of courses validated by UoK, assessment outcomes beyond threshold levels are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers in relation to mark ranges, and the awarding of marks above the threshold is congruent with the university's expectations as expressed in its grade descriptors. The sample of assessed work examined by the team shows that the School adheres to these descriptors and therefore maintains standards beyond the threshold that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

59   No evidence of assessment processes on UAL-validated provision was available at the time of the assessment, although the team noted that UAL Validation Reports confirm the university's view that the School sets standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those in other UK providers.

60   The School has acknowledged that the proportion of 'good' degrees awarded exceeds the national average, while also affirming its view that this reflects high levels of student achievement. External examiners' reports expressed mixed views about students' achievement above the threshold. While some drew attention to the very high quality of student work, one report in 2018-19 indicated a concern about 'grade inflation' in relation to some written work - this concern was addressed by the School in discussion with the external examiner. The School has affirmed that it tracks trends in relation to the classification of degrees and monitors the number of first-class honours degrees awarded each year. However, the available evidence of this did not confirm action planning or robust evidence-based processes for conducting comparative analysis with other providers to ensure that such standards continue to be secure.

61   In conclusion the team noted that mark ranges for assessed work are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, that samples of assessed work show adherence to nationally recognised standards beyond the threshold and that recent external examiners' reports comment positively on the levels of achievement. Accordingly, based on the evidence presented, the team determined that the standards set for students to achieve beyond the threshold on the School's courses are reasonably comparable with those set by other UK providers.

62   Therefore the team concludes, based on the evidence described above, that students have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers and this Core practice is met.

63   The team was not able to make use of a comprehensive set of evidence to consider this Core practice - specifically, the sample of assessed work reviewed was available only for the discontinuing provision with UoK and no evidence of assessed student work was yet available for the UAL courses. Furthermore, there was limited evidence of robust internal processes to ensure that standards above the threshold continue to be secure. The team accordingly has moderate confidence in its 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

64   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.

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

The evidence the team considered

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

a   UoK Validation Agreement [002]
b   UAL Validation Agreement [003]
c   UAL Course Regulations [007]
d   UoK Regulations and Guidance [008]
e   Programme specifications [009]
f   External Examiner Reports and Responses [010]
g   UoK Level Descriptors and Marking Scale [013]
h   Terms of Reference [016]
i   Kent PPR [027]
j   CDD ACMR [028]
k   LCDS Board of Examiners Meeting minutes 2020-21 [078]
l   LCDS LLC minutes 01 Dec 2021 [097]
m   Professional placements [141]
n   UAL Collaborative Procedures [143]
o   Approval of External Examiners [146]
p   CDD Senate Terms of Reference and minutes [149]
q   Second Marking Comment 2021 Professional Placement [162]
r   BA External Examiner actions [164]
s   Notes on Admissions samples [165]
t   FHEA Application [166]
u   Examples of Recourse Provision Discussions [167]
v   The Place Studios [168]
w   Clarification around moderation [169]
x   BA Admissions spreadsheet [172]
y   QSR Request for additional documentation [173]
z   Committee structure [175]
aa   Meeting with senior staff [M1]

bb   Meeting with teaching staff and professional support staff [M3]
cc   University of Kent regulations for placements
        https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/documents/copt2020-annexq-wbl-v2.pdf
dd   University of Kent Professional Placement unit specification
        https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/collaborative/validation/profiles/documents/lcds/UGCD604_Professional%20Placement.pdf

67   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:

- The team did not consider third party endorsements because the School does not make use of any third parties in setting or maintaining standards such as professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

68   The team considered samples of assessed student work as described in 'How the assessment was conducted'.

69   The team did not conduct any sampling of external examiners' reports as the volume of documentation was such that all evidence could be assessed.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

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

71   To identify how the provider ensures the standards of its awards are credible and secure where these are delivered by placement providers, the team scrutinised the Degree Awarding Bodies' collaborative procedures, [143] their academic regulations [007, 008] and external examiner regulations. [019;013] The team also examined programme specifications, [009] a specification for the professional placement unit, [linked via 079] University of Kent regulations for placements, [Available at: https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/documents/copt2020-annexq-wbl-v2.pdf, accessed 16 January 2022] and an example of a placement agreement. [079] To better understand the partnership with CDD, the team considered the School's Committee Structure, [175] the CDD Senate's terms of reference [149] and annual monitoring reports. [028]

72   To interrogate the basis for the maintenance of academic standards within specific partnerships, and that those arrangements are in line with the provider's regulations or policies, the team scrutinised Memoranda of Agreement between the School and its Awarding Bodies, [002; 003] the terms of reference of the Link Liaison Committee, [016] the minutes of the Link Liaison Committee, [097] an example of a Professional Placement Agreement,[079] the School's placement log, [141] records of second marking on the professional placement unit, [162] and the Professional Placement unit specification. [https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/collaborative/validation/profiles/documents/lcds/UGCD604_Professional%20Placement.pdf accessed 16 January 2022]

73　　　To test whether external examiners consider that standards are credible and secure, thus confirming the effectiveness of the underpinning arrangements, the team scrutinised external examiner reports and responses. [010]

74　　　The team also reviewed records of second marking on the professional placement unit [162] to determine its own view on the credibility and security of standards and the underpinning arrangements.

75　　　To test that staff understand and discharge effectively their responsibilities to the awarding body, the team scrutinised Board of Examiner minutes 2020-21, [078] and a Periodic Programme Review report, [027] and records of the approval of external examiners. [146] The team also met teaching and professional support staff [M3] and the UAL Link Liaison Representative and senior staff who have responsibility for the oversight of academic standards and manage the relationship with the School's awarding bodies. [M1]

What the evidence shows

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

77　　　The School has partnerships with its degree-awarding bodies, agreements with professional placement providers, and a partnership with CDD. Placement providers are identified by the students who wish to undertake placements each year: each partnership with a placement provider lasts only for the duration of that placement.

78　　　As discussed under Core practices S1, S2 and S4, the two current bodies have academic regulations, credit frameworks, and quality assurance policies which govern how they work with the School to set and maintain academic standards. [UAL Collaborative Procedures 143; University of Kent Regulations and Procedures 008; UAL Course Regulations 2021-22 007] The School's role is to implement these regulations and carry out the responsibilities assigned to it, such as responding to external examiner reports. [UAL Collaborative Procedures 143; UAL External Examiner Procedures Regulations and Guidance 019; UoK Level Descriptors and Marking Scale 013]

79　　　Agreements with awarding bodies [UoK Memorandum of Agreement 002; UAL and LCDS Validation and Collaboration Signed Agreement 003] establish clear and comprehensive arrangements for the management of academic standards because they detail the roles of each partner in programme approval, assessment and classification processes, and in the nomination and response to external examiners' reports. Where defined through academic regulations these arrangements are discussed in detail below (see S4), but the memoranda are fit-for-purpose because they state which academic regulations apply to the partnership and clarify the constitution of important processes such as examining boards. The team therefore concludes that partnership agreements are clear and comprehensive, and reflect the School and awarding bodies' regulations or policies for the management of partnerships.

80　　　Oversight of standards by UoK takes place through periodic programme review and by means of annual monitoring. The report [027] of the most recent periodic programme review carried out in 2016 of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes shows that the university satisfied itself that academic standards continued to be aligned with the FHEQ.

81　　　For UAL programmes, the terms of reference for the Link Liaison Committee (LLC) outlines the role of this body in helping ensure close working between the School and UAL. [Terms of Reference 016] Although it had only met on a single occasion at the time of the assessment visit and had not yet discussed any matters of direct relevance to academic standards, the minutes of its meeting [097] show that the committee is likely to be an effective basis for the maintenance of academic standards. This is because its membership

includes senior members of UAL staff (the Dean of Performance Arts and Foundation) and of the School (Director of Dance Studies) as the designated Link Liaison Representatives as well as the School's senior teaching leadership and representatives from both the School and awarding body's quality teams, because its terms of reference [016] include responsibilities for several matters relating to maintenance of standards including updating the School on UAL regulations and processes and scrutiny of academic plans, validations and revalidations, and because it reports to UAL's internal committee structure. [LCDS LLC Minutes 01 Dec 2021 097] The minutes of its inaugural meeting held in December 2021 show the review of policy areas where there are shared responsibilities such as complaints and admissions.

82   Board of examiners' minutes for UoK programmes show that the School is aware of, and follows, its awarding body regulations. Minutes from their meetings clearly record the recommended actions in relation to particular students when mitigation is required and the University's staff confirm the process has been conducted in accordance with its regulations. [Board of Examiner Minutes 2020/21 078]

83   Staff met by the team mostly understand and discharge their responsibilities to the degree-awarding bodies in relation to standards. Teaching and professional support staff [M3] affirmed that UoK and UAL policy documents are readily available and that they were familiar with using them and that there had been numerous training sessions to prepare staff for working with UAL's regulations, as described in Core practice Q3. Senior staff [M1] offered examples of processes where both the School and the awarding body were involved – such as the nomination of external examiners – and accurately identified the differences in their responsibilities. [Approval of External Examiners 146] As discussed under Core practice S4, however, staff have not fully understood and operated moderation processes according to UoK's regulations.

84   The UAL Link Liaison Tutor met by the team expressed the view that the School understands and fulfils its responsibilities. [M1] Likewise, the last periodic review conducted by UoK in 2016 concluded that the School upheld its academic standards and delivered programmes according to the validated specifications and relevant regulations, [LCDS UoK Periodic Programme Review 027] thereby confirming confidence from the awarding body in the School's understanding and operation of its responsibilities for maintaining standards. On the basis of its meetings with staff, the team concludes that staff of the School understand their responsibilities for academic standards in respect of partnership arrangements and that they discharge these effectively.

85   The School offers a professional placement unit as part of the BA Contemporary Dance validated by the UoK. [Programme Specifications 009] This Level 6 unit, represents 30 credits and is designed for use when final year students are presented with an employment opportunity. [UGCD604 Unit Specification https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/collaborative/validation/profiles/documents/lcds/UGCD604_Professional%20Placement.pdf accessed 16 January 2022] Only a small number of students undertake a professional placement (four in 2020-21). The awarding body regulations governing placement units are available on its website [https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/documents/copt2020-annexq-wbl-v2.pdf 16.01.22] and, with regard to standards, stipulate that the form of assessment used must be agreed with the student before the placement commences and that unless the assessment is undertaken by the School's own staff then it must be on a pass/fail basis and zero-weighted in the final classification. In the case of the placement unit, these regulations relating to standards are satisfied since assessment is carried out by School staff and assessments are agreed with the student as part of the placement's approval by the School: hence the placement provider has no role with regard to academic standards. [Professional Placement Agreements 079] The team concludes that arrangements for the assessment of

professional placements are sufficient to enable standards to be maintained by the School.

86   Placement agreements [079] are formal, signed agreements between the student, placement provider and the School. Such agreements are fit-for-purpose because their structure and detail ensures that the student, placement provider and the School have a shared understanding of each other's responsibilities and the aims and principles of placement activity. Placement agreements align with the university's regulatory requirements (as discussed under Q8) and explicitly state that the School alone is responsible for assessment and feedback. [Professional Placement Agreement 079] Placement log records show that placement assessments are agreed between the Director of Undergraduate Courses and the student in advance of the placement commencing. [Placement Log 141] Placement records seen by the team demonstrate that assessments are double marked using the UoK's normal marking procedures and the criteria outlined in the unit specification. [Second Marking Comment 2021 Professional Placement 162; UGCD604 Unit Specification – linked via 079 at:
https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/collaborative/validation/profiles/documents/lcds/UGCD604_Professional%20Placement.pdf accessed 16 January 2022] External examiners' reports seen by the team do not raise any concerns about the assessment of placement units [External Examiner Reports and Responses 010] and the team therefore concludes that external examiners consider that standards in respect of professional placements are credible and secure.

87   The School is an affiliate member of CDD whose Senate exercises oversight of the assurance of standards at the School by means of a reporting arrangement from the School's Academic Board, as shown in the School's committee structure [175] and as confirmed by the CDD Senate's terms of reference. [149]

88   CDD's oversight of the assurance of standards is exercised through consideration and approval by its Senate of the School's courses to be delivered in partnerships with its degree-awarding bodies, and by consideration of the School's annual monitoring reports. Minutes of meetings of the Senate [149] show that in November 2020 it considered and approved the School's proposed undergraduate programme prior to validation by UAL, but do not show that it considered the School's proposed postgraduate provision. The School provided the team with the annual monitoring reports [028] submitted to CDD during the period 2018 to 2021. These reports provide an extensive and detailed data-driven summary, an evaluation of the School's provision during the year in question and a list of intended actions arising from that evaluation. However, the minutes of the CDD Senate [149] for the academic year 2020-21 do not show evidence of consideration or endorsement of the School's annual monitoring. The School affirmed that this was a consequence of the delayed deadline for the submission of annual monitoring reports to CDD caused by the effects of the Covid pandemic, as confirmed by the minutes [149] of the CDD Senate for its meeting of November 2020.

Conclusions

89   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.

90   The team concludes that the School's staff mostly understand their responsibilities in relation to academic standards, with the exception of the issues reported under S4. The

team also concludes that partnership agreements are clear and comprehensive, up-to-date and reflect the School and awarding bodies' regulations or policies for the management of partnerships. This is because memoranda of agreement with awarding bodies clearly stipulate which regulations apply, and specify the School's responsibilities and the composition of important shared structures such as Board of Examiners. It is also because the partnership agreements and placement log used by the School collectively meet the awarding bodies' regulatory expectations and clearly distinguish the employer's responsibility for facilitating the placement from the School's exclusive responsibility for assessment of standards. The team therefore confirms that the Core practice is met.

91   The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all of the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix for this Core practice. Therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

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

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

The evidence the team considered

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

a   Student submission [000S]
b   UoK Validation Agreement [002]
c   UAL Validation Agreement [003]
d   UAL Validation Reports [005]
e   UAL Course Regulations [007]
f   UoK Regulations and Guidance [008]
g   Programme specifications [009]
h   External Examiner Reports and Responses [010]
i   Course handbooks [011]
j   UAL Classification/Marking Scale [012]
k   UoK Level Descriptors and Marking Scale [013]
l   NSS Data [014]
m   UAL External Examiner Procedures Regulations and Guidance [019]
n   Academic Board minutes [020]
o   Quality Assurance Handbook [022]
p   Kent PPR [027]
q   UoK ACMR [029]
r   Student Voice Committee minutes [038]
s   LCDS Learning and Teaching minutes [056]
t   Examples of Student Feedback [058]
u   Unit Guides [069]
v   Agendas of recent CPD weeks [072]
w   Moderation Reports and Examples [077]
x   LCDS Board of Examiners Meeting minutes 2020-21 [078]
y   Director of Research and Postgraduate Programmes Job Description [083]
z   MA Screendance External Examiner Appointment [126]
aa   Further Moderation Reports and Examples [127]
bb   UAL Collaborative Procedures [143]
cc   Approval of External Examiners [146]
dd   BA External Examiner Actions [164]
ee   Meeting with students [M2]
ff   Meeting with teaching staff and professional support staff [M3]

gg   Clarification meeting [M4]
hh   Assessed student work.

95   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:

- The assessment team did not consider third party endorsements because the School does not make use of any third parties in setting or maintaining standards such as professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

96   The team did not conduct any sampling of external examiners' reports, records of course approval or approved course documentation as the volume of documentation was such that all evidence could be assessed.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

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

98   To identify how external experts are used in setting and maintaining academic standards, and how the provider's assessment and classification processes operate, the team scrutinised the degree-awarding bodies' collaborative procedures, [143] validation reports, [005] memoranda of agreement, [002;003] periodic review report, [027] academic regulations, [007; 008] external examiner procedures, [019] assessment criteria and level descriptors, [012; 013] alongside the School's quality assurance handbook. [022]

99   To assess the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes for the courses sampled, the team scrutinised the School's Unit Guides and Assessment Briefs, [069] a sample of assessed student work, programme specifications, [009] course handbooks, [011] evidence of unit briefing sessions, [153] external examiner reports, [010] assessment criteria, level descriptors and marking scales, [013; 012] moderation reports and marking documentation [077; 127] and Board of Examiner minutes. [078] The team also met undergraduate and postgraduate students, [M2] teaching staff, [M3] and senior staff, including those with responsibility for quality assurance, programme and institutional leadership. [M4]

100   To interrogate the use of external examiners and that the School considers and responds appropriately to their reports regarding standards, the team scrutinised external examiner appointment documentation, [126;146] external examiner reports, [010] responses to external examiner reports, [010] the minutes of the Academic Board, [020] minutes of the Board of Examiners, [078] documents supporting actions taken in response to external examiner recommendations, [164] and the degree-awarding body's annual course monitoring reports. [029] To identify externals' views about reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes, the team scrutinised external examiner reports [010] and the minutes of the Board of Examiners. [078]

101   To test that staff understand the requirements for the use of external expertise, and the provider's assessment and classification processes, the team scrutinised the School's quality assurance handbook, [022] attendance lists of recent CPD activities, [072] exemplar materials from recent CPD activities, [083] and moderation reports. [077; 127]

102   To identify how students regard the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes, the team scrutinised student voice committee minutes, [038] learning and teaching committee minutes, [056] documents relating to the School's student feedback action planning, [058] the School's report on its NSS 2020-21 survey data, [014] and evidence of unit assessment briefing sessions. [153] The team also considered student views through the student submission [000S] and by meeting undergraduate and postgraduate students. [M2]

What the evidence shows

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

104   The School's degree-awarding bodies use external subject experts in the validation of new programmes. Programmes validated by UAL according to its procedures [UAL Collaborative Procedures 143] undergo revalidation every five years, ensuring that external experts periodically review the setting and maintenance of academic standards. [UAL and LCDS Validation and Collaboration Signed Agreement 003] Programmes validated by UoK undergo periodic review every five years. [UoK and LCDS Memorandum of Agreement 002] The periodic review process uses external subject experts to assess whether academic standards are appropriately set and maintained. [LCDS UoK Periodic Programme Review 027] These arrangements enable external experts to play an effective role in ensuring academic standards because they include reviews of proposed assessment and marking criteria: for instance the validation of BA Contemporary Dance programmes [UAL Validation Reports 2021 005] involved a substantial discussion of, and constructive challenge to, the risks and benefits of the proposed approach to assessment, resulting in a comprehensive list of actions designed to enable the School to balance its pedagogic aims with clear information about what was being assessed. Both senior staff and teaching staff understand the requirements for the use of external expertise. [M1] Senior staff cited the role of external experts in validating programmes to explain how standards were set in relation to national reference points.

105   Unit guides and assessment briefs [069] evidence reliable assessment processes because the design of tasks enables the accurate measurement of student achievement against the intended learning outcomes (ILOs). For example, the use of an independent dissertation project on the MA Contemporary Dance enables student achievement to be reliably evaluated against the learning outcomes such as applying and reflecting on the theories of others and managing an individual investigation. [the School MA QSR Assessed student work sample] Programme specifications [009] further demonstrate reliable assessment design because they describe a range of assessment types linked to the unit aims and wider programme learning outcomes.

106   Both senior staff and teaching staff understand the assessment and classification process stipulated by the degree-awarding bodies with the exception of moderation processes as discussed below. Staff receive appropriate training that helps them to understand the School's assessment processes. For example, 28 members of staff attended an assessment training event held in September 2021 led by university staff. [Agendas of recent CPD Weeks 072] This session included explanations of the School's marking criteria and the assessment design principles it uses to ensure that assessments are fair and transparent. [Examples of materials for staff undertaking assessments 083 – page 1] Staff met by the team confirmed attendance at these training sessions and that they were

effective in helping them understand the differences between the School's two degree-awarding bodies. [M3] A Key Assessment Regulations summary table further enables staff to understand the differences because it compares UAL and UoK regulations on topics such as non-submission or the methods of calculating the programme mark. [Examples of materials for staff undertaking assessments 083 - page 30]

107   Course handbooks [011] provide transparent information about assessment tasks in that they set out what students are required to produce and provide details such as submission deadlines and credit weightings for each assessment and unit. The handbooks [011] list when students can expect to receive timetabled briefings on their assessments and students met by the team considered this an effective process. [M2 the School Students; Unit Briefing Sessions 153] Unit guides and assessment briefs [069] further ensure the transparency of assessment because they convey the task requirements in detail and provide consistently organised information about submission, referencing and academic misconduct. The unit guides and assessment briefs [069] for all three undergraduate units sampled included assessment-specific marking criteria as well as linking to the University's overall criteria, increasing transparency for students. Only one of the five postgraduate units sampled provided assessment-specific criteria but all directed students to the generic marking criteria which are sufficient for students to understand how their work is marked in the context of a briefing meeting. [Unit Guides and Assessment Briefs 069]

108   Marking criteria are accessible to students via unit guides. [069] The programmes validated by UAL utilise the university's framework of criteria which very effectively explain which different skills and attributes will be evidenced at each level and make a clear link between the mark awarded and the level of evidence observed in support of each criterion. [UAL Assessment Criteria and Level Descriptor 012] The student submission [000S] states that the School is transparent about the design of assessments and how marks are decided. The submission praises units which allow students to choose between several different assessment formats. Students met by the team felt that the new assessments introduced to the UAL programmes were fair and reliable because they focused on the process of production rather than just the finished performance which was subject to lots of variables on the day. [M2]

109   Student voice committee feedback in 2020-21 suggested that assessment criteria were not clear. [Student Voice Committee Minutes 038] A report to the Learning and Teaching Committee in November 2021 showed that student understanding of assessment criteria varied across units at all levels. [Learning and Teaching Committee Minutes 056] The School's action planning links this issue with a significant fall in student satisfaction with assessment reported in the NSS, whereby satisfaction on the assessment question-set fell from a three-year average of 75.55% to 56.82%. [Examples of student feedback 058; NSS Results Report 014] In response the School has introduced assessment briefing sessions designed to make assessment more transparent by talking students through the criteria. [Unit Briefing Sessions 153] The students met by the team regarded these sessions as effective and felt that staff make clear what they are looking for in assessments. [M2] The team concluded that students regard the School's assessment as reliable and fair and that, while there had previously been some evidence of limited transparency concerning marking criteria, action already taken has meant that students now understood how their work would be evaluated.

110   Degree-awarding bodies' regulations determine how the School's assessment process operates. The universities' regulations set the pass mark as well as the categorical marking scales used to measure achievement above the threshold. [UAL Assessment Criteria and Level Descriptor 012; UoK Level Descriptors and Marking Scale 013] On UoK programmes, all units are either marked by two internal examiners (who must double mark 80% of the work) or marked by one internal examiner and then moderated by another

internal examiner. [UoK Level Descriptors and Marking Scale 013] On UAL programmes marks are either arrived at through a panel of markers agreeing a final mark, two markers double-blind marking submissions, or through the second-marking of a systematic sample of work leading to the resolution of any differences. [UAL Course Regulations 2021-22 007]

111　　When a panel of markers assess a performance, the records kept demonstrate a fair process, given that each marker's scores against the criteria are recorded along with their comments. [Further Moderation Reports and Examples 127] When two internal markers are used to double-mark student work, records indicate a fair process because two individual marks and an agreed mark are recorded. [Further Moderation Reports and Examples 127; Moderation reports and examples 077] However, records of double-marking show that this process has limited transparency since they do not normally capture clear rationales that would enable an external examiner to clearly see how the two markers reached a final mark. [Moderation reports and examples 077] One external examiner report has signalled that this information would be valuable but supported the grades awarded. [External Examiner Reports 010] The team notes that records of the two markers' discussion is not required by the UoK's policies and that the newly introduced moderation documentation for UAL programmes requires markers to record how a final mark was agreed. It is not possible to evaluate the effectiveness of the UAL process because UAL units had not yet been assessed at the time of the visit. [Further Moderation Reports and Examples 127]

112　　On two units in the UoK-validated BA Contemporary Dance, a moderator is used to sample assessed work marked by another tutor. On all other units in UoK-validated provision, including all other units in the BA Contemporary Dance, no sampling is done because all assessed work is marked by two markers or a panel of markers. In both units the assessment concerned represented 100% of the unit mark. [Assessed work sample - UGCD46 Introduction to Critical Studies Module Specification; Moderation reports and examples 077] Both units were mandatory units taken by all students on the BA Contemporary Dance programme validated by UoK. [Programme Specification 009] Because the programme is being discontinued, one unit was delivered for the final time in 2020-21 and the other is being delivered for the final time in 2021-22.

113　　Moderation reports suggest that assessment in relation to these two units is not fair and transparent when a moderator is used to sample work marked by another tutor. On these units (referenced UGCD46 and UGCD503) in 2020-21, marks for some students in the sample were altered following discussion between the marker and moderator, but student work outside the sample was not adjusted or second marked. [Moderation reports and examples 077] No rationale was recorded for why these individual changes were made. [077] In the case of UGCD46, the moderator took a sample of 11 of the 49 submissions: the marks of two of these 11 were altered following moderation. In the case of UGC503, the moderator took a sample of 25 of the 47 submissions: the marks of 14 of these 25 were altered following moderation. The difference between the marker's initial mark and the moderator's suggested mark was 6 or 7 marks in eight cases where a mark was moved, indicating a significant disagreement about the application of assessment criteria between the marker and the moderator. The team considered that this represented a breach of UoK's regulations which require a moderator who is unable to 'vouch for the accuracy and consistency of marking' to refer the case to the Chair of the Board of Examiners who will arrange for 'all the work to be double-marked'. There are no provisions for moderators to adjust individual marks or only those of the submissions sampled. [UoK Level Descriptors and Marking Scale 013]

114　　Academic staff met by the team [M3] confirmed that the practices described above reflect how sample-based moderation operates on UoK programmes. They stated that a wider re-marking would be triggered if moderation resulted in more significant disagreements but confirmed that there was no ruleset or guidance available which specified the thresholds

at which this would occur. Senior staff noted the issue was limited to these two units because sample-based moderation was not in use elsewhere on the programmes and further affirmed that they believed the moderation practice was in accordance with UoK's regulations and that these allowed marks to be changed without a wider review. [M4] Noting that the UoK's regulations explicitly state that all work must be second marked if the moderator detects an issue and provides for no other means of altering a mark, the team concluded that senior staff showed a lack of understanding about UoK regulations. Subsequently, senior staff contacted the UoK and provided a statement [Clarification around modification 169] which acknowledges that the School had applied the University's regulations differently to the manner in which the University operates them.

115   In considering the impact of the failure to follow UoK regulations in respect of moderation of marking, the team noted that it could lead to the award of incorrect marks to students outside the chosen sample, in turn leading to students' being incorrectly failed on a unit or to incorrect classifications at the point of awarding a degree. In mitigation of these risks, the team noted that the record of moderation [077] showed that there were no instances of students receiving a failing mark without their work being marked by the moderator as well as by the marker, and that one of these two units (UGCD46) made no contribution to the final classification: the contribution of the other (UGC503) to the final classification is small, commensurate with a weighting derived from its credit-rating (15 credits of a total of 360 credits for the award of a degree) and with the lower weighting accorded to units at Level 5 rather than Level 6.

116   The team concluded that while assessment practice is generally reliable, fair and transparent, assessment that involves moderation based on sampling students' work has not been implemented in accordance with the University's regulations. Moderation is intended to give institutions confidence that the sample of marks are arrived at correctly and that this will also be true of the wider population of submissions. Conversely, having detected a weakness in the application of marking criteria within their sample, moderators can only confirm the reliability of all marks if they establish that the issue identified is restricted to the sample and/or relevant actions are taken. Without such a check, adjustments cannot be made fairly as this depends on the presence or absence of the student's work in the moderator's sample. In considering the adverse effects of this weakness, the team took into account the fact that this applies to a single undergraduate programme with 112 of CDT's total of 250 students, and to a single 15-credit unit at Level 4 and to a single 15-credit unit at Level 5 of that programme, and that both of these units were discontinuing. Nevertheless, the team formed the view that this weakness has led to a risk of unreliable outcomes on two units and of a lack of transparency for students as to how their marks are determined. Furthermore, the reliability of marks outside the moderator's sample on these units is reduced as no such confirmation was sought, despite being required by the University's regulations.

117   For UAL programmes, the moderation processes required are set out in its course regulations. [007] Because the UAL programmes are being delivered for the first time in 2021-22 these processes have not yet fully been put into practice by the School. The only example available related to a pass/fail assessment whose moderation was completed according to UAL's regulations. [127 Moderation Reports and Examples] For that reason, the team had no evidence of the wider effectiveness of the School's implementation of UAL's sample-based moderation processes in relation to performance above the threshold.

118   With regard to external examining, the School's quality assurance handbook enables staff to have a clear understanding of the role of external expertise because it contains clear descriptions of the role, how nominations are agreed within the School and how it responds to external reports. [Quality Assurance Handbook 022] Degree-awarding bodies' regulations set out their requirements in relation to external examiners in respect of

appointment procedures, scrutiny of assessed work, membership of Boards of Examiners and annual reporting. [UAL External Examiner Procedures Regulations and Guidance 019; UAL Course Regulations 2021-22 007; University of Kent Regulations and Procedures 008]

119   Nomination forms and accompanying documentation show that the School fulfils its responsibilities in relation to external examiner appointments because it identifies individuals with relevant expertise, provides them with relevant university briefing materials, and passes the nomination to the university for approval. [MA Screendance external examiner appointment 126; Approval of External Examiners 146]

120   External examiners' reports show that external examiners review assessments effectively because they record specific comments on cohort achievement in individual units, consistently consider the reliability of marking, evaluate overall levels of achievement, and review the design of assessment and feedback provided. [External Examiner Reports 010] External examiners' reports also show that they offer informed challenge and targeted recommendations. For example, externals have previously recommended question types that could further encourage students to demonstrate their intellectual independence at postgraduate level or have asked that the School work towards greater consistency in relation to the length of student feedback. [010] The team concludes that the School makes effective use of external examiners in assessment design.

121   External examiners' reports [010] confirm that assessments are reliable in that they state that the standards set are appropriate, that assessment design enables students to achieve the learning outcomes, and that marking is 'rigorous'. Reports also confirm that assessment and classification processes are fair and transparent because they comment positively on the provision of student information about assessment and on the operation of Board of Examiners. Board of Examiner minutes 2020-21 [078] support this finding because they show that external examiners confirm the standards of awards.

122   Responses to external examiners' reports demonstrate that recommendations and comments are given due consideration because each issue raised is thoroughly addressed by the course leader as part of a structured response. For example, the School addressed a recent recommendation to increase the weighting of audiovisual assessment components on the MA Screendance, explaining that while their observations partly reflected assessment patterns made necessary by the pandemic, their curriculum development plans incorporated more audiovisual essay alternatives. [LCDS External Examiner Reports 010 – page 17] External examiners' reports are also considered through the School's committee structures. For example, the Academic Board held on 4 November 2020 heard an overview of externals' reports and related actions. [LCDS Academic Board Minutes 020] External examiners' subsequent reports confirm that actions have been taken and issues addressed. In one instance, an external examiner recently noted the increased consistency of feedback volumes after the School had introduced training sessions in response to a previous report recommendation. [LCDS External Examiner Reports 010 – page 17; BA External Examiner Actions 164] Annual monitoring reports also demonstrate that consideration is given to external examiners' reports as they consistently refer to these and the School's associated actions. [Annual Course Monitoring Reports 2019-21 University of Kent 029] The team concluded that external examiners' reports are used effectively and that the School appropriately considers and responds to comments on academic standards. The team also concluded that external examiners view assessment and classification processes as reliable, fair and transparent.

Conclusions

123   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 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.

124   The team concludes that the School has a secure approach to the use of external expertise in setting and maintaining academic standards, because this is governed by its awarding bodies' regulations which set out requirements for the appointment and use of external examiners and of external expertise in programme approval. The School gives due consideration to its external examiners' reports because it systematically responds to them based on the review of student work and course documentation. External examiners explicitly confirm that assessment is reliable because it is designed to enable students to demonstrate their achievement of the intended learning outcomes and fair because marks are awarded in accordance with the marking criteria.

125   The School has a clear and comprehensive approach to assessment and classification because its programmes are governed by regulations which set out how marking and moderation should operate, how credit is awarded, how classification decisions are reached and how credit may be condoned or compensated.

126   Nearly all aspects of the School's assessment processes are reliable, fair, and transparent. This is because unit documentation outlines the tasks students must complete in detail and assessments effectively test unit and programme learning outcomes. Panel marking and double-blind marking are transparent except in relation to the recording of how some agreements are reached between first and second markers. However, the team found that a moderation process which applies to two 15-credit units has not been carried out appropriately which leads to a potential risk to the fairness and reliability of any classification decisions where students are narrowly eligible or ineligible for a particular classification under the regulations. In mitigation, the team noted that there was no evidence of students receiving a failing mark without their work being double-marked, and that the impact of this weakness was small, being limited by the number of students whom it potentially affected and by the fact that the units concerned were discontinuing. While, in general, staff understand the classification and assessment regulations, both teaching staff and senior staff did not recognise that an aspect of moderation practices on two units were in breach of the University's regulations, and had not identified the risks to fairness or the potential risk to the award of classifications associated with non-compliant moderation practices.

127   In determining whether the Core practice is met, the team carefully considered the concept of proportionality using their professional judgement. The team noted that the School's use of external expertise is conducted reliably and that all other assessment and classification processes were considered to be reliable, fair and transparent. While the weakness identified has led to a risk of unfairness to students, the mitigations to this risk identified by the team led it to conclude that its effect on the judgement was outweighed by the strengths which were apparent in this Core practice. The team therefore concluded that the Core practice is met.

128   The moderation of marking on UAL courses from 2022 onwards will take place according to UAL regulations which, if securely implemented, would act to remove the weakness identified above. The team noted that it had no evidence of the reliability of the implementation of these processes because they had not yet been implemented, and also noted the failure by senior staff of the School to have identified a breach of UoK regulations in respect of moderation processes. This led the team to conclude that there were weaknesses in the strength of the evidence supporting its judgement. Hence the team has a moderate degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

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

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

The evidence the team considered

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

a   UoK Validation Agreement [002]
b   UAL Validation Agreement [003]
c   UAL Validation Reports [005]
d   UAL Course Regulations [007]
e   UoK Regulations and Guidance [008]
f   Programme specifications [009]
g   External examiner reports and responses [010]
h   Course handbooks [011]
i   UAL Classification/Marking Scale [012]
j   UoK Level Descriptors and Marking Scale [013]
k   NSS data [014]
l   UAL External Examiner Procedures Regulations and Guidance [019]
m   Academic Board minutes [020]
n   Quality Assurance Handbook [022]
o   Kent PPR [027]
p   UoK ACMR [029]
q   Student Voice Committee minutes [038]
r   LCDS Learning and Teaching minutes [056]
s   Examples of student feedback [058]
t   Unit guides [069]
u   Agendas of recent CPD weeks [072]
v   Moderation reports and examples [077]
w   LCDS Board of Examiners Meeting minutes 2020-21 [078]
x   Director of Research and Postgraduate Programmes job description [083]
y   MA Screendance external examiner appointment [126]
z   Further moderation reports and examples [127]
aa   UAL Collaborative Procedures [143]
bb   Approval of external examiners [146]
cc   BA external examiner actions [164]
dd   Meeting with students [M2]
ee   Meeting with teaching staff and professional support staff [M3]
ff   Clarification meeting [M4]

gg   The School's website www.lcds.ac.uk

hh   CDD's guidance on contextual admissions http://www.cdd.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/DRAFT-Framework-for-Contextual-Admissions.pdf

ii   A social media site for the School https://www.instagram.com/theplacelondon

132   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:

133   The team did not consider the School's arrangements with recruitment agents because the School does not make use of any recruitment agents.

134   The team did not consider arrangements relating to admission to UoK courses, since admission to these courses has ceased.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

135   The team considered samples of records of admissions decisions as described in 'How the assessment was conducted'.

136   The team did not conduct any sampling of approved course documentation as the volume of documentation was such that all evidence could be assessed.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

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

138   To identify institutional policy relating to the recruitment, selection and admission of students, the assessment team scrutinised the School's agreements with its awarding bodies, [000A University of Arts London Degree Awarding Body Responsibilities checklist; 003 Validation and Collaboration Agreement] the School's quality assurance handbook, [022] the School's admissions policy, [023] UAL's admissions policy, [051] the School's website [Policies and Procedures | London Contemporary Dance School (www.lcds.ac.uk)] and the School's admissions appeals and complaints policy. [024] To test whether staff involved in admissions understand their role and are appropriately skilled and trained, the team also scrutinised staff training records [072 agendas of recent CPD events; 110 Agenda Staff Training Admissions] and spoke to staff involved in admissions. [M3]

139   To assess whether the School has credible and robust arrangements for ensuring that its admissions systems are reliable, fair and inclusive, the team scrutinised the School's quality assurance handbook, [022 Quality Assurance Handbook] the School's admissions policy, [023 Admissions Policy] the School website, [www.lcds.ac.uk] programme specifications for UAL BA and MA programmes, [009] a sample of admissions records and records of admissions decisions, [172] the CDD's guidance on contextual admissions, [http://www.cdd.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/DRAFT-Framework-for-Contextual-Admissions.pdf] and arrangements to accommodate specific learner differences in the admissions process. [048 Reasonable adjustment template and guidance; 125 Evidence of consideration of accessibility at Admissions Workshops; 154 Reasonable Adjustments during the application process] The team also met staff involved in admissions. [M3]

140   To test whether admissions requirements for courses sampled reflect the School's policy and the regulations of UAL, the team scrutinised programme specifications for the BA Contemporary Dance and MA programmes [009] and checked these against the School's admissions policy [023] and UAL regulations. [051 UAL Admissions Policy] The team also checked to ensure that arrangements for recognition of prior learning were being followed. [109 Example RPEL approved form]

141   To test whether the information given to applicants is transparent, inclusive and fit-for-purpose the team scrutinised the School's website, [https://www.lcds.ac.uk/] the School's prospectus, [052] and social media sites. [https://www.instagram.com/theplacelondon, The Place - YouTube] The team also spoke to professional support staff [M3] and to students. [M2]

142   To assess whether reliable, fair and inclusive admissions decisions were made for the applicants sampled, the team scrutinised 104 admissions records from applications to the UAL-validated BA programme in 2020-21. The team scrutinised the admissions database [172 BA Admissions Spreadsheet] used by the School to record applicant details and admission decisions and read the notes made by admissions panels for candidates attending audition and interview. The team sought clarification from staff on some admissions records. [M4, 165 Notes on Admissions Samples]

143   To assess students' views about the admissions process the team spoke to nine BA and MA students [M2] and scrutinised the student submission. [000S]

What the evidence shows

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

145   From September 2021 the School has admitted students to the UAL-validated BA Contemporary Dance, MA Expanded Dance and MA Screendance programmes. The School is responsible for all activities associated with the recruitment and admissions of students to UAL-validated programmes, including setting admissions criteria, making offers, and enrolment and induction of new students. [000A University of Arts Degree Awarding Body Responsibilities checklist, 003 Validation and Collaboration Agreement]

146   The School has developed its own institutional policy to support the operation of a reliable, fair, and inclusive admissions system including admissions policy, [023] quality assurance handbook [022] and an admissions appeals and complaints policy. [024] The admissions policy sets out the School's general approach to recruitment and admissions, and procedural detail on the arrangements for application, selection, admission, and induction of students. The admissions policy alongside the quality assurance handbook is credible and reliable because it fully documents all aspects of the admissions system and incorporates requirements of the awarding body's regulations, [051 UAL Admissions Policy] for example in relation to minimum academic entry requirements. The admissions policy [023] is inclusive because it expresses a commitment to equality and diversity and to selecting, training and supporting students regardless of ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, or religion, and because it allows for reasonable adjustments in the selection process for applicants with physical, sensory or mental impairments; it is fair because it sets out a clear process for selection of students according to transparent criteria, involving video tasks, online submission of portfolios, and live admissions workshops or interview.

147   Selection of students is undertaken by admissions and interview panels, the composition of which is specified in the quality assurance handbook [022] and include two or more staff representing different interests and areas of the curriculum. Administrative support for the admissions process is provided by Admissions and Registry staff. [022] Staff

involved in admissions undertake training to ensure understanding of admissions criteria, requirements for reporting comments and decisions, reasonable adjustments, and unconscious bias. [110 Agenda Staff Training Admissions; 072 agendas of recent CPD events] These arrangements for training and staff development are effective because attendance records show that each CPD event in 2021 was well attended by 24 staff on average including a mix of senior, teaching and professional support staff [072] and because staff who met the team could describe how outcomes from training had been used in their daily work on admissions. Examples included developing a shared and consistent understanding of how student movement in the workshop setting can be evaluated to judge an applicant's suitability for the course and how admissions panels can avoid bias in decision making. [M3] The team concluded that staff involved in admissions understand their role and are appropriately skilled and trained.

148   The Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy [024] provides detail on the procedures for making an appeal against an admissions decision or a complaint about a specific concern, the form to complete and the timescales involved. The policy is accessible from the School's website. [Policies and Procedures | London Contemporary Dance School (lcds.ac.uk)] At the time of assessment the School had not received any admissions complaints or appeals, and hence the team could not investigate the effectiveness of the policy or evaluate outcomes from specific complaints or appeals.

149   Applications to the BA Contemporary Dance and MA programmes are made directly to the School by an online application completed on the LCDS website. [https://www.lcds.ac.uk/] Applications consist of submission of a completed application form and personal statement, and (for applications to the BA programme) a recorded video of practical tasks or (for MA programmes) submission of a portfolio. [023] Guidance is provided to applicants on the website [023. Top Tips for Filming Your Video - Undergraduate Course | London Contemporary Dance School (lcds.ac.uk)] and selection criteria are included in programme specifications [009] and on the website. Video submissions are reviewed by at least two members of staff and the decision and comments are recorded and evidenced on the School's admissions database. [172 BA Admissions Spreadsheet] Successful candidates are invited to an online admissions workshop and interview following which a decision on whether to offer a place is made after discussion between panel members. [022 Quality Assurance Handbook, Admissions Records – Notes from Admissions Workshop] Admissions staff confirmed that at point of entry a candidate's academic qualifications are checked in line with requirements set out in the quality assurance handbook [022] to ensure they meet the minimum entry requirements specified. [M3] Overseas qualifications are checked for equivalence using guidance from the UK Council for International Student Affairs. [M3] These arrangements led the team to conclude that the admissions system is reliable and fair because the policy and procedure for the selection and recruitment of students outlined in its admissions policy [023] is effectively implemented in practice and applies to all candidates seeking entry to the School.

150   The admissions system is inclusive because, in line with the School's admissions policy, admission panels may consider contextual information such as social background as detailed in the framework for contextual decisions used by member schools of CDD [www.cdd.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/DRAFT-Framework-for-Contextual-Admissions.pdf] and may make adjustments to accommodate individual needs. Disabled students are encouraged to disclose their support requirements and the admissions policy confirms that the School will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments at any stage of the admissions process. [023 Admissions Policy] Five examples of how applicants' needs were supported were provided to the team that confirm adjustments being made to the audition workshop and interview process to meet individual needs such as physical characteristics or neurodiversity. [125 Evidence of consideration of accessibility at Admissions Workshops, 154 Reasonable Adjustments during the application process] On the basis of this evidence,

the team concluded that the School operates an inclusive admissions system that takes into account the needs of individuals.

151   Programme specifications [009] for UAL-validated programmes include clear information on admission requirements because they include selection criteria and academic entry requirements. The minimum academic entry requirements for the BA Contemporary Dance and MA programmes are consistent with those published in the School's admissions policy [023 Admissions Policy] and UAL's regulations. [051] The programme specifications also describe the non-academic selection criteria including the candidate's ability to engage in creative processes, their understanding of dance in its wider context, and their potential for development of technical capabilities and performance skills. [009] Programme specifications state that applicants who do not meet course entry requirements can be considered if a candidate can present evidence of accredited prior learning. In line with the School's admissions policy and UAL regulations [023 section 4.12; 051 UAL admissions policy] applications for accredited prior learning are assessed by the awarding body and an example provided to the team confirmed that this happens in practice. [109 Example RPEL approved form] The team concluded that the admissions requirements set out in approved course documentation are consistent with the School's admissions policy and the regulations of the awarding body.

152   Information is available to applicants through the School's website [https://www.lcds.ac.uk/] and prospectus, [052] including content on programmes of study, the application process, financial information and relevant policies and procedures, including the admissions appeals and complaints policy. [Policies and Procedures | London Contemporary Dance School (lcds.ac.uk)] The School's dedicated YouTube channel [The Place – YouTube – https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFnPErueKJVoIYwZYFfDyUQ] includes several dozen short and accessible videos including interviews with current students, information about the School and introductions to the BA and MA programmes. Website content is accessible to the visually impaired and others who use adaptive technology because it conforms with current accessibility guidelines. [Accessibility; website | https://www.lcds.ac.uk/accessibility-website] Sub-titles are also available for YouTube videos. The team concluded, therefore, that information is designed to be accessible to a wide range of potential applicants. Based on scrutiny of the website, YouTube channel and the HE course guide, the team also concluded that information for applicants is transparent and fit for purpose because all content is publicly available and clearly signposted on the School's website.

153   The team found that the School maintains full and carefully documented records of applicant details, contextual information, and admissions decisions in the School's admissions database. [172 BA Admissions Spreadsheet] Consideration of candidates is reliable and fair because admissions panel members write notes about each candidate's performance at workshop and interview and these are consistent with, and structured against, each selection criteria specified in the programme specification. Consideration of candidates is inclusive because selection criteria do not introduce barriers to applicants with specific learning differences and this inclusivity is reflected in admission panel notes. [Admissions Sample BA] Of the sample of 104 applicant admissions records scrutinised by the team seven applicants had been rejected following consideration of the application form, personal statement and video submission and the remaining 97 applicants had attended an online workshop and interview. In 95 cases the evaluation of performance at workshop and interview recorded in the notes is consistent with the decision to offer a place or not. In nine cases the team considered that the admission panel's notes expressed only positive opinions about a candidate but that these candidates did not receive an offer and were instead placed on a reserve list. To ascertain whether these candidates had been treated fairly the team requested further clarification from the School. In response, senior staff highlighted that the selection process is competitive with many applications being received

for each place available. [M4] They confirmed that final decisions on whether or not to offer a place are made after discussion, including consideration of contextual information relating to the School's access and participation targets. [M4, 165 Notes on Admissions Samples] These decisions are recorded in the admissions database. The team concluded that admissions decisions made in respect of these cases were reliable and that admissions records demonstrate that the School's policies are implemented in practice.

154   The student submission [000S] expressed the view that the large majority of students considered the admissions process to be fair and easy to understand and that international students particularly appreciated the accessibility of the workshop and interview as these were held online. Both BA and MA students who met the team expressed positive views about the information available online to help inform their decision to apply to the School. [M2] They also expressed positive views about the workshop and interview describing it as an easy positive process that was not overwhelming. Consistent with the student submission, an international student praised the accessibility of the online workshop and interview process. The team concluded that students tend to agree that the admissions system is reliable, fair and inclusive.

Conclusions

155   As described above, the assessment team considered all of the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the School 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.

156   The team concludes that the College has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system. This is because the School has a credible and robust approach through its policies and plans and follows UAL's academic regulations for the recruitment and admission of students that demonstrate reliability, fairness and inclusivity. The information given to applicants is transparent and fit for purpose, and students tend to agree that the information is helpful and that the process of audition at workshop and interview is supportive and implemented fairly. Entry requirements are aligned with the overall regulations and policies of the School and the University, and admissions decisions reflect the published entry requirements agreed with the University and published in programme specifications and on the School website. Admissions records demonstrate that the School's policies are implemented in practice and that admissions decisions are reliable, fair and inclusive. Staff involved in admissions understand their role and are appropriately skilled and trained. Based on the evidence available to it, the team concludes that the Core practice is met.

157   The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all of the relevant evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix for this Core practice. Therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

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

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

The evidence the team considered

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

a   Student submission [000S]
b   Programme specifications [009]
c   External examiner reports and Responses [010]
d   Course handbooks [011]
e   Terms of reference [016]
f   Academic Board minutes [020]
g   LCDS student handbooks [021]
h   Quality Assurance Handbook [022]
i   LCDS Learning and Teaching minutes [056]
j   Unit guides [069]
k   Organogram for Course Delivery and Management [099]
l   Meeting with senior staff [M1]
m   Meeting with students [M2]
n   Meeting with teaching staff and professional support staff [M3]
o   Observations of teaching sessions.

161 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:

- The assessment team did not consider third party endorsements because the School does not make use of any third parties such as professional, statutory or regulatory bodies in respect of this Core practice.

- The assessment team did not meet any representative of employers of graduates because there are no employers who have particularly close association to the delivery of the programmes.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

162 The team observed a sample of teaching and learning sessions as described in 'How the assessment was conducted'.

163   The team did not conduct any sampling of external examiners' reports or approved course documentation as the volume of documentation was such that all evidence could be assessed.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

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

165   To identify the School's approach to designing and delivering high-quality courses, the team scrutinised the Quality Handbook, [022] CDD Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, [129] the School's organogram, [099] terms of reference of its committees, [016] minutes of the Learning and Teaching Committee [056] and Academic Board. [020] The team also met senior staff [M1] and teaching staff. [M3]

166   To test that all elements of the courses sampled are high quality (curriculum design, content and organisation, learning, teaching and assessment approaches) and that the teaching, learning and assessment design will enable students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes, the team consulted programme specifications, [009] course handbooks [011] and LCDS student handbooks, [021] and assessment tasks presented in unit guides. [069]

167   To identify views about the quality of the courses sampled, the team consulted external examiner reports and responses [010] for the view of external examiners and used evidence from the student submission [000S] and a meeting with students [M2] to ascertain the views of students.

168   To assess how staff ensure courses are high quality, the team met with senior staff [M1] and with teaching and professional support staff. [M3]

169   To assess the quality of course delivery, the team observed teaching sessions for BA Contemporary Dance Level 6 T2 Ballet, Level 5 S2 Music and Choreography and Level 4 BA1 Project. The team also observed an online teaching session for MA Screendance Level 7 Making Screendance.

What the evidence shows

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

171   The School's approach to the delivery of its courses is detailed in its Quality Handbook [022] and in the CDD Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy [129] which is currently in use by the School prior to adoption of its own Learning and Teaching Strategy which is currently in draft form. [129] The Quality Handbook sets out the approach to the design and approval of courses, and the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy sets out the key features of its approach to course delivery. The programme specifications for its courses [009] underpin the School's approach because they specify curricular content as well as showing the mechanisms through which the courses are designed, managed, delivered and assessed.

172   The quality assurance handbook [022] sets out the policies and procedures which

form the basis for the design and approval of courses. These are sufficient to support high-quality provision because the arrangements for course development include collaboration with staff, students and industry professionals within the process of course design, consideration of sector-recognised frameworks as expressed in the UK Quality Code and in Subject Benchmark Statements, and formal consultation with student representatives in the Learning and Teaching Committee. Consistent with the School's deliberative structure as set out in the organogram [099] and the terms of reference of its committees, [016] the handbook also confirms that the Learning and Teaching Committee is expected to comment on proposed course documentation prior to recommending the course for approval by the Academic Board, thereby ensuring academic oversight of proposed courses or changes to existing courses.

173   The Organogram for course delivery and management [099] shows the Academic Board as a decision-making committee which scrutinises and approves plans for the development and maintenance of high-quality provision, as recommended to it by the Learning and Teaching Committee. Consistent with this structure, minutes of the Learning and Teaching Committee [056] show discussions related to business from the degree-awarding bodies (such as course approvals), to policy review and approvals (such as the Research and Ethics Policy) and to business from the School's Curriculum Development Group which is responsible for curriculum content and design for new and existing courses. Discussion which takes place in the Learning and Teaching Committee shows that the School has in place processes for continued appraisal of the quality of its courses. Minutes of Academic Board [020] show evidence of it undertaking robust scrutiny of the quality of the School's provision. For instance, minutes of the meeting in November 2020 evidence detailed consideration and critical challenge by the Board of documentation for the proposed undergraduate programme subsequently validated by UAL. This led to identified action in the form of a requirement for the Curriculum Development Group to address feedback from UAL and the Board, and to respond with a further iteration of the programme specification and handbook. The team formed the view that these arrangements support the design of high-quality courses and that the deliberative structure is effective in supporting high-quality course development.

174   The School's approach to the delivery of its courses is governed by the CDD Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS).[129] The strategy is credible because it sets out key strategic aims for its courses in terms of supporting a diverse body of students, the employability of graduates, the formation of learning communities and the use of digital technologies. While it also sets out key targets for the attainment of these aims, it is not robust because these targets are not measurable or time-bound. The School's own draft Learning and Teaching Strategy 2022-25 [129] is intended to replace the CDD strategy in due course, but at present it is under consultation and also lacks detailed measurable goals. However, the draft strategy in its current form is credible because it directly links safe and effective learning environments to the specific aim of encouraging students 'to engage as responsible, reflective creative artists on the course and further into the sector' and because it makes clear commitments to student-centred learning environments and to effective academic support.

175   In the meeting with senior staff, [M1] the team asked how they oversee the implementation of the CDD LTAS, [129] and how they are using the measures and targets outlined in the strategy. Senior staff responded that the School is focusing in particular on digital learning and widening student diversity, and that its progress is reported in annual monitoring reports, but that it regards the targets outlined in the LTAS as now being outdated. In considering how staff engage with actions identified in learning and teaching strategies, senior staff affirmed that teaching staff have been closely involved in the development of the strategy in 2019, but that its implementation had been superseded by the need to make changes to its approach to learning and teaching at the start of the

pandemic in 2020.

176   In discussion with teaching staff, [M3] the team asked how staff ensure that course delivery is of high quality. Although staff did not allude explicitly to the learning and teaching strategy, their responses drew attention to engagement with the sector and the adoption of good practice from elsewhere in the sector, and to steps taken to prepare students for employment after graduation. To exemplify this, staff affirmed that many of them actively engage in the external dance sector and bring best practices from industry into daily practices. For instance, insights from another provider around how decolonisation was embedded in its curriculum through the exploration of urban dance styles which had been successful at engaging black, Asian and minority ethnic students had been used to inform the development of the new UAL courses. The experience of artistic research and development activities at Sadler's Wells Theatre as experienced by a tutor had informed the School's approach to creating an effecting and supportive learning environment for students. Staff also reported that they engage in regular informal discussions on how to enhance learning and teaching across courses, and routinely critically reflect on their own practices, but did not offer examples of this.

177   In considering the views of students about the quality of courses, the team noted that the student submission [000S] shows that students have a high regard for the quality of courses, commenting '... staff, who work extremely hard to deliver high-quality learning experiences which shows students perceive courses to be high-quality because of the commitment of staff in providing high-quality provision'. In the meeting with students, [M2] they drew attention in positive terms to the structure, content and expectations of the BA Contemporary Dance course newly validated through UAL, to the responsiveness of staff to issues raised by students, to the high level of professional experience of tutors, to the high quality of academic and pastoral support and to the high quality of studio space.

178   Observations of the selected sample of teaching sessions show that tutors deliver high-quality learning and teaching in practice because in each of the four teaching sessions, the team observed that tutors provided students with clear objectives for the sessions, that sessions are well planned and organised, and that content is suitably pitched to allow all students to progress and achieve. Students are engaged and focused because of well-planned sessions: in the Level 6 Ballet Class, the team noted that the tutor provided clear instructions to students as to the aspects of technique which are essential to demonstrate, and how that demonstration can be achieved; in the MA Screendance session, the tutor used the technology for virtual engagement skilfully, and engaged students in group discussion and self-reflection tasks.

179   The team formed the view that the School provides a high quality of course delivery, as evidenced by students' views and by observation of teaching sessions. While the LTAS lacks robustness in its specification of measures to meet its aims and teaching staff did not show clear awareness of the strategy, the team accepted that these weaknesses were to an extent offset by the need to rapidly adapt delivery strategies during the pandemic, and that the evidence of staff engagement with good practice in the sector demonstrated a commitment to the continuing development of high-quality learning and teaching.

180   In examining the structure and content of the School courses as presented in programme specifications, [009] course handbooks [011] and LCDS student handbooks, [021] the team concludes that regulatory processes which underpin delivery and assessment of the courses facilitates the design and delivery of high-quality courses. This is because units are well conceived, drawing on current thinking and practices related to dance as a discipline and performance art, and because forms of assessment provide opportunities for students to meet their potential. The content of the BA Contemporary Dance is of high quality because the structure and content of units reflect the types of knowledge,

understanding and skills which are commensurate with contemporary dance practice in the context of higher education, with assessments allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills through assessment of a unit's subject matter. The MA Screendance is of high quality because it develops students' critical thinking skills and application of theory to practice, assessed in a variety of assessment types which allow for differentiated student outcomes. For example, the team observed a teaching session for the MA Screendance in which the tutor presented students with questions which required responses reflecting on their personal understanding against theoretical principles of how dance is created for the screen.

181   Elements of curriculum design, unit content, learning, teaching and assessment expectations, along with intended learning outcomes are presented in unit guides, [069] providing information on the structure and content of the unit and how the unit is assessed. This information supports students in their understanding of what is required of them in meeting the learning outcomes of the unit and expectations of assessment. Unit guides [069] also provide points of reference for students to return to as they progress and reflect on their learning because they detail what is expected of students in meeting learning outcomes for the unit, the content to be covered in the unit along with reference lists to support learning and engagement, and how knowledge, understanding and skills developed in the study of a unit is to be assessed. The team concluded that course documentation indicates that teaching, learning and assessment design enable students to demonstrate intended learning outcomes for the units.

182   External examiners' reports for the last three years [010] confirm that examiners have a high regard for the quality of the School's provision. For instance, comments from examiners drew attention to the 'inventive, creative, reflective projects' undertaken by students, to the 'excellent use of the academic referencing system', to the 'rigorous and motivated investment in dance science for the dancers to prevent injury and learn the scientific aspects of their body in training', to the opportunities for students to work within a range of professional settings, and to the 'range of challenges and opportunities to those [students] specialising in the expanding field of experimentation in dance on screens'. [010] One examiner commented that the School is a 'centre of excellence'. The team formed the view that from their engagement with the programme design, delivery and assessment of programmes, external examiners have positive views about the quality of the School's courses.

Conclusions

183   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.

184   The School has credible and robust arrangements for ensuring delivery of high-quality courses: the Academic Board undertakes robust scrutiny of the quality of the School's provision and the Learning and Teaching Committee carries out continued appraisal of the quality of its courses. The School's draft learning and teaching strategy is not yet fully developed but forms a credible approach to course delivery. Course documentation shows that units are well conceived, drawing on current thinking and practices related to dance as a discipline and performance art, and enabling students to demonstrate intended learning outcomes. Observations of a sample of teaching sessions show that tutors deliver high-quality learning and teaching with clear objectives, well-planned sessions and sound use of

technology. Students and external examiners support the view that the quality of course delivery is high. Teaching staff were able to offer examples of active engagement in the external dance sector and of best practices from industry being brought into daily practices.

185   Therefore, the assessment team concludes, based on the evidence described above, that the School designs and delivers high-quality courses, and this Core practice is met.

186   The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all of the relevant evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix for this Core practice. Therefore, the team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

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

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

The evidence the team considered

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

a   Student submission [000S]
b   UAL Partnership Approval [004]
c   UAL Validation Reports [005]
d   The Place Staff Structure [030]
e   HR Recruitment Flowchart [031]
f   Staff Induction Programme and Checklist [032]
g   Induction of guest staff review [033]
h   CPD Policy [034]
i   The Place Annual Accounts [035]
j   Director of Undergraduate Programmes and International Development Job Description [082]
k   Director of Research and Postgraduate Programmes Job Description [083]
l   Director of Registry and Student Well-Being Job Description [084]
m   Quality and Compliance Manager Job Description [085]
n   Head of Learning and Teaching Job Description [086]
o   Lecturer in Dance Job Description [087]
p   Guest Lecturer Job Description [088]
q   Example Recruitment Record Permanent Staff Member [089]
r   Example Recruitment Record Guest Lecturer [090]
s   Staff Spreadsheet Levels 5-7 [092]
t   CV-Director of Dance Studies [102]
u   CV-Director of Undergraduate Courses and International Development [103]
v   CV-Director of Research and Postgraduate Courses [104]
w   CV-Director of Registry and Student Wellbeing [105]
x   CV Quality And Compliance Manager [106]
y   CV-Head of Learning and Teaching [107]
z   Meeting with senior staff [M1]
aa   Meeting with students [M2]
bb   Observation of teaching sessions.

190   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:

- The assessment team did not consider third party endorsements because the School does not make use of any third parties such as professional, statutory or regulatory bodies in determining the sufficiency, qualifications or skills of staff.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

191   The team considered samples of job descriptions of staff and of records of recruitment of staff, and observed a sample of teaching and learning sessions, as described in 'How the assessment was conducted'.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

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

193   To identify the School's approach to staffing, the team considered the Overall Resourcing Strategy document [130] and the staff structure. [030]

194   To identify how the School recruits and appoints staff, the team examined the HR Recruitment Flowchart, [031] staff spreadsheet, [092] and a sample of job descriptions for managerial and teaching positions. [082-088] The team also scrutinised the HR Recruitment Flowchart, [031] an Example of Recruitment Record Permanent Staff Member [089] an Example of Recruitment Record Guest Lecturer [090] and met senior staff to discuss the approach. [M1]

195   To assess whether the staff are appropriately qualified and skilled to perform their roles effectively, the team sampled job descriptions [082-088] and CVs of senior staff roles: Director of Dance Studies; [102] Director of Undergraduate Courses and International Development; [103] Director of Research and Postgraduate Courses; [104] Director of Registry and Student Wellbeing; [105] Quality and Compliance Manager; [106] and Head of Learning and Teaching. [107]

196   To identify the awarding bodies' views about sufficiency, qualifications and skills of staff, the team consulted the UAL Partnership Approval [004] and UAL Validation Reports. [005] The team also met senior staff. [M1]

197   To assess whether the School has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that it has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality learning experience, the team referred to the Place Staff Induction Programme and Checklist, [032] Induction of Guest Faculty Review, [033] The Place and LCDS Staff Development Policies, [034] The Place Annual Report Draft, [035] Agendas of Recent CPD Weeks, [072] Pilot Peer Observation Scheme, [074] and Extracts of Reports from Research Group. [075] The team also met senior staff [M1] and teaching and professional support staff. [M2]

198   To identify students' views about sufficiency, qualifications and skills of staff, the team examined the student submission, [000S] and met students. [M2]

199   To test whether academic staff deliver a high-quality learning experience, the team observed teaching sessions for BA Contemporary Dance Level 6 T2 Ballet, Level 5 S2 Music and Choreography and Level 4 BA1 Project. The team also observed MA Screendance Level 7 Making Screendance.

What the evidence shows

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

201   The Overall Resourcing Strategy [130] sets out the School's approach to staff resources. The School engages a range of academic and professional support staff to deliver and manage its courses: in respect of teaching staff, its model rests on permanent staff supplemented by casual staff on short-term contracts in order to maintain flexibility. The School believes that its current cost base and staffing numbers are appropriate to the delivery of its current and planned provision.

202   The staff structure [030] provides organograms related to the School's Senior Leadership Team, Senior Management Team, Education Programmes, and Central Services as well as to the School's public engagement activities. The staff structure is fit for purpose in supporting a high-quality academic experience because it shows clear lines of responsibility to and oversight by senior staff in managing the School's educational activities. For instance, there are clear reporting lines from teaching staff to the Directors of Undergraduate and International Development (for undergraduate courses) and of Research and Postgraduate (for postgraduate courses), and from these roles directly to the Chief Executive and the Board of Governors.

203   Expectations of teaching and professional support staff are identified in the job descriptions provided by the School. [082-088] These are clearly expressed and align with the School's staffing structures because job descriptions state the purpose of a position, lines of reporting, accountabilities, committee attendance and a description of a candidate's profile. The Lecturer in Dance Job Description (permanent position) [087] is in the form of a comprehensive booklet, providing information on the overview of the position, key academic and general responsibilities, and a person specification. The Guest Lecturer job description [088] gives information on the role, responsibilities and includes a person specification. The team concludes that job descriptions are appropriate to the role and sufficiently detailed to support credible and robust arrangements for the recruitment of staff.

204   To illustrate selection and recruitment procedures in practice the School provided documentation [089] showing the process for the recruitment of a lecturer in dance in 2021. This shows that the recruitment process was transparent because candidates were shortlisted, and notes taken of the shortlisting exercise to evidence the decisions made. The shortlisting process was robust because a range of views from different application assessors drawn from the School staff was considered ahead of inviting to interview those candidates who best matched the essential and desirable skills of the position. The application assessors from the School recorded their evaluations of the suitability of candidates against criteria as specified in job descriptions. This example also showed that the recruitment process was credible because a transcript of the interview questions was made recording responses to questions so that the responses could be referred to in deliberations by the School interview team post the interview taking place and because external references were sought to confirm the suitability of the appointment. The team concludes that the School has transparent, robust and credible arrangements for the recruitment and appointment of appropriately qualified and skilled staff.

205   To assess the thoroughness of recruitment processes from an HR perspective, the team scrutinised the HR Recruitment Flowchart. [031] This flowchart outlines various checks

and interventions post the interview/recruitment stage and prior to employment, including checks on safeguarding, on entitlement to work in the UK and in initial training. The flowchart provides evidence that the School has credible and robust mechanisms in place because it identifies the various stages from interview completion to start of employment which need to be satisfied.

206	The Example of Recruitment Record for a Guest Lecturer [090] shows evidence of the use of the flowchart [031] in practice, through a tick list of checks conducted ahead of employment. This shows the School's systematic approach in recruitment processes because it ensures that potential staff have satisfied the required checks and induction processes required of all staff. The team noted that the flowchart does not show that checks on prior qualifications are required, and senior staff affirmed [M1] that the qualifications of appointees are not always checked because the School places importance on professional expertise as well as on formal qualifications. The team considered CVs of senior staff [102-107] and cross-referenced them against job descriptions. [082-088] This exercise showed that all senior staff who were considered have skills and experience which match the relevant job descriptions and which are likely to enable them to fulfil their roles effectively.

207	The UAL Partnership Approval [004] and UAL Validation Reports [005] show that UAL is satisfied that the School engages staff with appropriate qualifications and skills, and that there is a sufficient number of staff to deliver courses. In discussion [M1] the UAL representative affirmed that, as part of the UAL validation process, the School was required to submit CVs of all staff for UAL to assess: this assessment gave confidence to UAL that the School staff are appropriately qualified and skilled; that teaching staff can deliver learning and teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels of study; and that there is a sufficient number of teaching and professional support staff employed. In addition, the UAL representative confirmed that UAL continues to receive and check CVs of new staff appointments at the School. This assurance from UAL and the oversight which the awarding body exercises of new appointments corroborates the School's view that its staff are appropriately qualified and skilled, and that there is sufficient staff to deliver and manage courses.

208	The staff spreadsheet [092] shows that a total of 21 staff with teaching responsibilities are employed by the School. While these staff are employed with a range of full-time and part-time contracts, they comprise a total of 15.8 full-time equivalent posts. The team's view is that this is a sufficient number of staff to support the School's total of 250 students. The spreadsheet shows that staff are appropriately qualified and skilled to carry out roles and responsibilities because of the 21 staff listed on the spreadsheet, eight have qualifications above the level they teach and 10 have qualifications at the level they teach. Three members of staff have qualifications lower than the level they teach: while the anonymised nature of this evidence prevented the team from establishing whether this was compensated by professional expertise, the team formed the view that this was commensurate with the importance placed by the School on professional expertise as well as on qualifications. The spreadsheet also shows that 27% of its academic staff are Fellows of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA), with another 27% either working towards fellowship or enrolled for study on an accredited qualification for teaching; this is consistent with the aim, expressed in the draft Learning and Teaching Strategy, [129] to have 50% of academic staff with FHEA status by 2023.

209	The student submission [000S] shows that students believe that staff at the School are highly qualified and experienced, and that staff work very hard to deliver high-quality provision, as evidenced by their comments that the School has 'very strong staff, who work extremely hard to deliver high-quality learning experiences. Both the administration team as well as the teaching staff are very involved in the university and show a lot of care and commitment to the students' progression and growth'. The submission draws attention also

to the high quality of the one-to-one support provided by the physical support team. Students whom the team met [M2] agreed that tutors provided good academic support, reflecting the views presented in the student submission [000S] that tutors are highly trained in dance and in their subject specialisms such as Making Screendance.

210   On the basis of the evidence seen, the team formed the view that the School recruits and appoints staff with sufficient qualifications and skills to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

211   The Staff Induction Programme and Checklist [032] for permanent staff shows that the School supports and inducts its staff appropriately because it has in place processes to ensure new staff are informed and made aware of regulatory information and policies and processes which all staff are required to follow. The induction schedule affirms that new staff are set probationary targets with progress checked after six months. While the team did not review target-setting documentation for any new members of staff, the processes outlined in the Staff Induction Programme and Checklist [032] ensure that newly appointed staff develop appropriate knowledge and understanding to deliver high-quality learning experiences. This is because the induction programme covers regulatory information, policies and processes such as the School's governance structures, Prevent and GDPR training, observations of experienced academic staff delivering classes and regular meetings with Line Managers and a Senior Management Team staff member.

212   The description of the induction programme for guest teachers [033] shows evidence of careful attention to the support needs of newly appointed guest teachers, although without the identification of specific actions for future induction activities.

213   The Staff Development Policies [034] include three documents: LCDS Staff Development Policy, The Place Staff Development Policy and The Place Appraisal Scheme. The LCDS Staff Development Policy outlines the School's approach to supporting the professional development of staff as a means towards staff continually developing and enhancing their teaching and professional skills. The Place Staff Development Policy shows how funding for professional development is managed, with The Place Appraisal Scheme outlining the purpose of appraisals and the processes through which staff appraisals are conducted. In reviewing the expectations and processes of staff appraisals, the team note that information regarding the purpose of staff appraisals, how the appraisals will be conducted, and how the outcomes of appraisals will be actioned is clear and informative because it provides staff with the information they need in order to engage with the staff appraisal effectively. Collectively, this suite of three documents shows that the School has in place evidenced-based planning for ensuring staff can deliver high-quality courses because staff are afforded opportunities, such as, but not limited to, tuition fee support for study of higher degrees and funding for research activities and conference attendance in order to develop their professional knowledge, understanding and skills.

214   In discussion [M2] about the support provided to staff, teaching staff affirmed that the School provides support for applications for FHEA Fellowship and for studying towards teaching qualifications: staff noted that in addition to financial support, the School is prepared to alter teaching timetables to accommodate staff attendance at classes for a PG Certificate programme. As evidence of the support provided to staff, the team received the application for AdvanceHE Fellowship by a member of staff,[166] showing achievements against agreed targets being appraised on an annual basis. Teaching staff [M2] additionally described the arrangements for mentoring support, affirming that the course leader mentors newly appointed members of staff through class observation, formal meetings and ad hoc discussions.

215   The School arranges a 'Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Week' every term, intended to cover a range of topics to ensure staff continue to be able to deliver a high-quality course. The records of CPD weeks in 2020-21 [072] show that a total of 16 CPD sessions took place across the three weeks concerned, with a range of titles including assessment and feedback, safe dance practice, self-reflective practice, anti-racism, Competition and Markets Authority compliance and curriculum design. Omitting one event which was intended as a small group discussion, the average number of teaching staff attending was 15, comprising permanent and casual staff. Staff confirmed the effectiveness of CPD sessions by describing [M2] the arrangements to ensure their preparedness for delivery of new UAL programmes from 2021 onwards: these included CPD sessions on establishing a shared understanding of threshold standards, of quality assurance arrangements for ensuring these standards, and of developing understanding of students' expected levels of achievement as they progress through the programme.

216   At present the School does not have an established arrangement for peer observation of staff although a report by the Head of Learning and Teaching outlines plans for a pilot Peer Observation Scheme. [074] The report provides a rationale for the implementation for a Peer Observation Scheme and describes plans for the development of a scheme which will support the introduction of 'non-traditional' teaching practices. While it was too early to form a view of the likely effectiveness of this planned scheme, the School's plans to conduct staff peer reviews are credible because they are based on an analysis of the views and wishes of teaching staff, because they take account of the School's approach to curriculum design and because they set out planned common questions for discussion between a teacher and the observer. In considering the arrangements for funding professional development, for mentoring new staff, for CPD sessions, and the planned peer observation scheme, the team formed the view that the School has an effective approach to the professional support of its staff.

217   Extract of reports from the Research Group, [075] notes of which are reported to the Learning and Teaching Committee, and The Place Annual Report Draft [035] show the activities being undertaken by research-active staff. Staff engage in activities such as presenting at conferences, collaborating with other dance education and training institutions and publishing in peer-reviewed publications, all of which informs the learning and teaching practices of staff to underpin the maintenance of high-quality provision because staff can draw on engagement with external activities to enhance their teaching as a means of ensuring courses remain high quality and relevant. This is evidenced through the written descriptions of units which reflect current thinking and practices in relation to course and unit content as shown in course handbooks. [011] For example, the content of the MA Screendance includes consideration of different cultural perspectives on what dance is and of how dance is presented on screen. In observing the MA Screendance session, the team witnessed written course descriptions being exemplified in practice, with the tutor drawing on personal professional experience as a way of illustrating theoretical content as applied to the craft of film-making.

218   In observing teaching sessions for BA Contemporary Dance Level 6 Ballet, Level 5 Music and Choreography and Level 4 Project and MA Screendance Level 7 Making Screendance, the team noted that all four tutors were well prepared and were comfortable, knowledgeable and confident in their delivery. Where relevant theoretical and/or technical aspects of the subject area were referred to, these were competently presented and explained in relation to the application of theory to practice. The content and delivery of all four sessions was considered stimulating because it introduced students to new areas of knowledge and promoted new levels of understanding. All tutors check that learning is taking place by posing questions to students and encouraging self-check learning strategies. In the case of Making Screendance, the tutor made reference to 'real world' situations in contextualising theoretical perspectives and practices. Based on the observations of

sampled teaching sessions, the assessment team concludes that staff deliver a high-quality learning experience because they demonstrate skilled learning and teaching strategies to support student progress and achievement.

Conclusions

219   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.

220   The School has a clear strategy for staffing its courses, supporting a staffing structure which is sufficient to deliver high-quality learning experiences. Job descriptions are sufficient to support credible and robust arrangements for the recruitment of staff and there are transparent, robust and credible arrangements for the recruitment and appointment of appropriately qualified and skilled staff. There are a sufficient number of staff to support the School's students, and staff are appropriately qualified and skilled to carry out their roles and responsibilities.

221   The School has an effective approach to the professional support of its staff, and students expressed positive views of the academic support provided by staff to support their learning. Observations of sampled teaching sessions show that staff deliver a high-quality learning experience with skilled learning and teaching strategies to support student progress and achievement. The team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

222   The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all of the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. Therefore, the team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

223   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.

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

The evidence the team considered

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

a   Student submission [000S]
b   The Place Business Plan 2021-2023 [001]
c   UAL Partnership Approval [004]
d   Terms of reference [016]
e   LCDS Student handbooks [021]
f   CDD ACMR [028]
g   The Place Staff Structure [030]
h   The Place Annual Accounts [035]
i   Minutes of Board of Governor meeting 070721 Part1 [055]
j   Examples of student feedback [058]
k   LCDS Personal Tutor Roles and Guidelines [066]
l   Data on number of students accessing each support service [070]
m   Capital Project Kick Off Workshop minutes and Block Plans [081]
n   Director of Undergraduate Programmes and International Development Job Description [082]
o   Director of Research and Postgraduate Programmes Job Description [083]
p   Director of Registry and Student Well-Being Job Description [084]
q   Lecturer in Dance Job Description [087]
r   Guest Lecturer Job Description [088]
s   Director of Dance Studies Job Description [101]
t   Personal Tutor examples [121]
u   Draft Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-25 [128]
v   Learning and Teaching Strategy [129]
w   Overall Resourcing Strategy [130]
x   Library Resourcing and Strategic Planning [131]
y   CV Counsellor [134]
z   CV Learning Support Coordinator [135]
aa   CV Physical Support Team [136]
bb   CV Mental Health Advisors [137]

cc	Resourcing Requests [138]
dd	Examples of Recourse Provision Discussions [167]
ee	The Place Studios [168]
ff	Meeting with senior staff [M1]
gg	Meeting with students [M2]
hh	Meeting with teaching staff and professional support staff [M3]
ii	Clarification meeting [M4].

226   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:

- The assessment team did not consider third party endorsements because the School does not make use of any third parties such as professional, statutory or regulatory bodies in respect of this Core practice.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

227   The team considered a sample of job descriptions of staff as described in 'How the assessment was conducted' section above.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

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

229   To identify how the School's facilities, learning resources and student support services contribute to delivering a high-quality academic experience, the team scrutinised the Place Business Plan, [001] a Key Deliverables 2022-2023 matrix, [130] The Place Annual Report 2021 Draft, [035] and the Minutes of Board of Governor meeting held on 7 July 2021. [055] The team also reviewed terms of reference of committees, [016] specifically of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The team additionally scrutinised the CDD Learning and Teaching Strategy, [129] the School's draft Learning and Teaching Strategy 2022-25, [129] a draft Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-25, [128] and a Library Resourcing and Strategy Planning statement [131] and met senior staff [M1; M4] and teaching and professional support staff. [M3]

230   To assess whether the School has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that they have sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience, the team scrutinised the 2021 Place budget, [130] its five-year plan, [130 page 113] the minutes of a capital project workshop and supporting papers, [081] example resourcing requests, [138] course team meeting minutes, [167] annual monitoring reports 2018-2021 [028] and a benchmarking report for Contemporary Dance Schools in which the School participated. [130] The team also met with senior staff [M1] and with teaching and support staff. [M3]

231   To identify students' views about facilities, learning resources and support services the team scrutinised the student submission, [000S] and met students from the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. [M2]

232   To identify awarding bodies' views about facilities, learning resources and student support services the team scrutinised UAL approval documentation, [004] and the UoK periodic programme review report. [027]

233   To identify the School's facilities, learning resources and student support services the team scrutinised the job descriptions of the Director of Dance Studies, [101] the Director of Undergraduate and International Development, [082] the Director of Research and Postgraduate Programmes, [083] and the Director of Registry and Student Wellbeing [084], and the School's organisational chart. [030] The team also met teaching and professional support staff. [M3]

234   To determine whether staff roles are consistent with the delivery of a high quality learning experience, the team scrutinised job descriptions for Guest Lecturers [088] and a Lecturer in Dance, [087] the personal tutor role and guidelines [066], examples of Personal Tutor records, [121] and the job descriptions of a Digital Projects Manager and Mental Health Advisor. [138 Resourcing Requests] The team also met with teaching and professional support staff. [M3]

235   To test whether staff are appropriately qualified and skilled, and understand their roles and understand their roles and responsibilities the team scrutinised the CVs of the Learning Support Coordinator, [135] Mental Health Advisors, [137] Counsellor, [134] and the Physical Support Team. [136] And met with teaching and professional support staff. [M3]

236   To test that the facilities, resources or services under assessment deliver a high-quality academic experience, the team undertook a tour of the facilities [Observation – Facilities Tour] and scrutinised One Dance UK Dance Studio Specifications, [168] The Place Studios Brochure, [168] UAL and LCDS Partnership Approval, [004] data on number of students accessing each support service, [070] Examples of responses to student feedback, [058] and student handbooks 2021-22 .[021]

What the evidence shows

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

238   The overall Business Plan [001] provides a high-level strategy for the School's development of resources, facilities and student support services in support of its education provision as well as of its other activities. This Business Plan maps out a planned and coherent strategy for the development of learning resources, facilities and student support and demonstrably links these to a high-quality student experience. This is because the plan's strategic aims are relevant ('Create the conditions to leverage growth and ambition', 'Facilitate leading practice in dance learning and teaching') and are linked to defined strategic objectives which are directly relevant to students' academic experiences, such as developing a digital infrastructure, ensuring regular feedback to build leading service provision for dance, ensuring the capital estate is fit for purpose, and fostering student wellbeing and creative potential. [Business Plan 001] These objectives are in turn linked to a set of concrete deliverables, such as investing in streaming technologies in studios during 2022 or organising training to facilitate the redesign of teaching resources for blended delivery. Responsibility for these deliverables is assigned to senior managers or departments. [Key Deliverables 2022-2023 130] An annual report provides structured updates against the Business Plan's strategic aims as they detail the initiatives undertaken to support key deliverables and clearly state progress against each objective. [The Place Annual Report 2021 Draft 035]

239   The School delivers its strategic aims and objectives in relation to facilities and learning resources through governance structures and its executive management team. The Governing Body approves the Business Plan described above and monitors deliverables.

[Overall resourcing strategy 130; Minutes of Board of Governor meeting 070721 Part1 055] A Finance and General Purposes Committee reviews and approves strategic projects and resourcing commitments as well as monitoring the management of the estate. [Finance and General Purposes Terms of Reference 016] The School's strategic documents identify how it uses and develops its facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience. These documents include the current CDD Learning and Teaching Strategy [129] which links resources and services to a high-quality academic experience and describes how CDD member schools will take advantage of new digital technologies and links these to students' academic experience.

240   Some strategies relating to specific services are in draft or are in a developmental phase. For example, a draft Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-25 [128] maps the School's strategy for supporting student health and wellbeing. Although in draft, staff expressed familiarity with its content and informed the team that it will be taken to Academic Board for approval in Spring 2022. [M3;M4] The areas for action identified - such as personalising support to better meet individual needs, reducing stigma and aligning support for staff and student wellbeing - are credibly linked to the academic experience because they relate to a range of barriers students may face in accessing and benefiting from support, and show consideration of the student body's diverse needs. The draft strategy is realistic because its six objectives are matched to specific aims or actions that are likely to contribute to a high-quality academic experience.

241   A Library Resourcing and Strategy Planning statement [131] reviews current utilisation of library facilities and sets out intentions for increased investment. Although not yet fashioned into a plan for action, this document is credible because it makes demonstrable links between learning resources, investment and the academic experience by setting out a strategy that will see the library respond to changing student demands. The team concludes that strategies and plans for facilities, learning resources and student support services are credible, realistic and demonstrably linked to the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes for students. This is because although service-level strategies are not as credible given their draft status, organisation-level strategies articulate detailed strategic aims, objectives and deliverables which show an informed understanding of how facilities and student service investment can result in educational benefits to students and their discipline-specific needs.

242   The resource planning process is credible and robust because a detailed annual budget identifies resourcing needs relevant to the School's educational programmes, such as computer upgrades for the library and improvements to dance studios and lecture rooms. [2021 The Place Budget 130] The budget is aligned to the investment priorities outlined in the strategies described above and in the Five Year Plan. [130] This Plan represents robust medium to long-term resource planning because it matches strategic aims such as the growth in student numbers in the coming years with a realistic appraisal of resource implications in different scenarios and strategies for managing risks and variables. [Five Year Plan 130 p113] For example, the School expects to slightly reduce contact hours and will continue to make use of additional 'casual' teachers to maintain flexibility. [130 p114-5] The plan is credible because it recognises that the estate is at capacity with higher student numbers and high teaching levels, and positions growth as dependent on investment in this estate or alternative solutions. [Five Year Plan 130]

243   The minutes of a Capital Project workshop held in September 2021 [081] demonstrate credible and evidence-based resource and facilities plans because the discussion is based on a detailed mapping of existing space usage. Likewise, the CDD exit plan, contained in the Library Resourcing and Strategy Planning, [131] demonstrates that consideration has been given to the resource implications of the planned withdrawal of the School from CDD: for instance it identifies the need to create new accounts with the

providers of academic journal databases and the associated resource implications.

244   The School identifies operational resourcing needs to deliver a high-quality academic experience. For example, in 2021 the cross-organisational management meeting discussed a proposal to purchase new live-streaming equipment. [Resourcing Requests 138] The decision-making process was robust because the resulting discussion thoroughly explored the benefits and limitations of the proposal, the specifics of which were then further discussed and approved at an Executive Directors' meeting. As per the School's governance structures, this expenditure was subsequently authorised at the Finance and General Purposes Committee. [Resourcing Requests 138] The minutes of course team meetings also show that resource needs are identified at programme level. [Examples of Resource Provision Discussions 167] This demonstrates that the School's resource planning process is effective because resource needs identified by academic and support staff can be traced through to items in the capital expenditure budget and are suitably prioritised. [Overall resourcing strategy 130] Teaching and support staff met by the team gave examples of requesting resources and these being forthcoming through the means described above. [M3]

245   The School monitors its plans for resources and facilities and takes account of changing circumstances. For example, the effectiveness of student support services and physical/digital resources is regularly reviewed through annual monitoring reports. [028] These reports are robust and evidence-based because they contain detailed breakdowns of improvements made to services and actions taken. The School has also participated in external benchmarking to ensure it makes evidenced-based decisions. For example, in 2020-21 the School participated in a commissioned review which benchmarked its facilities and support services against three other European providers. [Benchmarking Contemporary Dance Schools Report 130; M1]

246   The team concludes that the School has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that it has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience. This is because it is supported by detailed budget planning that accounts for different scenarios and because budget planning is adapted to new resource requests identified by those delivering programmes.

247   The School's 11 dance studios are well equipped to support learning and teaching and map onto industry organisations' recommendations for such spaces. [One Dance UK Dance Studio Specifications 168] All studios have sprung floors, mirror walls, and AV systems and the studios observed by the team were as described in the School's public information. [Observation – Facilities Tour; The Place Studios 168] Ten of the studios contain fixed ballet bars and some house musical instruments to support live accompanament of classes. [Observation – Facilities Tour; The Place Studios 168] The team observed the use of live music in two classes. [Observation – Facilities Tour] Teaching observations confirmed that the studio facilities were appropriate because they supported the lesson objectives and teaching activities. [Observations - Teaching]

248   The library supports a high-quality academic experience because it contains a specialist collection of 9,000 items, including around 5,000 books and an extensive collection of DVD recordings, that support students to undertake independent research. [Observations – Facilities Tour; UAL and LCDS Partnership Approval 004] The team observed quiet study space and IT facilities (13 PCs and 4 Macs) appropriate to the current scale of the provision and in the context of the programme's performance focus. [Observations – Facilities Tour]

249   Technical facilities and support are of a high quality. For example, a range of specialist audiovisual and recording equipment is available to students with the support of a specialist member of support staff. [Observations – Facilities Tour] The costume department

incorporates an appropriate archive collection which students can make use of as well as the specialist advice of a costumier. [Observations – Facilities Tour]

250   Students have access to an excellent range of physical support services, with their needs triaged by the Head of Dance Science. Services include physiotherapy, access to an osteopath, and injury diagnosis and treatment. The team observed suitable body conditioning equipment and spaces. [Observations – Facilities Tour] Internal service usage data from 2020-21 shows that students make extensive use of physical support services, with 382 appointments booked. [Data on number of students accessing each support service 070] The School has responded to student feedback about its physical support services. For example, a request for more body conditioning support in later year groups led to a weekly class being scheduled for year 2 students. [Examples of student feedback 058]

251   Student handbooks provide comprehensive information about the facilities and support services on offer because they break down each service in detail and include the details necessary for students to access these, such as links to bookings pages or opening hours. [LCDS Student Handbooks 2021-22 021] Handbooks also make students aware of the reasonable adjustments process and how to arrange for an Individual Learning Agreement. [LCDS Student Handbooks 2021-22 021]

252   The awarding bodies agree that the School has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience. For example, UAL's partnership approval process evaluated the library resource available to students, and found that the combination of items held on-site and access to online materials was a suitable means of supporting the programmes proposed. [UAL and LCDS Partnership Approval 004 – page 4] The approval process also identified an appropriate range of audiovisual equipment available for students to book, technical and physical support, and opportunities to work with expert lighting designers. The most recent periodic review conducted by UoK commended the studio facilities available to students as well as the 'comprehensive guidance and support all students receive' in relation to library resources. [LCDS UoK Periodic Programme Review 027]

253   The team concludes that facilities and learning resources provide a high-quality academic experience because its observations of teaching and facilities showed an appropriate range of services and facilities specific to the needs of its dance programmes.

254   The student submission expresses the view that a comprehensive range of services and facilities are available and that these are delivered to a high standard. [000S] For example, it praises the ability to book high-quality studio spaces at no extra cost, the full range of physical support services, and the fit-for-purpose audiovisual equipment available to book, and makes an explicit connection between the availability of some of these services and their ability to transition easily from the programme into industry. Students met by the team confirmed this view that facilities, resources and support services effectively supported their learning. [M2]

255   Students reported being able to easily access information about the services available via the virtual learning environment (VLE) and newsletter. [M2] Students the team met gave examples of helpful physical support, volunteered that these services were used by lots of students, and praised the excellent dance studios, highlighting the importance of natural light and sprung floors. [M2] Students met by the team had made variable use of the library, but regarded it as broadly sufficient for their needs albeit not with the same level of journal access which one student had expected based on wider experience of university-level study. [M2] While students felt that online teaching tended to decrease their motivation to study, they recognised that the use of online classes and the VLE had 'made the best' of the situation. [M2] The team concludes that students tend to regard facilities, learning

resources and student support services as sufficient and appropriate, and facilitating a high-quality academic experience. This is because they report using a comprehensive suite of services specific to the needs of a programme featuring both written and practical work.

256   The student submission highlighted a perceived need for more student counselling staff. [000S] Some students met by the team also reported that mental health support was less readily available to students who did not have an already diagnosed condition and felt that the lack of an initial screening process contributed to this. [M2] Student voice committee minutes [038] show that students have raised issues of access to wellbeing and mental health services and also that staff have directed them to key sources of information and have highlighted the availability of in-house and national services.

257   The team considered the roles of senior staff and professional support staff in enabling the provision of learning resources and support services by examining the School's Organisational Chart [030] and job descriptions and lines of reporting for various roles. [101, 082- 084] The team found that these roles are consistent with the delivery of a high-quality learning experience because accountability for the management of specific services is clearly delineated throughout the organisation and job descriptions set requirements relevant to the roles concerned. Similarly, the role descriptions of those employed to deliver support services clearly define the scope of support roles, set relevant person requirements, and align the purpose of the role and projects to be undertaken with the aim of supporting students learning. [138 Resourcing Requests] For example, the mental health advisor role described the key responsibility of the role as developing a triage service designed to better support students wellbeing with the aim of enabling successful academic engagement. [138 Resourcing Requests] Similarly, the Digital Projects Manager specification included requirements for expertise in digital platforms and content production that are highly relevant in supporting the digital outputs students and staff produce on the programmes. [138 Resourcing Requests]

258   Job descriptions for lecturers [087] and guest lecturers [088] are also consistent with the delivery of a high-quality learning experience. This is because they set out the responsibility of academic staff to manage and develop learning resources including the School's VLE and require staff to engage in CPD to support this. The job descriptions also set an expectation of close working with support services, such as the Student Support Team and Librarian. [Guest Lecturer Job Description 088; Lecturer in Dance Job Description 087] Teaching staff met by the team gave examples of how the School has supported them to fulfil their responsibilities to develop virtual learning resources and examples of working with support services. [M3] Personal tutor roles are similarly designed to direct students to relevant support services. [Personal Tutor Role and Guidelines 066] Records of personal tutoring and student support show that this system is effective in practice because students experiencing difficulties are promptly referred for specialist support. [Personal Tutor Examples 121]

259   Staff who manage or deliver relevant facilities, learning resources and student support services are appropriately qualified and skilled. For example, the Learning Support Coordinator, who has been in this role since 2019 and is currently completing a Professional Diploma in Teaching Students with Specific Learning Differences, has teaching experience at the undergraduate level, having previously worked as a Teaching Fellow and completed a PhD in a Humanities subject. [CV Learning Support Coordinator 135] The appointee to the post of Mental Health Advisor is appropriately qualified, holding a postgraduate degree in Dance Movement Psychotherapy and having previously held the position of Lead Therapist at a psychotherapy provider for young people. [CV Mental Health Advisors 137] Student counsellors are appropriately qualified and have relevant experience to support students. For example, both contracted counsellors are registered with the UK Council for Psychotherapy, hold qualifications in counselling and have experience supporting individuals

in training or educational settings. [CV Counsellor 134]

260   Support staff met by the team understood their roles and responsibilities; costume department staff offered examples of how they facilitate student projects and teaching staff gave examples of how the physical support team enabled students to return to class after injury. [M3; Tour Observation] The Learning Support Coordinator gave examples of how they identified students' needs and put in place specific learning support adjustments where necessary. [M3] The team therefore concludes that staff are appropriately qualified and skilled, and understand their roles and responsibilities. This is because staff hold qualifications relevant to their support roles and are able to give examples of how they respond to student needs.

Conclusions

261   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.

262   The team concludes that strategies and plans for facilities, learning resources and student support services are credible, realistic and demonstrably linked to the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes for students. This is because organisation-level strategies articulate detailed strategic aims, objectives and deliverables which show an informed understanding of how facilities and student service investment can result in educational benefits to students and their discipline-specific needs. Its plans are credible, robust and realistic because they are supported by detailed budget planning that accounts for different scenarios.

263   The team concludes that the School has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience because its observations of teaching and facilities showed an appropriate range of services and facilities specific to the needs of its dance programmes. Student services are provided by qualified staff and students tend to regard the facilities, support services and learning resources offered as facilitating a high-quality academic experience. The team considers that the roles of those engaged in supporting students are consistent with the delivery of a high-quality learning experience because roles and management structures are clearly defined and align the purpose of roles, teams, and projects to be undertaken with the aim of supporting students' learning. The assessment team therefore confirms that the Core practice is met.

264   The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all of the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix for this Core practice. Therefore, 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

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

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

The evidence the team considered

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

a   Student submission Contemporary-Dance-Trust-Ltd-LCDS [000S]
b   University of Kent Degree Awarding body responsibilities checklist [000K]
c   University of the Arts London Degree awarding body responsibilities checklist [000A]
d   UoK Validation Agreement [002]
e   UAL Validation Agreement [003]
f   Module Evaluation Data/Report [015]
g   Terms of reference [016]
h   Academic Board minutes [020]
i   Quality Assurance Handbook [022]
j   CDD ACMR [028]
k   Student Rep JD [037]
l   Student Voice Committee minutes [038]
m   UAL Validations Logs [039]
n   LCDS Student Representative Data [054]
o   Minutes of Board of Governor meeting 070721 Part1 [055]
p   LCDS Learning and Teaching minutes [056]
q   BA2 Critical Studies Module Report [057]
r   Examples of student feedback [058]
s   Unit briefing sessions [153]
t   NSS results discussions [155]
u   Feedback from Student Observers of the Board of Governors [158]
v   Meeting with students [M2]
w   Meeting with teaching staff and professional support staff [M3] .

How any samples of evidence were constructed

268   No sampling was carried out for this Core practice as the volume of documentation was such that all evidence provided could be assessed.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

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

270   To identify how the School actively engages students in the quality of their educational experience the team scrutinised the agreements with the two universities and checklist of respective responsibilities, [000A UAL Responsibilities checklist; 002 UoK validation agreement; 003 UAL Validation Agreement; 000K UoK Responsibilities checklist] the terms of reference of committees, [016] and the School's quality assurance handbook. [022 Quality Assurance Handbook]

271   To assess whether the School has credible, robust and evidence-based arrangements for engaging students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience, the team scrutinised the School's quality assurance handbook, [022] the student representative role description, [037] the list of current student representatives, [054] and the terms of reference of the student voice committee. [016 Terms of reference of Key Committees] The team also checked Board of Governors minutes [055] for evidence of student engagement. To assess the effectiveness of these arrangements, the team also scrutinised minutes of six meetings of the student voice committee 2019-2021, [038] examples of actions arising from student engagement, [058 Examples of Student Feedback; 153 Unit Briefing Sessions] collated module evaluation results 2020-21, [015] a module leader's report on module evaluation results, [057 BA2 Critical Studies Module Report] and a course director's report synthesising module evaluation results across the programme. [015 Example of Module Evaluation Report to Learning and Teaching Committee] The team also checked annual programme monitoring reports and minutes from the Learning and Teaching Committee and Academic Board to confirm that outcomes from student engagement, including the NSS, were appropriately reported and monitored. [020 LCDS Academic Board minutes, 056 LCDS Learning and Teaching Minutes, 155 NSS results discussions - extracts from senior management meeting, 028 Annual Programme Monitoring Reports – Conservatoire for Dance and Drama 2018/19, 2019-20, 2021] The team also discussed arrangements with teaching staff [M3] and with students. [M2]

272   To illustrate the impact of the School's approach the team scrutinised examples of the School changing or improving provision as a result of student engagement. [039 Validation logs, 058 Examples of Student Feedback]

273   To identify students' views about student engagement in the quality of their educational experience the team scrutinised the student submission. [000S] The team also met students [M2] and considered a report from a student member of the Board of Governors. [158 Feedback from Student Observers of the Board of Governors]

What the evidence shows

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

275   The provider's responsibilities for engaging students in the quality of their educational experience are set out in its agreements with UoK [002] and UAL [003] and the lists of responsibilities of each partner in these arrangements. [000A, 000K] Arrangements for actively engaging students in the quality of their educational experience are formalised in

the provider's quality assurance handbook [022] and include a student representation system, the student voice committee, student membership of Academic Board and of the Learning and Teaching Committee, and student attendance at the Board of Governors. [016 Terms of reference of Key Committees] The team concluded that the School's policies enable the engagement of students collectively and individually in the quality of their education experience.

276   In considering the effectiveness of arrangements for supporting student representatives elected by the student body, the team noted that in 2021-22 there are 35 student representatives including 23 undergraduates and 12 postgraduate MA students with all courses represented. [054 LCDS Student Representative Data] A role description and training are provided for new student representatives including expectations in respect of attendance at meetings, communication with fellow students, and time commitment to the role. [037 role description] The team concluded that these arrangements are sufficient to provide reliable support for student representatives.

277   Three student representatives attend meetings of the Board of Governors as observers, and its minutes [055] show that they participate in discussions. The terms of reference [016] for Academic Board and the Learning and Teaching Committee stipulate that there should be at least two student representative members. Meeting minutes from three Academic Board meetings (2020-21) [020] and three meetings of the Learning and Teaching Committee (2021) [056] confirm attendance by student members with, in some instances, multiple (9) student representatives present. Effectiveness of student contribution to these meetings cannot be determined from the minutes, which do not name contributors, but students whom the team met expressed the view that the opportunity to engage in discussions is valued. [M2] The School also engages all students through internal surveys including end-of-module/unit questionnaires and the quality assurance handbook [022] confirms that the School takes part in the National Student Survey (NSS).

278   Student representatives attend termly student voice committee meetings, which are chaired in rotation by the students and are attended by staff including the Directors of programmes, and the Director of Registry and Student Wellbeing. [016 Terms of reference] The committee is intended to provide opportunity for students to raise matters or concerns about their educational experience and for staff to consult with students about proposed changes to modules or programmes. [016] Meeting minutes are produced, including an action list which is evidently followed up on at the next meeting. [038 Student Voice Committee Minutes 2019-2021] Minutes of six meetings held between 2019 and 2021 confirm that the committee is well attended by students and staff (for example 20 students and 6 staff at the October meeting) and is operating in accordance with its terms of reference [038 Student Voice Committee Minutes 2019-2021] because there are standing agenda items for student matters and actions arising from the previous meeting are reported and minuted. The approach to student engagement encapsulated in the student representation system and student voice committee is effective and robust because the School could evidence several examples of changes being made in response to student feedback; for example, adopting MA Screendance students' proposals for holding sessions around consensual filming, and linking filming into the ethics approval procedures. [058 Examples of Student Feedback]

279   The School's approach to engaging students in the quality of their education is credible because outcomes from student engagement are considered within course teams and through the committee structure. For example, feedback responses from end-of-module/unit student evaluation questionnaires are collated and sent to the module or unit leader for consideration and response [022 quality handbook, 015 Collated Module Evaluation results 2020-21] under four subheadings designed to promote reflection on strengths and identify improvements. [Example: 057 BA2 Critical Studies Module Report]

The Course Director assimilates individual unit and module responses into a full report highlighting any enhancements or changes for consideration by the Learning and Teaching Committee. [015 Example of Module Evaluation Report to Learning and Teaching Committee] Minutes from this committee demonstrate consideration of module evaluation reports and other outcomes from student engagement such as the NSS and actions arising such as steps to improve students' understanding of assessment criteria. [056 LCDS Learning and Teaching Minutes, 155 NSS results discussions] The minutes acknowledge that not all students complete module evaluation surveys (44% response rate averaged across 2020-21 units) and, as an action arising, time is now scheduled in taught classes for students to complete the online evaluation form; staff affirmed that the new arrangements will be monitored during 2021-22. [M3] Academic Board and senior leadership meeting minutes confirm consideration of NSS results and reports from the student voice committee [020 LCDS Academic Board minutes, 155 NSS results discussions - extracts from senior management meetings] including reflections on a dip in overall student satisfaction in NSS (from 91.65% (three-year average 2018-20) to 65.63% in 2021) attributed to the consequences of the alternative teaching arrangements introduced during the pandemic. Outcomes from student engagement also feed into annual programme monitoring reports produced for the CDD. [028 Annual Programme Monitoring Reports – Conservatoire for Dance and Drama 2018/19, 2019-20, 2021] The team concluded that the School has a credible approach to engaging students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience and of considering the feedback received.

280   The arrangements for considering and responding to student feedback through the committee system are effective because there are examples of change resulting from different examples of student engagement. The School offered examples [058 Examples of Student Feedback] of action taken arising from student feedback on module and course delivery: scheduled time has been introduced at the start of each module in 2021-22 to explain the approach to and the requirements for the assessment of the module because module evaluations had suggested some lack of understanding by students of these arrangements; [153 Unit Briefing Sessions] in November 2021 lectures on the Level 5 Critical Studies module were changed to be in-person rather than recorded; and students' requests in 2020-21 for more time for critical studies discussions and debates led to the development of optional critical studies enrichment activities. In addition, further examples show that change and improvement may arise from different areas of student engagement including student voice committee, course design process, admissions and induction survey, module feedback, student complaint, NSS, and year group meetings. [058 Examples of Student Feedback] For instance, during 2020-21 student representatives were consulted on the new programme designs for validation by UAL and their detailed feedback was incorporated into the validation documents along with comments on how their feedback was considered and acted upon. [039 validation log]

281   The student submission expresses positive views about opportunities for student engagement, identifying opportunities for acting as student representatives and the wide range of digital platforms available for students to engage in, individually and as a collective group. [SS] Students who met the assessment team reported that the School engages them in the quality of their educational experience. [M2] For example, two student observers of the Board of Governors confirmed they were encouraged to actively participate in discussion and that representing students at this level had been a valued opportunity, [M2] and the written views of one such observer [158 Feedback from Student Observers of the Board of Governors] supported this, commenting, for instance, that observing meetings of the Board had 'helped me situate my role as one of the student representatives as a clearer part of a chain, rather than just for my own cohort'. The team concluded that student representatives consider that they are engaged in the quality of the educational experience offered by the School.

Conclusions

282   As described above, the assessment team considered all of the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the School 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.

283   The College actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience through a variety of mechanisms. This is because the representation of students on School committees and the student voice committee ensure that students can raise matters or concerns about their educational experience and enable staff to consult with students about proposed changes to modules or programme, and because there are effective arrangements for gathering and responding to students' views about module and course delivery. These arrangements are credible and robust because meetings are consistently well attended and the impact of this student engagement is evidenced through various examples of change arising.

284   Arrangements for consideration of internal surveys and the NSS are well documented in reports and the minutes of School committees and evidence of outcomes confirm the credibility and effectiveness of the approach taken. Students who met the assessment team reported that the School engages them in the quality of their educational experience and expressed satisfaction with their involvement in School committees such as the Board of Governors. The team concluded that the School has credible arrangements for engaging students in the quality of their educational experience based on effective operation of a student representation system and on the consideration of outcomes from student engagement within course teams and through the committee structure. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

285   The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all of the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. Therefore, the team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

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

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

The evidence the team considered

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

a   Student submission Contemporary-Dance-Trust-Ltd-LCDS [000S]
b   UoK Validation Agreement [002]
c   UAL Validation Agreement [003]
d   LCDS Student handbooks [021]
e   CDD Student Complaints Procedure [041]
f   LCDS Student Complaints Procedure Draft [042]
g   UAL Academic Appeals [043]
h   UoK Academic Appeals [044]
i   Screenshot of Complaints and Appeals on VLE [062]
j   Student Case Records Spreadsheet [063]
k   Annual Report on Student Cases [064]
l   Agendas of recent CPD weeks [072]
m   S01130 Student Complaint [111]
n   S01055 Student Complaint [112]
o   S03003 Student Complaint [113]
p   S03039 Student Complaint [114]
q   S03259 Student Complaint [115]
r   S03236 Student Complaint [116]
s   S03248 Student Complaint [117]
t   S03072-S03066-S03112 Student Complaint [118]
u   S01900 Academic appeal [119]
v   Meeting with senior staff [M1]
w   Meeting with students [M2].

How any samples of evidence were constructed

289 No sampling was carried out for this Core practice as the volume of documentation was such that all evidence provided could be assessed.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

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

291   To identify the School's processes for handling complaints and appeals and to confirm these processes are fair and transparent, the team scrutinised the agreements with UoK [002] and UAL, [003] regulations concerned with academic appeals, [043 UAL Appeals Procedure including student guide to appeals; 044 UoK Academic Appeals Annex] the CDD Student Complaints Policy and Procedure, [041] an example of a completion of procedures letter, [061] an annual report on the number and type of complaints and minutes from the Board of Governors [064] and the CDD policy on sexual misconduct, harassment and related behaviours. [http://www.cdd.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Policy-on-Sexual-Misconduct-Harassment-Related-Behaviours.pdf, accessed 12 January 2022]

292   To assess whether the School has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for developing and operating fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints, the team scrutinised the School's draft Student Complaints Procedure, [042] the current CDD Student Complaints Policy and Procedure [041] and the School's response to a request for additional documentation regarding respective responsibilities with awarding bodies for handling complaints. [173] The team also discussed the status of the draft complaints procedure with senior staff. [M1]

293   To assess whether information for potential and actual complainants and appellants is clear and accessible, the team scrutinised student handbooks for BA and MA programmes, [021] the CDD Student Guide to Complaints [041] and checked the content of the VLE. [062 Screenshot of Complaints and Appeals on VLE]

294   To identify levels of complaints and appeals received by the School and to test that complaints and appeals sampled were dealt with in a fair, transparent and timely manner, the team scrutinised the case records of all eight complaints [111-118] and the single appeal [119] received by the School in the last three years, the School's records of complaints and appeals [063] and the agendas of recent CPD events. [072]

295   To identify students' views about the clarity and accessibility of the School's complaints and appeals procedures the team met students [M2] and scrutinised the student submission. [000S]

What the evidence shows

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

297   The School's responsibilities for handling complaints and appeals are set out in its agreements with its awarding bodies. [002 UoK Validation Agreement, 003 UAL Validation Agreement] Responsibility for operating a complaints policy and procedure and for handling student complaints rests with the School. [002, 003] Academic appeals are handled by the two universities in line with their regulations. [043 UAL Appeals Procedure including student guide to appeals; 044 University of Kent Academic Appeals Annex] In discharging its responsibilities for handling complaints, the School currently operates under the CDD Student Complaints Policy and Procedure. [041] Where the complaint relates to

discrimination, harassment or bullying, additional guidance is available to students and staff in the Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Related Behaviours. [http://www.cdd.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Policy-on-Sexual-Misconduct-Harassment-Related-Behaviours.pdf, accessed 12 January 2022]

298   The CDD Student Complaints Policy and Procedure [041] is fair and transparent because it applies to all students on the School's programmes, is clearly structured in stages with associated timescales, has defined staff responsibilities, relates clearly to the procedures of the awarding bodies and to the services of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), and is subject to oversight by the Board of Governors and the CDD Senate. Three stages in the complaints procedure are identified and each stage is described in detail, including the role and responsibilities of relevant staff and timescales involved. Complaints may be submitted by an individual student or by a group of students through completing the required form available in the student guide to complaints. [041] The team concluded that the School's procedures for handling complaints and appeals are definitive, fair and transparent, and enable the delivery of timely outcomes.

299   For complaints concerned with the provision of a programme of study validated by UoK or a related academic service, the complainant may pursue the complaint with the university [041 Par 77] once stage 3 of the School's internal procedures has been completed. Similarly, UAL reserves the right to make final judgement on student complaints specifically related to the delivery of courses leading to an award of UAL prior to issue of a completion of procedures letter. [003] Once the School's procedures have been concluded a completion of procedures letter is issued which includes advice on submitting a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. [061 CoP Letter Student Complaint Example]

300   The Board of Governors and CDD Senate receive and consider an annual report on the number and type of complaints, identifying any trends and drawing out conclusions and recommendations. [064] The team noted that, for instance, in 2021 this led to an initiative ensuring that all staff in Schools within CDD undergo specific training which took place for School staff in September 2021 as shown in the agendas of the School's CPD activities. [072 M1, M3]

301   While the School currently handles complaints under the procedures set out in the CDD Student Complaints Policy and Procedure, [041] in preparation for changes in its relationship to the CDD the School has drafted its own Student Complaints Policy and Procedures [042] for planned implementation from July 2022. The draft policy and procedure are similar to the existing CDD policy and procedure and has three stages. The School affirmed in a response to a request for additional documentation [173] that it has sought feedback and advice from University link liaison staff and that it expects to approve the new policy, which will apply to all students, at its Academic Board meeting in February 2022. This was further confirmed in discussion with senior staff. [M3] The team concluded that the School's plans for developing its own procedures for handling complaints are credible and robust because they are based on effective existing policy and they have been developed with advice from awarding bodies.

302   Information for potential and actual complainants and appellants is accessible because it is found in student guides, [041 Student Guide to Complaints] handbooks [021 student handbooks] and on the School's VLE. [062 Screenshot of complaints and appeals information on VLE] The Student Guide to Complaints [041] provides clearly structured information relating to the three stages of the complaint's procedure, timescales involved and the rights of the student at each stage. The student handbooks for the BA and MA programmes awarded by UAL [021] and those awarded by UoK [021] all clearly outline the scope of the complaints procedures and the stages involved, explains the role of the OIA, and provides a link to the Student Guide to Complaints. [041] In line with the agreements

with awarding bodies, it is made clear that academic appeals must be submitted directly to the relevant university for consideration [021 student handbooks] and a link to the regulations of each university is included in the School's VLE. [062 Screenshot of complaints and appeals information on VLE] The team concluded that information about procedures for handling complaints and appeals is clear and accessible to students.

303   The team examined the records of the eight complaints and the single appeal received in the last three years. [063, 111-119] All complaints were dealt with in a transparent manner because there was clear and comprehensive record-keeping of email communications and meeting discussions during each stage of the process. Complaints were dealt with fairly because the School closely followed its published procedures and treated each complainant in a respectful and reasonable manner. Complaints were dealt with in a timely manner because the School kept to the timescales published in the Student Complaints Policy and Procedure with any minor delays attributable to closure periods, delayed student responses or student non-attendance at meetings. The appeal was dealt with fairly because it was referred to the university in accordance with the regulations. The records reviewed by the team demonstrated that all complaints and appeals sampled were dealt with in a fair, transparent and timely manner.

304   The team noted that four complaints were related to allegations of sexual misconduct. [063 Student Case Records] Arising from this, the School's complaints panel had recommended that steps be taken to ensure all staff are aware of the policy on sexual misconduct, harassment and related behaviours to ensure appropriate recognition and support for students in any future cases. Evidence was seen confirming that 27 staff had attended a CPD event on this policy in September 2021 [072 Agendas of recent CPD events] and awareness of this policy and its importance was affirmed by senior staff, teaching staff and professional support staff. [M1, M3] The team concluded that the School had identified an issue arising from complaints received and had taken effective action in response to it.

305   The team met nine students including seven taking an undergraduate BA programme and two postgraduate MA students. Each year of the undergraduate programme was represented. Students confirmed that they consider that complaints and appeals procedures are accessible because they know where to go for information and they would feel able to seek help from staff if needed. [M2] The student submission confirmed that information on how to bring forward a complaint or appeal was available on the VLE. [000S] All students who spoke to the team expressed confidence that the School would take a complaint or appeal seriously and that they would be treated fairly. [M2] One student cited an example of a group complaint that students had felt had been well handled by the School. [M2] The team concluded that students believe the School has clear and accessible complaints and appeals procedures and that students do not raise any serious concerns about the fairness, transparency or accessibility of the procedures, or their application.

Conclusions

306   As described above, the assessment team considered all of the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the School 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.

307   The team concludes that the School has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to students. The School follows

CDD's policy and procedures to handle complaints raised by students, and these are robust and credible. The School's plans for developing its own procedures for handling complaints are credible and robust because they are based on effective existing policy. Examples of complaints reviewed by the team were dealt with according to these procedures. Complaints by students are handled by the School fairly and investigated in a timely manner. Responses are detailed and clearly communicated. Appeals are handled by the validating University and the single appeal that had been received had been referred to the university according to its regulations. The team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

308   The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all of the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. Therefore, 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

309 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.

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

The evidence the team considered

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

a   UoK Validation Agreement [002]
b   UAL Partnership Approval [004]
c   UAL Course Regulations [007]
d   UoK Regulations and Guidance [008]
e   Programme specifications [009]
f   CDD ACMR [028]
g   UoK ACMR [029]
h   UAL Validations logs [039]
i   CDD Student Complaints Procedure [041]
j   Learning and Teaching Strategy [129]
k   Module Evaluation Response Professional Placement [140]
l   Professional Placements [141]
m   Evaluation Form Exchange and Placements [142]
n   UAL Collaborative Procedures [143]
o   CDD Senate Terms of Reference and Minutes [149]
p   Professional Placement Criteria Analysis [160]
q   Meeting with senior staff [M1]
r   Meeting with students [M2]
s   Meeting with teaching staff and professional support staff [M3] .

312 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:

• The assessment team did not consider third party endorsements because the School does not make use of any third parties such as professional, statutory or regulatory bodies in respect of this Core practice.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

313   The team did not conduct any sampling of external examiners' reports as the volume of documentation was such that all evidence could be assessed.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

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

315   To assess how the School ensures courses are high quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them, the team scrutinised UAL Collaborative Procedures, [143] UoK Regulations and Procedures, [008] UAL Course Regulations 2021-22, [007] the UoK Validation Agreement, [002] the UAL Validation Agreement, [003] the UAL Partnership Approval, [004] UAL validation logs, [039] and UoK Annual Course Monitoring Reports 2019-21. [029] The team also scrutinised programme specifications [009] an example of a placement agreement, [079] UoK regulations for placements, [https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/documents/copt2020-annexq-wbl-v2.pdf accessed 16 January 2022] a student guide to setting up and organising a Professional Placement, [141] a Professional Placement application form, [141] the Placement Log, [141] a revised student guide to set up and organise a Professional Placement, [161] and a Professional Placement Criteria Analysis. [160] To understand the relationship between the School and CDD the team considered the School's annual monitoring reports to CDD, [028] the CDD's Learning and Teaching Strategy [129] and its Complaints Procedure, [041] and minutes of the CDD Senate. [149] To test whether they understand and discharge effectively their responsibilities the team met senior staff and teaching staff involved in the organisation of placements. [M1;M3]

316   To assess students' views about quality of courses delivered in partnership, the team scrutinised a unit evaluation response relating to the Professional Placement [140] as well as a proposed evaluation form. [142] The team also met students, one of whom was currently on placement. [M2]

What the evidence shows

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

318   The School's two degree-awarding bodies have academic regulations and quality assurance policies which govern how they work with the School. [UAL Collaborative Procedures 143; University of Kent Regulations and Procedures 008; UAL Course Regulations 2021-22 007] The School's contribution to ensuring these partnerships deliver courses of a high quality is to implement these policies and regulations as per its memoranda of agreement and deliver the services and programmes as agreed. [002; 003] For example, UoK requires the School to participate in the annual monitoring of its programmes and annual monitoring reports show that it does so in a thorough and structured way because its annual reports [029] provide all the required data and documentation, comment insightfully on data trends and offer concrete examples of good practice. Similarly, the records of recent programme validations with UAL show that the School's staff engaged effectively with the review process to ensure the programmes

approved were of a high quality. This is because the course team systematically addressed the reviewers' recommendations and acted on suggestions such as revising reading lists to increase the diversity of perspectives students are exposed to. [Validation Logs 039]

319   Staff met by the team understand and discharge their responsibilities to their degree-awarding bodies in relation to quality. Teaching and support staff met by the team offered examples of processes where both the School and the awarding body were involved and accurately identified the differences in their responsibilities. [M3] Senior staff and teaching staff met by the team recognise that they are responsible for the delivery of programmes and the facilities, student support, and learning resources which lead to a high-quality academic experience. [M1;M3]

320   The team considered the views of external examiners about partnership arrangements with UoK by reviewing external examiners' reports. [010] These show that external examiners confirm that the School fulfils its responsibilities to UoK in terms of providing externals with all relevant information about assessment processes and by carrying out its examining boards according to UoK regulations. The team was unable to consider the views of external examiners in respect of professional placements because no external examiner commented on placement activity.

321   CDD's oversight of the School's provision, exercised by a line of reporting from the School's Academic Board to the CDD Senate, is described in Core practice S3. The CDD's oversight of the quality of the learning experience at the School takes place through consideration of the School's annual monitoring reports [028] and through the adoption by the School of the CDD's Learning and Teaching Strategy [129] and of its Complaints Procedure. [041] As detailed in Core practice S3, and because of the effects of the Covid pandemic, the CDD Senate did not consider the School's annual monitoring report in 2020-21, but the team considered that this did not impact on the School's ability to deliver a high-quality academic experience given its internal monitoring and planning mechanisms and the partnerships in place with its awarding bodies. The adoption by the School of the CDD's Learning and Teaching Strategy [129] and of its Complaints Procedure [041] is described in Core practices Q3 and Q6 respectively.

322   The UoK regulations governing placement units [https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/documents/copt2020-annexq-wbl-v2.pdf , accessed on 16 January 2022] require the School to contact the student regularly throughout the period of the placement, undertake a risk assessment and ensure that clear arrangements are in place for scenarios in which the placement is disrupted or the student fails the assessment.

323   A student guide to setting up and organising a professional placement [Professional Placements 141] outlines the requirements and approval process. This document creates an effective basis for a partnership with the placement provider because it clearly explains that students will retain access to the School's resources and their personal tutors during the placement, that they must organise meetings with designated members of staff during the placement, and that this member of staff will meet with the placement provider at the end of the placement. The guide also informs students how to raise any concerns during a placement and that any issues will be discussed at the Senior Management Meeting. [Professional Placements 141]

324   Students who had undertaken a placement [M2] confirmed that these arrangements worked well in practice, because a tutor from the School had remained in regular contact during the placement and had offered useful advice about the nature of the placement provider. Staff who had acted as tutors of placement students [M3] confirmed that they followed the guide by meeting the provider to discuss the student's intended role, by

checking on the completion of intended learning outcomes and by keeping in contact with the student during the placement. The team concluded that the School has credible arrangements for the support of students on a professional placement.

325   The School explained in response to an additional request for evidence that its Director of Undergraduate Studies had recently 'articulated and formalised criteria to assess the suitability of professional placements' and had incorporated these into a revised version of the student guide. [161] While not well embedded, these criteria are appropriate because they map to the university's requirements. They include whether the placement will enable the student to meet the module and course learning outcomes, whether there is a contract, whether the opportunity is paid, the reputation of the placement provider, and whether the provider can demonstrate the necessary policies and procedures, such as equal opportunities, health and safety and risk assessments. The Director of Undergraduate Studies only recently mapped these principles to the existing placement underway as well as another under review. [Professional Placement Criteria Analysis 160] While the team recognises that these criteria represent a formalisation of how placements were previously considered, the systematic recording of how proposals are considered against them is not well embedded.

326   Placement agreements [079] ensure that the student, placement provider and the School have a shared understanding of each other's responsibilities and the aims and principles of placement activity. The agreements are fit-for-purpose and align with the university's regulatory requirements because they make clear the placement provider's obligation to provide an induction and mentor and because they outline the student's obligations, the continuing support available, and the complaints process. The agreements also act as the basis for the maintenance of high quality within the partnership because the placement provider is invited to discuss the specific skills, knowledge and objectives the placement will focus on, because they are provided with links to definitive information about the unit, and because the placement agreement explicitly states that the School is solely responsible for assessment.

327   The team concludes that the School has sufficient arrangements to ensure that its placement provision is high quality because it has a placement approvals process that results in placement agreements and records that together meet the university's expectations of placement arrangements, and because there is evidence that staff, placement providers and students work together to ensure a high-quality experience. Staff of the School understand and effectively discharge their responsibilities in respect of ensuring high-quality placements.

328   Student survey data relating to placements undertaken in 2020-21 is limited as only one of four relevant students completed the survey and no qualitative feedback was received. [Module Evaluation Response Professional Placement 140] The School has designed a new survey form to collect the views of students undertaking placements, although this has not yet been used. The survey's design is fit-for-purpose and is likely to enable it to collect useful feedback, since it asks questions covering the full range of placement activity from arranging a placement through to assessment. [Evaluation Form Exchange and Placements 142]

329   The team met a single student currently on placement who gave examples of how they had been supported to agree to the arrangements after being offered an employment opportunity. The student confirmed that they had regular meetings with a designated member of staff, that they understood how they would be assessed, and highly recommended the placement unit to others. [M2] Due to the small number of placements, there is only limited evidence that students view the courses and learning opportunities delivered in partnership as well supported and of a high quality.

Conclusions

330   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.

331   The team concludes that the School has clear and comprehensive policies for the management of partnerships with other organisations to ensure that the academic experience is high quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them. It has detailed agreements with degree-awarding bodies and staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities arising from those agreements.

332   In respect of placement partnerships, there is a clear and effective process for the approval of placements and for the support of students while on placement which is aligned with the awarding bodies' regulations. The team concludes that the Core practice is met.

333   The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all of the relevant evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix for this Core practice. Therefore, the team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

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

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

The evidence the team considered

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

a   Student submission [000S]
b   External Examiner Reports and Responses [010]
c   Course handbooks [011]
d   LCDS Student handbooks [021]
e   Quality Assurance Handbook [022]
f   Student Achievement and Continuation Data [025]
g   CDD Support Through Studies Policy [047]
h   Reasonable Adjustment [048]
i   Disability Disclosure Consent Form [049]
j   Student Wellbeing Reports [065]
k   LCDS Personal Tutor Roles and Guidelines [066]
l   Staff CPD on Mental Health and Specific Learning Differences [068]
m   Unit Guides [069]
n   Data on number of students accessing each support service [070]
o   Career and Professional Development at Level 7 [071]
p   Agendas of recent CPD weeks [072]
q   Personal Tutor Examples [121]
r   All Staff Training 200421 List of Attendees [122]
s   List of Mental Health First Aiders [123]
t   Student Support and Progression Tracker [124]
u   Unit Briefing Sessions [153]
v   Meeting with students [M2]
w   Meeting with teaching staff and professional support staff [M3].

How any samples of evidence were constructed

337   The team considered samples of assessed student work as described in 'How the assessment was conducted' above.

Why and how the team considered this evidence

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

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

339   To identify the School's approach to student support, the team scrutinised the School's quality assurance handbook, [022] the CDD Support Through Studies Policy, [047] and the BA and MA course handbooks. [021 Student Handbooks] The team also reviewed data on students accessing each support service and a report monitoring support service provision presented to Academic Board. [070 Data on number of students accessing each support service; 025 Report for LCDS Academic Board - 24 Feb 2021]

340   To test how the School identifies and monitors the needs of individual students, the team scrutinised the quality assurance handbook, [022] guidance on the personal tutor system, [066] records of outcomes from the personal tutor system, [121 Personal Tutor Example] the School's student support and progression tracker, [124] Senior Management Team weekly meeting minutes, [065 Example of SMT notes highlighting Student Wellbeing discussions] minutes and reports presented at Academic Board. [070 Data on number of students accessing each support service; 025 Report for LCDS Academic Board - 24 Feb 2021; 124 Student Support and Progression Tracker - academic board minutes examples] The team also considered the views on student support expressed in external examiners' reports [010] and met students and teaching and professional support staff. [M2, M3]

341   To assess whether the School has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that all students are supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes the team scrutinised the quality assurance handbook, [022] an example of a 'reasonable adjustment' document, [048] the disability disclosure consent form, [049] course handbooks, [011] student handbooks, [021] unit guides, [069] unit briefing presentations, [153] information on careers and professional development for MA students, [071] and outcomes from the School's work on periodisation and wellbeing research. [065] The team also met students. [M2]

342   To test whether students tend to agree that they are adequately supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes the team scrutinised the student submission [000S] and met students. [M2]

343   In order to test whether students receive comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback on assessed work, the team considered samples of students' assessed work drawn from assessments carried out on undergraduate programmes at Level 4 and 6 and from a postgraduate programme at Level 7.

344   To test whether staff understand their responsibilities and are appropriately skilled and supported, the team met teaching and professional support staff. [M3] The team also scrutinised staff training and CPD records. [068 Staff CPD on Mental Health and Specific Learning Differences; 122 All Staff Meeting - Attendance List; 123 List of mental health first aiders; 072 agenda of recent CPD weeks at LCDS]

What the evidence shows

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

346   The quality assurance handbook [022] describes arrangements for student support including supporting successful and professional outcomes through a personal tutor system, student wellbeing services, learning and physical support, and professional studies support. The School also operates under the CDD Support Through Studies Policy [047] which sets out in more detail the arrangements designed to support the needs of students. Overall responsibility for continued monitoring of student support services including through review of data [070] on students accessing student support services and of student feedback through evaluation surveys rests with the Senior Management Team and Academic Board. [Data on the number of students accessing each support service; 025 Report for LCDS Academic Board - 24 Feb 2021] Student handbooks provide a comprehensive summary of the support arrangements available to students and how to access them. [021 Student Handbooks] The team concluded that the approach to supporting students is credible because arrangements are in place to support students with different needs and because these arrangements are clearly articulated in its policy.

347   The School operates a personal tutor system in which students regularly meet tutors on a one-to-one basis. [022 quality handbook] This approach to supporting students is credible because clear guidance is provided on how the personal tutor system should work and the respective responsibilities of the personal tutor and academic tutee. [066 LCDS Personal Tutor Roles and Guidelines] Meetings are expected to take place at least once a term to discuss and support a student's academic and personal development. [022] The personal tutor log confirms that tutors record the discussion and outcomes of these meetings. [121 Personal Tutor Examples] Tutors monitor tutees' progress through and across their programme of study, offering general feedback on overall performance and appropriate guidance and support. [066 LCDS Personal Tutor Roles and Guidelines] Teaching staff are expected to report attendance concerns to personal tutors and where necessary tutors report to senior staff if attendance concerns are an ongoing issue. [066] Personal tutors are expected to signpost services which may support students' development or needs and offer help in accessing these if needed. [066]

348   The team considered the effectiveness of the personal tutoring system in discussion with staff involved in it, from the examples of records of the system in operation [121 Personal Tutor Examples] and from the evidence in external examiners' reports. [010 LCDS External Examiner Reports and Responses 2018-2021] Personal tutors who met the team described examples of how they support students and highlighted the differential needs of individual students which may necessitate more frequent meetings and interventions. [M3] Evidence of meeting logs, communications with students and actions and outcomes in respect of attendance or other concerns indicate that personal tutors are effective in identifying and monitoring the needs of individual students. [121 Personal Tutor Examples] Examples seen by the team include tutor referrals for counselling and mental health support, and reaching out to tutees where their engagement with classes has been flagged as a concern. [121 Personal Tutor Examples]

349   Students who met the team affirmed that they value the helpful and accessible support available from tutors. [M2] External examiners' reports express positive views about the support provided to students through the tutor system with one noting that 'Tutorial support makes a significant difference to the student experience and their artistic development. There is a clear sense of developing individual identity that is guided by experienced staff and mentors'. [010 LCDS External Examiner Reports and Responses 2018-2021] The team concluded that the personal tutor system provides a credible and robust approach to student support including identification of individual student needs.

350   Student progress is reported on a student support and progression tracker sheet [124 Student Support and Progression Tracker] and is monitored on an individual student basis at weekly meetings of the undergraduate teaching team. [121 Personal Tutor

Examples – Minutes of LCDS Undergraduate Team Meetings] Minutes from four meetings held in 2021 were scrutinised and confirm careful consideration of concerns raised about individual students and reporting of actions that have arisen such as referral to a support service or discussion with the student.

351   Notes of the weekly meetings of the School's Senior Management Team demonstrate that student wellbeing matters are discussed regularly. [065 Example of SMT notes highlighting Student Wellbeing discussions] Minutes from four senior management meetings show consideration of general issues arising from student support cases and forward planning of student wellbeing and support needs. Actions with a lead person and timeframe are identified and examples include provision of laptops to specific students to support Covid lockdown learning and steps taken to improve student awareness of the support available such as recording of videos by the Learning Support Coordinator outlining to all students the learning support they can receive. [065 Example of SMT notes highlighting Student Wellbeing discussions]

352   Student attainment and continuation reports are considered by Academic Board [124 Student Support and Progression Tracker - academic board minutes examples] which also monitors access to student support services, including data on numbers of students accessing services and the range of issues and interventions undertaken. [070 Data on number of students accessing each support service; 025 Report for LCDS Academic Board - 24 Feb 2021] Examples from the minutes of four Academic Board meetings demonstrate analysis of data and identification of trends, including reasons for leaving the programme early. Outcomes from this analysis have included enhanced access to mental health support within the School. [124] The team concluded that the School has effective arrangements for monitoring the ongoing needs of individual students.

353   In addition to personal tutor and module-level academic support, support from student wellbeing services, learning and physical support, and professional studies support is available to students. Each student may access up to six sessions a year of general learner support from the learning support coordinator who can also provide support for those with specific learning differences; [022 Quality Assurance Handbook] these arrangements were confirmed in discussion with staff. [M3] Professional support staff involved in learner support who met the team described the range of student services available and explained how individual student support arrangements are communicated to teaching staff and personal tutors. [M3] Staff also explained new arrangements for identifying physical support requirements with all new students being screened during induction week and adjustments to teaching then planned according to needs identified. [M3]The team concluded that these approaches to supporting individual students are credible and robust because staff understand and use these arrangements to support successful outcomes. The team concluded that these approaches are accessible to students because they are signposted in course handbooks and on the School website and monitoring data confirms that they are used by many students on the BA and MA programmes.

354   Acknowledging that students who are practising dance have needs in relation to physical support, the School has taken steps to embed this within the curriculum of the UAL-validated BA programme with the introduction of a Level 4 unit, Introduction to Dance Higher Education. [011 Course Handbooks Unit description] This unit incorporates findings from the School's own periodisation research [065 Periodization and Wellbeing Research Summary] that seeks to ensure that students' physical and cognitive workload is optimally distributed over time, to minimise the risk of injury through overtraining or lack of fitness, as well as burnout and mental health pressures. [011 learning outcomes of introduction to dance higher education and Level 6 Performance Projects] This module also embeds the development of study skills, reflective practice and safe dance practice informed by dance science. [011 Course Handbooks Unit description] This example demonstrated to the team that the School

was developing an evidence-based approach to supporting students' physical and mental health, but the effectiveness of the approach could not yet be tested as the unit was being taught for the first time during 2021-22.

355   The School has developed a credible approach to supporting students with assessment because in designing the UAL-validated BA Contemporary Dance programme greater use of formative feedback to support students' learning has been embedded. For example, in the Level 4 unit Introduction to Dance, higher education students complete an electronic log of their embodied dance practice experiences of dance science principles for which formative feedback is provided to support students work on the related summative assignment. [069 Unit Guides] The team found that the approach was robust because each unit guide clearly documents the formative and summative assessment requirements [069 Unit Guides] and that time is scheduled at the beginning of each unit to explain the requirements of assessments and assessment criteria. [153 Unit Briefing Sessions]

356   Students are supported to achieve successful professional outcomes because opportunities for professional development and careers guidance are embedded in modules and units on the BA and MA programmes of each validating university. For example, careers guidance is included in the Level 5 Professional Studies module on the UoK BA programme. [021 LCDS Student Handbooks BA Contemporary Dance (Kent)] The Level 6 unit Transitioning into a Portfolio Career on the UAL-validated BA programme is designed to help students to transition into the arts and creative industries with a focus on networking, developing an online profile and preparing students for freelance working and self-employment. [011 Course Handbooks] Professional development skills are also embedded in the UAL-validated MA programmes because they include professional skills workshops with industry practitioners. [071 Careers and Professional Development at Level 7] Students on the PGDip/MA Contemporary Dance programme validated by the UoK have professional development sessions including sessions on finding an agent, CV writing, and working across commercial and theatrical business. [071 Careers and Professional Development at Level 7]

357   The sample of assignment briefs, assessed student work and feedback reviewed by the team indicates that assessment supports student learning at all levels. Feedback on student work is comprehensive and timely. It is timely because students confirm [M2] that, in line with the School's policy, [022] feedback is usually returned within 20 working days. In reviewing the sample of Level 4, 6 and 7 assessed student work there is evidence of comprehensive feedback that helps students to understand how they can improve or maintain performance levels. This is because written feedback typically identifies areas of strength, areas that require further improvement and suggestions on how to improve the work. Feedback comments are clear and should aid student understanding and implementation of feedback. In reviewing Level 6 work the team noted some inconsistency in how markers used the feedback report template. Some markers write text against the assessment criteria as well as a written report, while other markers identified the level achievement against each criterion followed by a report. However this inconsistency did not lead to differences in the overall quality of feedback provided. The team concluded that the School's approach to assessment design and feedback was credible and would support successful academic outcomes.

358   The student submission [000S] expresses the view that students receive detailed feedback on assessments within a reasonable amount of time and that teachers are willing to discuss and provide support for assessed work throughout the process. It also expresses the view that a range of sources of support is available to help students prepare for professional work, including access to alumni and guest artists who share their experience with the students. Students who met the team agreed that they are adequately supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes, [M2] affirming that tutors are

accessible and helpful, and that they felt well supported by highly trained staff who are experts in dance and in making Screendance. [M2]

359 In discussion with staff (both teaching staff and professional support staff) the team formed the view that staff understand their role in supporting student achievement. [M3] Teaching staff, for example, spoke about supporting personal tutees experiencing problems with course or other issues necessitating referral to a support service. Professional student support staff explained arrangements for learner support and physical support that were consistent with the School's arrangements and policy. Both teaching and professional support staff understood their responsibilities and highlighted how training and professional development had been deployed in their roles, describing for instance a session in 2021, attended by 17 staff, on responding to concerns about a student's mental health and recognising specific learner differences. [068 Staff CPD on Mental Health and Specific Learning Differences; 122 All Staff Meeting - Attendance List] A total of 32 staff are mental health first-aiders and/or mental health champions. [123 List of mental health first aiders] Other professional development sessions held in 2021 include an introduction to student support (27 attendees), assessment and feedback (28 attendees) and safe dance practice (23 attendees). [072 agenda of recent CPD weeks at LCDS] The team concluded that staff understand their responsibilities and are appropriately skilled and supported through the School's arrangements for staff training.

Conclusions

360 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.

361 The team concludes that the School supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes and that it has policies and processes in place that facilitate successful academic and professional outcomes. Its approaches to student support, including physical support, are well tailored to the needs of students. The personal tutor system in particular ensures that the individual needs of students can be identified and monitored. There is evidence of timely and comprehensive feedback that helps students to understand how they can improve or maintain performance levels. Academic and support staff understand their roles in supporting student achievement and the various approaches used for this. They are fully committed to delivering successful academic and professional outcomes for their students. Students reported that they were satisfied with the support mechanisms available, in particular personal tutors, and that they received helpful and timely feedback. The team therefore concludes that the School supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes and that the Core practice is met.

362 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all of the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix for this Core practice. Therefore, the team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

Annex 1

000	Contemporary-Dance-Trust-Ltd-LCDS-Quality-Standards-Review-Provider-Submission
000K	University_of_Kent_Degree_Awarding_body_responsibilities_checklist
000A	University_of_the_Arts_London_Degree_awarding_body_responsibilities_checklist
000S	Student_Submission_Contemporary-Dance-Trust-Ltd-LCDS
001	The_Place_Business_Plan_2021-2023
002	UoK_Validation_Agreement
003	UAL_Validation_Agreement
004	UAL_Partnership_Approval
005	UAL_Validation_Reports
007	UAL_Course_Regulations
008	UoK_Regulations_and_Guidance
009	Programme_Specs
010	External_Examiner_Reports_and_Responses
011	Course_Handbooks
012	UAL_Classification_/_Marking_Scale
013	UoK_Level_Descriptors_and_Marking_Scale
014	NSS_Data
015	Module_Evaluation_Data_/_Report
016	Terms_of_References
019	UAL_External_Examiner_Procedures_Regulations_and_Guidance
020	Academic_Board_Minutes
021	LCDS_Student_Handbooks
022	Quality_Assurance_Handbook
023	Admissions_Policy
024	Admissions_Appeals_and_Complaints_Procedure
025	Student_Achievement_and_Continuation_Data
027	Kent_PPR
028	CDD_ACMR
029	UoK_ACMR
030	The_Place_Staff_Structure
031	HR_Recruitment_Flowchart
032	Staff_Induction_Programme_and_Checklist
033	Induction_of_guest_staff_review
034	CPD_Policy
035	The_Place_Annual_Accounts
037	Student_Rep_JD
038	Student_Voice_Committee_Minutes
039	UAL_Validations_Logs
041	CDD_Student_Complaints_Procedure
042	LCDS_Student_Complaints_Procedure_Draft
043	UAL_Academic_Appeals
044	UoK_Academic_Appeals

047	CDD_Support_Through_Studies_Policy
048	Reasonable_Adjustment
049	Disability_Disclosure_Consent_Form
051	UAL_Admissions_Policy_2021_22
052	LCDS_Prospectus_2022-2023
054	LCDS_Student_Representative_Data
055	Minutes_of_Board_of_Governor_meeting_070721_Part1
056	LCDS_Learning_and_Teaching_Minutes
057	BA2_Critical_Studies_Module_Report
058	Examples_of_Student_Feedback
060	UAL_University_Complaints_Procedures_from_October_2021
061	CoP_Letter_Student_Complaint_Example
062	Screenshot_of_Complaints_and_Appeals_on_VLE
063	Student_Case_Records_Spreadsheet
064	Annual_Report_on_Student_Cases
065	Student_Wellbeing_Reports
066	LCDS_Personal_Tutor_Roles_and_Guidelines
068	Staff_CPD_on_Mental_Health_and_Specific_Learning_Differences
069	Unit_Guides
070	Data_on_number_of_students_accessing_each_support_service
071	Career_and_Professional_Development_at_Level_7
072	Agendas_of_recent_CPD_weeks
074	074_Pilot_Peer_Observation_Scheme
075	Extracts_of_reports_from_Research_Group
077	Moderation_Reports_and_Examples
078	LCDS_Board_of_Examiners_Meeting_Minutes_2020-21
079	079_Example_Professional_Placement_Agreement
081	Capital_Project_Kick_Off_Workshop_Minutes_and_Block_Plans
082	Director_of_Undergraduate_Programmes_and_International_Development_Job_Description
083	Director_of_Research_and_Postgraduate_Programmes_Job_Description
084	Director_of_Registry_and_Student_Well-Being_Job_Description
085	Quality_and_Compliance_Manager_Job_Description
086	Head_of_Learning_and_Teaching_Job_Description
087	Lecturer_in_Dance_Job_Description
088	Guest_Lecturer_Job_Description
089	Example_Recruitment_Record_Permanent_Staff_Member
090	Example_Recruitment_Record_Guest_Lecturer
092	Staff Spreadsheet Levels 5-7
094	Collaborative_Modifications_Procedures
096	University_of_Kent_Board_of_Examiners
097	LCDS_LLC_Minutes_01_Dec_2021
099	Organogram_for_Course_Delivery_and_Management
101	Director_of_Dance_Studies_Job_Description
102	CV-Director_of_Dance_Studies
103	CV-Director_of_Undergraduate_Courses_and_International_Development

104	CV-Director_of_Research_and_Postgraduate_Courses
105	CV-Director_of_Registry_and_Student_Wellbeing
106	CV_Quality_And_Compliance_Manager
107	CV-Head_of_Learning_and_Teaching
109	Example_RPEL_Approved_Form
110	Agenda_Staff_Training_for_Admissions
111	S01130_Student_Complaint
112	S01055_Student_Complaint
113	S03003_Student_Complaint
114	S03039_Student_Complaint
115	S03259_Student_Complaint
116	S03236_Student_Complaint
117	S03248_Student_Complaint
118	S03072-S03066-S03112_Student_Complaint
119	S01900_Academic_Appeal
121	Personal_Tutor_Examples
122	All_Staff_Training_200421_List_of_Attendees
123	List_of_Mental_Health_First_Aiders
124	Student_Support_and_Progression_Tracker
125	Evidence_of_consideration_of_accessibility_at_Admissions_Workshops
126	MA_Screendance_External_Examiner_Appointment
127	Further_Moderation_Reports_and_Examples
128	Draft_Student_Health_and_Wellbeing_Strategy_2022-25
129	Learning_and_Teaching_Strategy
130	Overall_Resourcing_Strategy
131	Library_Resourcing_and_Strategic_Planning
134	CV_Counsellor
135	CV_Learning_Support_Coordinator
136	CV_Physical_Support_Team
137	CV-Mental Health Advisors
138	Resourcing_Requests
140	Module_Evaluation_Response_Professional_Placement
141	Professional_Placements
142	Evaluation_Form_Exchange_and_Placements
143	UAL_Collaborative_Procedures
146	Approval_of_External_Examiners
147	Approval of Module Changes
149	CDD Senate Terms of Reference and Minutes
150	Extracts_of_discussions_around_high_degrees
153	Unit_Briefing_Sessions
154	Reasonable_Adjustments_during_the_application_process
155	NSS_results_discussions
158	Feedback from Student Observers of the Board of Governors
160	Professional Placement Criteria Analysis

161	Student Guide to set up and organise a Professional Placement
162	Second_Marking_Comment_2021_Professional_Placement
164	BA_External_Examiner_Actions
165	Notes_on_Admissions_Samples
166	FHEA_Application
167	Examples_of_Recourse_Provision_Discussions
168	The Place Studios
169	Clarification around Moderation
172	BA Admissions Spreadsheet
173	QSR Request for additional documentation
175	Committee Structure
M1	Meeting with senior staff
M2	Meeting with students
M3	Meeting with teaching staff and professional support staff
M4	Clarification Meeting