



Designated Quality Body
in England

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

Liverpool Media Academy Limited



Review Report

January 2023

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Summary of outcomes and confidence levels

Core practice	Outcome	Confidence
S1 The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks.	Met	High
S2 The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.	Met	High
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
S4 The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.	Met	High
Q1 The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.	Met	High
Q2 The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.	Met	High
Q3 The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.	Met	High
Q4 The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.	Met	High
Q5 The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.	Met	Moderate
Q6 The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.	Met	Moderate
Q8 Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.	Met	High
Q9 The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.	Met	High

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 December 2022 for Liverpool Media Academy Limited.

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: Professor Phil Powrie
Institution: University of Surrey
Role in assessment team: Institutional assessor

Name: Ms Sarah Mullins
Institution: Formerly at DN Colleges Group
Role in assessment team: Student assessor

Name: Ms Caitriona Price
Institution: Formerly at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance
Role in assessment team: Subject assessor

The QAA officer for the assessment was: Ms Althea Cusick.

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 Liverpool Media Academy Limited

Liverpool Media Academy Limited (LMA) is a specialist, privately owned provider located in Liverpool and London. It was founded in May 2009 as a specialist training organisation delivering Pearson Levels 3–5 qualifications in creative performance and media. It now offers further and higher education programmes in the media, music and performing arts fields. LMA is wholly owned by LMA (Holdings) Limited. LMA (Holdings) Limited is owned by LMA's original shareholders (38.33%) and Galileo (61.67%). LMA has been part of the Galileo Global Education group (the GGE group) since July 2021.

In 2016, it entered a franchise agreement with Staffordshire University to deliver three-year BA (Hons) degree programmes in Acting, Games Art and Animation, Digital Film and TV Production, Music Performance and Industry and Musical Theatre, adding Dance Performance in 2019. The last new cohort intake under the Staffordshire University franchise agreement was in 2020-21 and the programmes validated with Staffordshire University are in a formal teach-out arrangement with the final year of delivery for the Level 6 cohort commencing in September 2022.

In 2021, LMA redeveloped its programmes and entered a franchised arrangement with the University of Northampton, its new awarding body. All new Level 4 students recruited to LMA from and including September 2021 study the three-year BA (Hons) programmes delivered under the new franchise arrangement in the following subject areas: Dance Performance; Acting and Performance; Digital Games Art; Digital Film and TV Production; Music Performance and Industry; and Musical Theatre.

Under its Academic Governance Framework, LMA's board retains ultimate authority over academic development and standards and the student experience but authorises the Academic Committee to oversee those areas.

LMA adheres to the academic policies and regulations of its awarding body partners and accordingly, the awarding bodies' academic governance structures inform the work of LMA's Academic Committee. Membership of the Academic Committee comprises one board member, the Executive group, Heads of Department, two staff members and two students.

The table below shows the student numbers for 2022-23:

Awarding body and cohort	Programme	Number of students
University of Northampton Year 1 (L4) and Year 2 (L5)	BA (Hons) Acting and Performance	372
	BA (Hons) Dance Performance	157
	BA (Hons) Digital Games Art	43
	BA (Hons) Digital Film and TV Production	75
	BA (Hons) Music Performance and Industry	156
	BA (Hons) Musical Theatre	382

Staffordshire University Year 3 (L6)	BA (Hons) Acting	86
	BA (Hons) Dance Performance	30
	BA (Hons) Games Art and Animation	4
	BA (Hons) Digital Film and TV Production	28
	BA (Hons) Music Performance and Industry	65
	BA (Hons) Musical Theatre	86

LMA's strategy is to expand its curriculum portfolio into other cognate areas to include, for example, specialist postgraduate provision in Arts Education. If successful in its application to be registered with the Office for Students, LMA plans to apply for a Tier 4 Licence to recruit international students, primarily in order to allow collaboration with other institutions within the GGE group to be initiated and developed.

How the assessment was conducted

The assessment was conducted according to the process set out in [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers \(July 2022\)](#).

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

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

- The team viewed a representative sample of 13 job descriptions and 19 staff CVs covering senior leadership, professional support staff and teaching faculty working at LMA.
- The team reviewed a random sample of 123 admissions applications, out of a total of 1,589 admissions applications for the 2022-23 academic year.
- The team reviewed a random sample of assessed student work, from the 2021-22 academic year, comprising 118 individual pieces of student work: 68 items for Year 1, 32 for Year 2 and 18 for Year 3. The sample was derived from the 2021-22 enrolled student figures, where there were 534 registered Year 1 students, 308 registered Year 2 students and 147 registered Year 3 students.

The assessment was hybrid, conducted online, and supported by a limited onsite presence. It included 10 meetings with LMA's staff and students: two meetings (one online and one hybrid) with Executive Group (two Chief Executive Officers, Liverpool Principal, London Principal, Finance Director, Director of Training & Development, Director of Curriculum & Development, Strategic Director and Director Admissions and Data); four hybrid meetings with the London Principal; London teaching staff (Acting, Music, Musical Theatre, Dance); London Students (Student Representatives from each year level); and administration and professional support staff (selected staff across functions); and four online meetings with Liverpool teaching staff (Acting, Musical Theatre, Games Art, Digital Film and Theatre, Music Performance and Industry and Creative Media); Liverpool Students (Student Representatives from each year level); Heads of Department (Acting, Music, Musical Theatre, Dance, Creative Media); and the Link Tutors and Partnership Managers from Staffordshire University (SU) and the University of Northampton (UoN).

The assessment team was also able to observe five instances of teaching, both online and onsite, and facilities and resources remotely.

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

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

1 LMA ensures that its academic standards are set and maintained at the relevant threshold level because it adheres to and is bound by the clear and comprehensive academic regulations of its two degree-awarding bodies.¹ These standards are set at the appropriate relevant national qualifications' framework, which is also consistent with the Office for Students (OfS) sector-recognised standards. The Staffordshire University (SU) academic regulations² and the University of Northampton (UoN) academic regulations,³ together with supporting policies and procedures,⁴ set out the programmes of study, annual review of programmes, procedures for management of standards for the award, academic credit arrangements and assessment, and how external examiner protocols will operate.

2 The threshold standards described in examples of definitive course documentation are consistently in line with relevant national qualifications' frameworks. The documentation⁵ directs students to the volume of study and credit values and relevant learning outcomes expected at the relevant FHEQ level in line with the threshold standards within the sector-recognised standards, and the threshold levels that they are required to achieve within assessment tasks to meet the requirements for the award.

3 The sampled assessed student work⁶ demonstrates that credit and qualifications are awarded only where the relevant threshold standards have been met. The standards set in the assessment and feedback materials align with sector-recognised standards and disciplinary expectations.

4 SU external examiners' reports⁷ confirm that threshold standards of the programme are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks, and credit and qualifications are awarded only where those threshold standards have been met. There were no UoN external examiner reports available for consideration, as the external examiners appointed by UoN will report for the first time at the end of 2022-23.

5 Senior staff, teaching faculty and professional support staff understand and apply the specified approaches to setting and maintaining threshold standards. LMA's London Principal⁸ and the Executive group⁹ clearly articulated how standards are set and

¹ [000] LMA QSR Provider Submission

² [013a] SU Academic Regulations

³ [013b] UoN Academic Regulations

⁴ [028a] UoN Partnerships Handbook; [019] SU Schedule C Collaborative Delivery Plan for 2022-23; [018a] SU External Examiner Policy and Procedure; [020] SU Process for Approval of LMA Module Assignment Briefs; and [111] SU Assessment and Feedback Policy

⁵ [036] LMA - University of Northampton Handbook 22-23; [035] SU Student Course Handbook 2022-23 for BA (Hons) Digital Film and TV School of Digital, Technologies and Arts; [003a-e] SU Programme Specifications; [004a - i] UoN Programme Specifications

⁶ [181] Assessed student work sample

⁷ [018c] All 2021-22 SU external examiner reports and four 2020-21 external examiner reports ([107] Digital Film and TV; [108] Games Art and Animation; [109] Music Performance and Industry; and [110] Musical Theatre and Acting 20-21)

⁸ M1 meeting with London principal

⁹ M4 and M10, meetings with the Executive group

maintained. Teaching faculty cited the regular and consistent training,¹⁰ delivered by the awarding bodies, on threshold standards and assessment setting, marking and review procedures. They said this had significantly contributed to their understanding and application of LMA's approaches for ensuring that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks.¹¹

6 Plans for maintaining threshold standards are robust and credible and fully understood by staff. The awarding body partnership managers and academic link tutors explained the plans underpinning the maintenance of academic standards.¹² Key to this is training that is to be offered to all LMA's staff, including senior staff, teaching faculty and professional support staff aimed at ensuring that the plans for maintaining standards are fully understood. UoN offers training to all new staff to ensure that staff have an understanding of the threshold standards.¹³

7 The assessment team considers that, based on the evidence scrutinised, the standards achieved by LMA's students are in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework. Based on the scrutiny of all the evidence provided the assessment team concludes that this Core practice is met.

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

8 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all evidence recommended in Annex 4 for a provider delivering higher education, apart from third party endorsements because there are no Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) for the courses LMA offers. This was triangulated in meetings with the Executive group, teaching faculty and representatives of the awarding bodies. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

¹⁰ [032] Overview of Training undertaken by academic staff 2020/21 and [015] SU 2022-23 Regulatory Changes

¹¹ M3, meeting with London teaching staff & M8 meeting with Liverpool teaching staff

¹² M6, meeting with awarding bodies' academic link tutors and partnership managers

¹³ [014] Introduction to UKHE (delivered by UoN)

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

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

9 LMA operates in accordance with its awarding bodies' academic regulations and frameworks,¹⁴ which are clear and comprehensive and are clearly aligned to sector-recognised standards. They therefore present opportunities for students to achieve academic standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

10 Definitive course documentation¹⁵ demonstrates that the learning, teaching and assessment strategies underpinning the course design facilitate opportunities for students to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those in other similar specialist UK providers.

11 Staff understand and apply LMA's approach to setting and maintaining standards. Academic staff¹⁶ explained how assessment tasks are designed to facilitate opportunities for differentiated responses and confirmed their commitment to supporting students as individuals to achieve standards beyond the threshold level. Academic staff described ongoing bespoke formative feedback for learning as being an integral part of their practice. Observations of teaching¹⁷ demonstrated evidence of tutors giving formative feedback referring specifically to the assessment.

12 The student submission¹⁸ and meetings with students¹⁹ confirm that they understand what is required to reach each grade classification beyond the threshold level. Students cited information provided in the course documentation, including the feedback template²⁰ and ongoing individualised formative feedback from the academic staff.

13 All external examiners confirm that standards beyond the threshold level are reasonably comparable with those in other UK providers, and credit and qualifications are awarded only where those standards have been met.²¹

14 The sampled assessed student work²² demonstrates that credit and qualifications are awarded only where the relevant threshold standards have been met. The standards set in the assessment and feedback materials align with sector-recognised standards and disciplinary expectations.

¹⁴ [013a] SU Academic Regulations; [013b] UoN Academic Regulations

¹⁵ [036] LMA - University of Northampton Handbook 22-23; [035] SU Student Course Handbook 2022-23 for BA (Hons) Digital Film and TV School of Digital, Technologies and Arts; [003a-e] SU Programme Specifications; [004a - i] UoN Programme Specifications

¹⁶ M3, meeting with London teaching staff & M8 meeting with Liverpool teaching staff

¹⁷ [201] Teaching observations

¹⁸ [203] Student submission

¹⁹ M2, meeting with London students and M7, meeting with Liverpool students

²⁰ [023a] SU and [023b] UoN assessment feedback sheets

²¹ [018c] All 2021-22 SU external examiner reports and four 2020-21 external examiner reports ([107] Digital Film and TV; [108] Games Art and Animation; [109] Music Performance and Industry; and [110] Musical Theatre and Acting 20-21)

²² [181] LMA assessed student work sample

15 Plans for setting and maintaining comparable standards are robust and credible. The awarding body academic link tutors and partnership managers²³ described their regular observations of LMA's teaching in practice to ensure that its academic staff fully understand how to set and maintain threshold standards. LMA's Executive group emphasised the importance of their awarding partners' scrutiny in ensuring that LMA achieves and maintains parity of standards with other UK providers.²⁴

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

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

17 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all evidence recommended in Annex 4 for a provider delivering higher education, apart from third party endorsements because there are no PSRBs for the courses LMA offers. This was triangulated in meetings with LMA's Executive group, teaching faculty and students as well as representatives from the awarding bodies. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

²³ M6, meeting with awarding bodies' academic link tutors and partnership managers

²⁴ M4, meeting with the Executive group

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

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

18 LMA has clear and comprehensive regulations or policies for the management of partnerships with other organisations, to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure because it embeds the awarding bodies' regulations and policies into its own key processes. LMA's responsibilities relating to awards are aligned with those of its two degree-awarding partners. The awarding bodies' Partnership Handbooks²⁵ confirm that LMA and the awarding bodies work collaboratively to develop and implement mechanisms to uphold academic standards.

19 Partnership agreements are clear and comprehensive, up-to-date and reflect the provider's regulations or policies for the management of partnerships.²⁶ Under those agreements, in addition, LMA has the support of both degree-awarding bodies' academic link tutors and partnership programme managers, who ensure that LMA adopts the policies and regulations of the degree-awarding body and to implement procedures for the oversight and monitoring of standards. All progression and award boards where students' results are considered are managed and chaired by a senior member of staff from the degree-awarding bodies.

20 The established arrangements for programme review²⁷ under the partnership demonstrate that LMA has robust and credible plans to secure standards in provision delivered in partnership. The meeting with academic link tutors and partnership managers²⁸ demonstrates a close and collaborative relationship between LMA and the awarding bodies and confirmed that SU operates a continuous review of LMA's provision, while UoN has adopted an annual review process. The Executive group confirmed that the review activities are wide ranging and rigorous.

21 LMA's staff and academic link tutors and partnership managers from the awarding bodies²⁹ confirm that staff understand and discharge effectively their responsibilities to the awarding body in relation to academic standards. There is clear and comprehensive training of staff regarding the provision delivered in partnership and the regulations or policies that apply. This is evidenced by the provider's staff induction³⁰ which includes material on quality assurance and partnership roles; this induction was attended by all staff of both sites either on the day or as an online follow-up to ensure that all staff understand partnership requirements.

22 As set out at paragraphs 13 and 14 above, external examiner reports and assessed student work confirm that the standards of awards delivered in partnership are credible and

²⁵ UoN Partnerships Handbook; [019] SU Schedule C Collaborative Delivery Plan for 2022-23

²⁶ [028b] LMA - UON Collaborative Operational Handbook; [019] SU Schedule C Collaborative Delivery Plan for 2022-23

²⁷ Staffordshire University - LMA Partnership Review 2019; and the annual review of the University of Northampton

²⁸ M6, meeting with awarding bodies' academic link tutors and partnership managers

²⁹ M3, meeting with teaching faculty, London; M6, meeting with awarding bodies' academic link tutors and partnership managers M8, meeting with teaching faculty, Liverpool; and M9, meeting with heads of department

³⁰ [058] LMA induction presentation; [175] London and [176] Liverpool staff attendance records at induction training

secure.

23 LMA's plans in setting and maintaining academic standards and plans for assessment and classification processes are credible and robust.³¹ The Executive group³² confirms that ongoing integration with the GGE group³³ will not affect its ability to discharge its responsibilities to its awarding partners in relation to academic standards.

24 The arrangements in place to ensure that the standards of LMA's awards delivered in partnership are credible and secure are effective because comprehensive partnership agreements and the awarding bodies' academic regulations and policies underpin them. External examiner reports confirm that LMA successfully upholds its responsibilities for maintaining credible and secure standards. This was corroborated through the testimony of students and staff, and representatives of the awarding bodies. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

25 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all evidence recommended in Annex 4 for a provider delivering higher education, apart from third party endorsements because there are no PSRBs for the courses LMA offers. This was triangulated in meetings with LMA's Executive group, heads of department and teaching faculty and representatives from the awarding bodies. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

³¹ [000] Provider submission, [008] LMA Self-Assessment on Management and Governance 2022

³² M4, meeting with the Executive group

³³ [006] Example of documentation of LMA Integration Plan meeting 24.06.22

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

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

26 LMA operates under clear and comprehensive regulations and policies that require it to use external expertise in setting and maintaining academic standards because it is bound by the clear and comprehensive academic regulations of its two degree-awarding bodies.³⁴ The awarding bodies have policies and procedures³⁵ in place that provide a reliable, fair and transparent framework for external examiners to be closely involved in setting and monitoring academic standards. External examiners are appointed by the awarding bodies and report to the awarding bodies rather than directly to LMA, which demonstrates their independence.

27 LMA also adheres to the awarding bodies' regulations³⁶ and policies for assessment and classification, which are reliable and fair. It designs assessments, subject to the awarding bodies' approval, and adopts and utilises the marking and grading conventions set out in the University awarding bodies' assessment and feedback policies.³⁷ The policies for assessment and classification are transparent in that comprehensive information about the awarding bodies' assessment processes is readily available to students on LMA's website and in Google Classroom. Students can access programme-level assessment criteria as well as module assessment information, including learning outcome assessed, assessment type, weighting.

28 LMA has robust and credible plans for using external expertise in both setting and maintaining academic standards and assessment and classification. Its definitive course documentation demonstrates that it is fully aligned to the awarding bodies' regulations, policies and processes.³⁸ In its provider submission, LMA confirmed that it intends to expand its pool of external examiners as it progresses through the transition from SU to UoN. UoN will be responsible for the new external examiner appointments and its Quality Unit will undertake external examiner induction. This was triangulated in the meeting with the awarding bodies' academic link tutors.

29 Records of course approval and review confirm that external expertise is used according to the provider's regulations. External expertise is used to validate new programmes.³⁹

30 External examiner reports⁴⁰ confirm the use of external expertise and that LMA's response to external examiners is timely and constructive. One external examiner report recorded a concern to which LMA had apparently failed to respond, but the London

³⁴ [000] Provider submission; [013a] SU Academic Regulations; [013b] UoN Academic Regulations

³⁵ SU External Examiner Policy and Procedure and UON External Examiner Handbook 2022-23

³⁶ [013a] - Staffordshire University academic-regulations; [13b] UoN Academic Regulations 2022-23

³⁷ [111] Staffordshire University Assessment and Feedback Policy; [112] University of Northampton Assessment and Feedback Policy

³⁸ [036] LMA - University of Northampton Handbook 22-23; [035] SU Student Course Handbook 2022-23 for BA (Hons) Digital Film and TV School of Digital, Technologies and Arts; [003a-e] SU Programme Specifications; [004a - i] UoN Programme Specifications

³⁹ [051] Confirmed Validation Report BA Acting & Performance LMA; [017a] minutes from UON LMA Programme Validation Event 2021; [017b] LMA's response to UON Validation Conditions

⁴⁰ [018c] All 2021-22 SU external examiner reports and four 2020-21 external examiner reports ([107] Digital Film and TV; [108] Games Art and Animation; [109] Music Performance and Industry; and [110] Musical Theatre and Acting 20-21)

Principal⁴¹ identified curriculum changes that were made in direct response to that concern and explained that the lack of a recorded response was an administrative oversight. This was triangulated with Executive group.⁴²

31 External examiners confirm that assessment and classification processes are broadly fair and reliable. For example, assessment is described as 'reliable and consistent'⁴³ and the moderation process 'excellent in the way it ensures fairness'.⁴⁴

32 Assessed student work⁴⁵ demonstrates a systematic application of assessment criteria and learning outcomes across all modules and confirms assessment and classification are carried out in line with the provider's and course's requirements. The sample includes examples of written work, which are marked by two assessors; and recorded or live individual and/or ensemble performances, where at least one of the assessors is a tutor who has not taught the candidate on the module being assessed. There was evidence of appropriate calibration of academic standards which is tested via internal moderation.

33 Students confirm⁴⁶ that they understand LMA's classification processes and are able to access them on Google Classroom. They agree that marking and assessment is fair.⁴⁷

34 LMA's teaching staff understand the requirements for the use of external expertise, including external examiners and external experts in validation processes. Some teaching staff have experience of having participated in validation processes. Staff understand LMA's assessment and classification processes and some teaching staff designed revised assessment and classification processes in the transition to the UoN.⁴⁸

35 Based on all the evidence scrutinised, LMA uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent. LMA is bound by the academic regulations and the assessment policies and processes of its two degree-awarding bodies. Assessed student work demonstrates adherence to these processes and external examiner reports confirm assessment and classification processes are reliable and fair. LMA gives due consideration to external expertise. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

36 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all evidence recommended in Annex 4 for a provider delivering higher education. This was triangulated in meetings with LMA's Executive group, teaching staff and students. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

⁴¹ M1 Meeting with London Principal

⁴² M4 meeting with the Executive group

⁴³ [108] Games Art and Animation 20-21 EE Report

⁴⁴ [110] Musical Theatre and Acting 20-21 EE Report

⁴⁵ [181] Assessed student work sample and comments

⁴⁶ M2 meeting with London students and M7 meeting with Liverpool students

⁴⁷ 055 - LMA - NSS 21-22 responses; [136] LMA Student Voice Survey

⁴⁸ M3 meeting with London teaching staff; M8 meeting with Liverpool teaching staff

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

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

37 LMA has a clear policy or policies for the recruitment and admission of students which is reliable, fair and inclusive. UoN's policies and procedures for the recruitment and admission of students⁴⁹ apply to all new students. UoN's admissions policies and procedures are reliable, fair and inclusive and include the policies for the accreditation of prior learning and for the recruitment of students who do not have, or cannot evidence, the formal entry requirements but who are deemed to possess the ability to succeed. LMA effects an inclusive admissions process by facilitating a digital application process including a digital audition to reduce applicants' costs, and early, regular communication with applicants to identify any support needs.⁵⁰

38 Its plans for ensuring that admissions systems are reliable, fair and inclusive are robust and credible. UoN has plans to include an admissions audit,⁵¹ but since this is the first year that LMA has followed UoN's admissions processes, UoN's Link Tutor and Partnerships Manager⁵² confirm that the audit is due to take place in May 2023.

39 Students tend to agree that the admissions system is reliable, fair and inclusive. The induction survey⁵³ confirms that information is fit for purpose. Students provide positive comment in relation to the process, the information provided and the supportive environment. The admissions requirements set out in approved course documentation⁵⁴ are consistent with the provider's policy or policies.

40 Sampled admissions records included examples of both successful (conditional and unconditional) and unsuccessful applications, as well as internal applications, from applicants who wished to progress from LMA's Level 3 BTEC courses. All applicants were required to apply via UCAS. The admissions requirements set out in approved course documentation⁵⁵ are consistent with the provider's policy or policies and sampled admissions records demonstrate that the provider's policies are implemented in practice; any deviations relate to minor omissions or oversights which do not harm the integrity of the procedure or the interests of applicants.

41 The information provided to students pre-application and during the application process is detailed, transparent and fit for purpose, as well as easily accessible.⁵⁶ Students also receive informative, regular communications when they have submitted a UCAS application, once this has been reviewed and after they have received an unconditional offer.⁵⁷ LMA has acknowledged that its communications with unsuccessful applicants do not explicitly signpost the clear, accessible information on its website regarding the ability to appeal an admissions decision, and has identified this oversight as an area for

⁴⁹ [038] UoN Admissions Policy; [039] UoN Admissions Guide for LMA; [193] Accreditation of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Policy; [119] UoN's Special Admissions Policy

⁵⁰ M4, meeting with the Executive group; [120] LMA's Approach to Supporting Students with Additional Needs during the Admissions Process

⁵¹ [039] The UoN Admissions Guide for LMA

⁵² M6, meeting with awarding bodies' academic link tutors and partnership managers

⁵³ [135] LMA New Student September 2021 Survey [Nov 21]

⁵⁴ [003a-e] SU Programme Specifications; [004a - i] UoN Programme Specifications

⁵⁵ [003a-e] SU Programme Specifications; [004a - i] UoN Programme Specifications

⁵⁶ [043] LMA Prospectus; [044] LMA website

⁵⁷ [180a - n] Examples of Communications sent as part of the admissions process 2021-22

development.⁵⁸

42 Staff involved in admissions understand their role⁵⁹ and are appropriately skilled and trained.⁶⁰ The job descriptions and example CVs⁶¹ of staff involved in admissions provide a clear overview of the roles and responsibilities in relation to admissions, which LMA's process documentation⁶² substantiates.

43 LMA's admissions policies, procedures and plans and its use of UoN's admissions policies and procedures ensure that the admissions system is reliable, fair and inclusive. There is a credible and robust approach to recruitment and admissions of students, which is monitored under the UoN's admissions policies. This was corroborated through direct assessment of admissions records and the testimony of students and staff and UoN's representatives. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

44 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all evidence recommended in Annex 4 for a provider delivering higher education. This was triangulated in meetings with the Executive group, administration and professional support staff and representatives from the awarding body. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

⁵⁸ M4, meeting with the Executive group

⁵⁹ M5, meeting with administration and professional support staff

⁶⁰ [041] Overview of Training undertaken by Professional Support Staff

⁶¹ [163-173], [180], [181] Examples of job descriptions and staff CVs

⁶² [162] LMA Professional Support Services Roles and Staff Overview 2022-23; [182] Clarification on who makes the admissions decisions

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

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

45 LMA is aligned to the academic regulations of its awarding bodies,⁶³ which are comprehensive and facilitate the design and delivery of high-quality courses because they set out cohesive guidance and clear expectations to ensure effective design of teaching, learning and assessment approaches that enable students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes. LMA's mission statement⁶⁴ articulates its aim to design and deliver high-quality courses, to deliver academic and professional outcomes relevant to creative industry employment contexts. The Teaching and Learning Framework⁶⁵ (TLF) explains LMA's approach to designing and delivering high-quality courses which clearly aligns to the relevant plans of its degree-awarding partners.

46 LMA has robust and credible plans for designing and delivering high-quality courses and for monitoring and enhancing its course design and delivery under its Course Enhancement Action Plans (CEAP),⁶⁶ which facilitate the awarding bodies' ongoing and periodic review of LMA's course design and delivery.⁶⁷

47 Approved course documentation⁶⁸ indicates that LMA's teaching, learning and assessment design enables students to meet and demonstrate the intended learning outcomes. All programme specifications clearly align with the TLF. Approved validation documentation⁶⁹ demonstrates that the newly validated programmes are designed to develop and stretch students as they progress from FHEQ Level 4 to Level 6.

48 Staff are able to articulate what 'high quality' means in the context of LMA, and to show how the provision meets that definition. Senior staff, heads of department and teaching faculty demonstrated good understanding of the TLF and what 'high quality' means in the context of LMA. They were able to give specific examples of how LMA's approach to high-quality course design and delivery is reflected in their own practice.

49 External examiner reports confirm that LMA's courses are high quality, commending the 'high quality teaching and learning experience'⁷⁰ and 'excellent delivery and assessment'.⁷¹

50 Students regard the design and delivery of their course as being of high quality because of the currency of the teaching staff industry knowledge, professional expertise and passion for the disciplines and dedication to supporting the students as individuals.⁷²

⁶³ SU [013a] and the UON [013b]

⁶⁴ [000] provider submission

⁶⁵ [052] LMA Teaching and Learning Framework

⁶⁶ [139] LMA Course Enhancement Action Plans

⁶⁷ [139] LMA Course Enhancement Action Plans; [29a] Example of CEAP - Music Performance & Industry; [29b] Training Presentation - Course Enhancement Action Plans - An Introduction; and [29c] LMA Course Enhancement Action Plan - Review Schedule 22-23

⁶⁸ [036] LMA - University of Northampton Handbook 22-23; [035] SU Student Course Handbook 2022-23 for BA (Hons) Digital Film and TV School of Digital, Technologies and Arts; [003a-e] SU Programme Specifications; [004a - i] UoN Programme Specifications

⁶⁹ [016] Val 2 Support Documentation for UON LMA validation; [017a], Example of Minutes from UON LMA Programme Validation Event 2021

⁷⁰ [108] Games Art and Animation 20-21 EE Report

⁷¹ [018c] All 2021-22 SU external examiner reports (see 2021-22 report for 2 Music Performance and Industry; Dance Performance)

⁷² [203] Student submission; [136] Overview of LMA Student Voice Survey L4 - L5 May 2022; M2 and M7, meetings with London and Liverpool students

51 Observations of teaching and learning at both campuses demonstrate that sessions are organised and well planned, with clear learning objectives, allowing inclusive opportunities for student engagement and targeted ongoing feedback. Tutors are supported to achieve consistency in high-quality module design and delivery across both campus sites.⁷³ The content is appropriate and tutors embed opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to an authentic employment scenario.

52 LMA's TLF, policies and its use of its awarding bodies' academic regulations support the design and delivery of high-quality programmes. This was corroborated through observations of teaching and learning, the testimony of students and staff, and reports from all external examiners. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

53 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all evidence recommended in Annex 4 for a provider delivering higher education, apart from third party endorsements because there are no PSRBs for the courses LMA offers. This was triangulated in meetings with the Executive group, heads of department and teaching faculty involved in design and delivery. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

⁷³[037] LMA Sample Module Delivery Plan

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

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

54 LMA's regulations and policies for the recruitment, appointment, induction and support for staff provide for a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and skilled staff. Its degree awarding bodies have robust systems in place⁷⁴ to ensure that they review and formally approve LMA's recruitment and appointment of teaching staff. Staff from the awarding bodies confirm those systems also provide for the training of LMA's staff.⁷⁵

55 LMA's plans for the recruitment and appointment of sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff are credible and robust, and this is evident throughout the comprehensive documentation that underpins its processes.⁷⁶ The Academic Staff Development Plan⁷⁷ underpins LMA's plans for the induction and support of staff.

56 LMA ensures that there are sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to support a high-quality learning experience. The recruitment, appointment, induction and support for staff are mapped to LMA's continuing growth as an expanding institution. The sufficiency of appropriately qualified staff is reviewed annually.⁷⁸ LMA implemented a new Organisational and Staffing structure⁷⁹ in September 2022, which has led to the introduction of an enhanced management system, the recruitment of additional professional support staff and the creation of new academic and senior staff⁸⁰ roles.

57 Students agree that there are sufficient appropriately skilled and qualified staff, many of whom are currently practising in the creative industries, which supports a high-quality academic experience. They value the fact that both teaching staff and guest lecturers enrich their academic experience through their continuing professional engagement with the sector.⁸¹

58 Observations of teaching and learning sessions confirm that teaching staff are appropriately qualified and highly skilled.⁸² Staff have sound industry knowledge and extensive, sometimes high-profile, experience within the creative industries professions. This experience and up-to-date highly specialist knowledge informs the teaching sessions. The teaching sessions are interactive with individual and collective student engagement, and inclusive in using different teaching and learning approaches to meet diverse learning preferences. The interaction between teachers and students facilitates independent learning.

59 Staff sampled were recruited and appointed according to LMA's regulations or policies. Successful candidates' qualifications, skills and experience match the advertised

⁷⁴ [019] The Staffordshire University Schedule C Collaborative Delivery Plan 2022-23; [028a] UON Partnerships Handbook- Overview Doc; [028b] LMA-UON Collaborative Operational Handbook

⁷⁵ M6 meeting with link tutors and partnership managers

⁷⁶ [009] LMA Organisational and Staffing Structure 2022-23; [057] Overview of LMA Teaching Staff by Dept; [162] Professional Support Services Roles and Staff Overview 2022-2023

⁷⁷ [059] Academic Staff Development Plan 22-23

⁷⁸ M4 and M10, meetings with the Executive Group

⁷⁹ [009] LMA Organisational and Staffing Structure 2022-23

⁸⁰ [152] JD Director of Staff Training and Development

⁸¹ M2 and M7, meetings with London and Liverpool students; [203] Student submission

⁸² [201] Observations of Learning and Teaching

job descriptions.⁸³ Staff confirmed⁸⁴ that they are inducted and supported through teaching observations, training opportunities, according to LMA's stated approach.⁸⁵

60 LMA's staff are appropriately qualified and skilled to deliver a high-quality academic experience. It employs a combination of permanent teaching staff and guest lecturers with current or recent specialist knowledge and experience in in the media, music and performing arts fields. LMA's approach means it can adapt to its continuing growth as an expanding institution to ensure a sufficient number of teaching staff are in place. Furthermore, there is a clear staff development process and evidence that it is being used effectively. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

61 The assessment team was able to review all of the available evidence recommended in Annex 4. This was triangulated in meetings with students, the Executive group, teaching staff, heads of department, administrative and professional support staff and with representatives from the awarding bodies. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

⁸³ 163-174] CVs and job descriptions for professional support staff; [145-149] examples of teaching staff CVs; [153] - [155], examples of job descriptions for new academic posts

⁸⁴In meetings with: M3 and M8 teaching faculty; M5 administration and professional support staff; M6, awarding bodies' academic link tutors; and M9, Heads of Department

⁸⁵ [060] Example of Training Session delivered by ALT Staffs; [61] Overview of Teaching and Learning Observations March-April 2022; [064] Advance HE Introduction to Membership PowerPoint; and [065] Example of Training Sessions offered by Staffordshire University Library Staff

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

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

62 LMA's strategies and plans are credible, realistic and demonstrably linked to the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes for students. LMA has a long-term strategic vision for its facilities, learning resources and student support services, with ongoing plans for development and improvement. There is a unity of purpose and shared understanding of responsibilities within LMA with continued planning for further improvements.⁸⁶

63 Teaching staff demonstrate a good understanding of their role in supporting the strategic planning for learning resources, to ensure that they can deliver a high-quality academic experience.⁸⁷ Professional support staff clearly articulate their roles and responsibilities and the mechanisms they employ to monitor the facilities, resources and services and feed the data into strategic planning for the future provision.⁸⁸

64 Direct assessment of LMA's facilities and learning resources confirms that LMA provides a high-quality academic experience. Dance studios and music studio practice facilities at both campuses exemplify industry standard and implement sector best practice guidelines.⁸⁹ Through its collaborations with external stakeholders, LMA accesses state-of-the-art equipment and external performance venues to enhance the quality of the learning experience.⁹⁰ The virtual learning environment (Google Classroom) is clear and accessible and supports all programmes. Students can access the degree-awarding bodies' library facilities as well as all relevant handbooks, student-facing policy documents and support links in Google Classroom, while tutors use it to communicate directly with groups of students to support their studies.⁹¹

65 Students agree that facilities are 'good quality and industry standard'. They are positive about the 'accessible' online library, where relevant learning resources, including texts that are ordinarily difficult to source, are readily available. They describe Google Classroom as 'high quality and easy to navigate'.⁹²

66 Evidence from third parties indicates that facilities, learning resources and student support services are sufficient and appropriate. This is demonstrated by a commendation recorded in the minutes of one of LMA's validation events. The approval panel, comprising two external experts and two representatives from UoN, commended LMA's resources as 'state of the art' and its facilities as 'excellent'.⁹³

⁸⁶ [000] provider submission; M10 meeting with Executive group

⁸⁷ M3 and M8 meetings with teaching staff

⁸⁸ M5 meeting with administration and professional support staff

⁸⁹ [202] Observation of facilities

⁹⁰ [071] Example of LMA Industry Partnership - Black Magic - Da Vinci; [000] LMA QSR Provider Submission; [072] Summary of external venues used May 22

⁹¹ [075] Overview of Study Skills Information available to LMA students from UoN and Staffs; [073b] Google Classroom Stream Examples; [076] LMA Online Student Hub in Google Classroom – Screenshots; [077] LMA app snapshot

⁹² [053] Examples of Module Evaluation 2022; [054] - examples of minutes from LMA Staff Student Liaison Committee Meetings 2021-22; [126-134] SSLC minutes; M2 and M7, meetings with students

⁹³ [017a] Example of minutes from UoN LMA Programme Validation Event 2021

67 LMA's plans for facilities, learning resources and student support services are clearly linked to delivering successful academic and professional student outcomes. Direct observations undertaken by the assessment team show that they are sufficient and appropriate, and there is evidence of ongoing investment. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

68 The assessment team was able to review all of the available evidence recommended in Annex 4. This was triangulated in meetings with administration and professional support staff, the Executive group, teaching staff and with students. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

69 LMA has a clear and effective approach to engaging students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. The Student Voice and Engagement Strategy⁹⁴ (the Strategy) sets out its commitment to delivering an excellent student experience that is supported by active student engagement and a commitment to monitoring inclusivity in student engagement, to ensure that all groups within the student population have access to their opinions being heard.

70 Under the Strategy, all students are to be engaged individually in the quality of their educational experience because they are invited to participate in a range of surveys at different stages of the student lifecycle.⁹⁵ The Strategy provides for collective engagement by stipulating that all course cohorts have at least two student representatives per year group and the Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) forms part of LMA's formal management and governance structure. All of LMA's committees are to formally include at least one student representative as part of the formal committee/board composition, including the Academic Committee and the three subcommittees that support it.⁹⁶

71 In practice student participation in the internal LMA surveys is low.⁹⁷ In terms of collective engagement, student representatives are not yet in place for LMA's key governance committees. In addition, the inclusivity monitoring under the Strategy has not been implemented. It is not yet possible to assess the effectiveness of the Strategy in practice.

72 LMA has robust and credible plans to actively engage students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. It collates information from all forms of student engagement in the Course Enhancement Action Plans⁹⁸ and the Executive group monitors student engagement informally. LMA is effecting ongoing changes to the timing and methodology of surveys with a view to improving participation rates and therefore individual student engagement. It has plans to include student representatives in all of its formal governance committees and to introduce systematic monitoring and evaluation of student engagement.⁹⁹

73 There are examples of the provider changing and improving students' learning experience as a result of student engagement. Course Forum feedback samples, Course Enhancement Action Plans and SSLC minutes contain examples of improvements and changes to students' learning experience brought about by LMA's approach. Staff and students substantiate this.¹⁰⁰

74 The provider's policies and plans support the engagement of students individually and collectively in the quality of their educational experience. However, the Strategy, which

⁹⁴ [078] The Student Voice and Engagement Strategy

⁹⁵ [049] New Student Application and Induction Survey, [082] Module Evaluations, NSS for final level students and the Level 4 and 5 LMA Student Voice Survey, [053] LMA New Student September 21 Survey [135] Module Evaluation

⁹⁶ [007b] - LMA Academic Committee - Terms of Reference, [007c] - LMA Academic Subcommittees Terms of Reference

⁹⁷ [137] Overview of Module Evaluation Participation rates document

⁹⁸ [139]- LMA Course Enhancement Action Plans

⁹⁹ M10, meeting with the Executive group

¹⁰⁰ M3 and M8, meetings with teaching staff; M2 and M7, meetings with students

articulates LMA's policies for student engagement, is yet to be implemented in full. The testimony of students and staff corroborates the effectiveness of LMA's approach and once all features of the Strategy are in place students will have the opportunities to engage both individually and collectively in the quality of their educational experience. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that on balance the Core practice is met.

The team had a moderate degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

75 The assessment team was able to review all of the available evidence recommended in Annex 4. This was triangulated in meetings with students, teaching staff and the Executive group. However, there are doubts in relation to the inability to evidence elements of the Strategy as outlined resulting in insufficient evidence to form a reliable conclusion. Therefore, the assessment team has a moderate 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

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

76 LMA's procedures for handling complaints and appeals are definitive, fair and transparent, and deliver timely outcomes. Its complaints procedures are based on its own complaints policy,¹⁰¹ which, as required by the policies and procedures of the two awarding bodies, covers informal and stage one complaints, with the potential for a referral to be made to the relevant awarding body when LMA's procedures have been exhausted.¹⁰² The policy provides clear and transparent information on all stages of the complaints procedure and sets appropriate timeframes for these. Its appeals procedure is aligned with the awarding bodies' appeals policies. The awarding bodies are solely responsible for appeals and their policies clearly state that LMA's students should follow the relevant awarding body's procedures for academic appeals. Those procedures are definitive, fair and transparent and deliver timely outcomes.

77 LMA's procedures for handling complaints and appeals are accessible to students, as students can access the relevant policies and information about the complaints and appeals procedures on the website¹⁰³ and on Google Classroom. Information, including links to the relevant policies and guidance on complaints and appeals, is also available in the awarding bodies' student handbooks.¹⁰⁴ Students confirm that they can find and understand complaints and appeals procedures quickly and easily and are able to articulate the scope of the procedures.¹⁰⁵

78 Examples of informal complaints and/or appeals scrutinised by the review team have been dealt with according to the provider's procedures, subject to minor exceptions. There was just one ongoing appeal recorded, which was being dealt with by SU under the stated procedures. No formal complaints were available for scrutiny because none had been raised.¹⁰⁶

79 Any deviations from LMA's procedures for handling complaints and appeals are minor and do not harm the integrity of the procedure or the interests of students. Staff record all student concerns and student support issues, other than formal complaints, as informal complaints.¹⁰⁷ However, this in no way prevents students from pursuing complaints through the formal mechanisms.

80 There is an example of LMA recording an appeal against academic withdrawal as an 'appeal/complaint'. The assessment team did not see any evidence of the formal complaints procedure having been followed in this instance. There are two, minor instances where students followed the appeals procedure to raise matters that were out of scope of

¹⁰¹ [084] LMA Complaints Policy 2022-23

¹⁰² [105] and [106] Annex 8: Responsibilities checklist for providers without degree awarding powers; [086] SU Complaints and Appeals Policy; [085b] UON Applicant Complaints and Appeals Policy; [036] LMA - University of Northampton Handbook 22-23

¹⁰³ [Liverpool Media Academy accessed 20th October 2022

¹⁰⁴ [035] Sample Staffordshire University Course Handbook 2022-23; 036 - LMA - University of Northampton Handbook 22-23

¹⁰⁵ [203] Student submission; M2 and M7, meetings with students

¹⁰⁶ [088] The Summary Report LMA Complaints and Appeals September 2022

¹⁰⁷ [141] - 21-22 Informal LMA Complaints Log; [087] Example of Informal Complaints Log 2022-23

that procedure.¹⁰⁸

81 LMA's students do not raise any concerns about the fairness, transparency or accessibility of the relevant procedures. Any instance where LMA did not follow its stated procedure relate to minor omissions or oversights, which do not harm the integrity of the procedure or the interests of students.

82 LMA has plans to develop, monitor and review its complaints and appeals policies and procedures,¹⁰⁹ which include planned enhancement to the recording of Stage 2 complaints, in line with its Complaints Policy. LMA's plans to develop fair, transparent and accessible complaints and appeals procedures are robust and credible.

83 LMA has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students. There is a lack of clarity regarding the distinction between student feedback and complaints which reduces the transparency of the procedures. However, the testimony of students confirms that they do not have serious concerns about LMA's complaints and appeals procedures. There are robust and credible plans to develop fair, transparent and accessible complaints and appeals procedures. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

The team had a moderate degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

84 The assessment team was able to review all of the available evidence recommended in Annex 4. This was triangulated in meetings with students and the Executive group. However, there are doubts in relation to the reliability of the evidence because LMA was unable to evidence a clear differentiation between complaints, appeals and student feedback and the early information provided on recorded appeals was ambiguous. Therefore, the assessment team has a moderate degree of confidence in this judgement.

¹⁰⁸ [199] Clarification re LMA's appeal's data mentioned in 088.pdf; [200] Confirmation of 21-22 Appeals from Staffordshire University.pdf.

¹⁰⁹ M10, meeting with Executive group

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

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

85 LMA's policies for the management of partnerships¹¹⁰ are clear and comprehensive and operate to ensure that the academic experience is high quality. The degree-awarding partners are responsible for auditing the quality of the learning opportunities that LMA offers. Under these policies there are comprehensive arrangements that enable the awarding bodies to monitor LMA's compliance with its responsibilities for quality.

86 LMA has robust and credible plans to ensure a high-quality academic experience for provision delivered in partnership. There are mechanisms in place for the awarding bodies to undertake ongoing improvements and periodic review of LMA's courses.¹¹¹ Through close collaboration between LMA's staff and awarding bodies' academic link tutors,¹¹² the awarding bodies scrutinise teaching materials, conduct classroom observations and oversee assessment and feedback processes. LMA uses live course enhancement action plans,¹¹³ with three touch points during the academic year to ensure that high quality is maintained and this feeds into the awarding bodies' quality assurance processes. LMA's Executive group anticipates that its plans to continue to integrate LMA into the GGE group will support it in continuing to deliver a high-quality academic experience both by the instigation of collaborative activity between LMA and other institutions in the GGE group and the underwriting of planned capital investment.¹¹⁴

87 LMA's staff and staff from the awarding body have a very clear understanding of and commitment to high quality, with LMA's staff holding planned and purposive meetings on their responsibilities for quality with the awarding bodies' academic link tutors.¹¹⁵

88 External examiners' reports confirm that LMA ensures a high-quality academic experience through its course design and delivery and high-quality facilities, learning resources and student support services.¹¹⁶

89 There are credible and secure arrangements in place to ensure that the academic experience that LMA delivers in partnership is of high quality, irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them. Comprehensive partnership agreements and the awarding bodies' academic regulations and policies underpin those arrangements and there is a high level of scrutiny and engagement from the awarding bodies. This was corroborated through the testimony of students and staff, and representatives of the awarding bodies. Based on all the evidence scrutinised, this Core practice is met.

¹¹⁰ [028b] LMA-UON Collaborative Operational Handbook; [019] Staffordshire University Schedule C Collaborative Delivery Plan 2022-23

¹¹¹ [028b] LMA-UON Collaborative Operational Handbook

¹¹² M6, meeting with partnership managers and academic link tutors

¹¹³ [29c] LMA Course Enhancement Action Plan - Review Schedule 22/23; [139] - LMA Course Enhancement Action Plans; M6 meeting with partnership managers and academic link tutor

¹¹⁴ M10, meeting with the Executive Group

¹¹⁵ [033a] Sample ALT Report Staffordshire - Games Art and Animation; [033b] Example of Staffordshire University ALT visit report - Performance courses

¹¹⁶ [018c] All 2021-22 SU external examiner reports; [107] to [110] Examples of 2020-21 external examiner reports

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

90 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all evidence recommended in Annex 4 for a provider delivering higher education, apart from third party endorsements because there are no PSRBs for the courses LMA offers. This was triangulated in meetings with the Executive group and representatives from the awarding bodies. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

91 LMA creates an inclusive and supportive environment to facilitate successful academic and professional outcomes underpinned by its own policies and those of the awarding bodies.¹¹⁷ It monitors and supports student academic progress through the personal tutoring system, with twice-yearly academic progress reviews¹¹⁸ and offers timetabled drop-in sessions for additional personalised support. LMA supports successful academic outcomes via the awarding bodies' assessment and feedback policies,¹¹⁹ which set out clear expectations for detailed, timely formative and summative assessment feedback.

92 LMA enables successful professional outcomes by providing good opportunities for students to interact with industry¹²⁰ and begin to prepare for their future employment. It highlights creative work and internship opportunities¹²¹ to students and facilitates careers advice and guidance to support students through its own and its awarding bodies' resources.¹²² Students also have access to the validating partners' employability support resources. The effectiveness of LMA's approach results in positive feedback from industry on its graduates.¹²³

93 There was limited evidence of strategic monitoring or formal plans relating to LMA's approach to supporting successful academic outcomes. However, its staff were able clearly to outline key metrics to evidence the effectiveness of the support activities, and examples of changes made as a result of that ongoing monitoring. LMA uses Graduate Outcomes Survey data to track professional outcomes of its Liverpool graduates and has plans to expand this to cover its London graduates.¹²⁴ It also plans to build an alumni network to track professional outcomes. LMA therefore has comprehensive, robust and credible plans to support students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

94 Teaching faculty have a full understanding of their roles and responsibilities as Personal Tutors and are able to articulate the impacts of their role in supporting student achievement.¹²⁵ They are fully supported to understand the expectations of effective assessment and feedback practice.¹²⁶ Professional support staff could identify their roles in relation to supporting both academic and professional outcomes, and gave examples of supporting students with additional needs and leading study skills sessions.¹²⁷

¹¹⁷ [094] LMA Personal Academic Tutoring Policy 2022-23; [004a-i] UON Programme Specifications

¹¹⁸ 095 - Examples of LMA Student Review Documentation recorded in Student Central Record

¹¹⁹ [111] SU Assessment Policies and Procedures; [112] UoN Assessment and Feedback Policy 2022-2023; [023a], [023b] Example feedback sheets; and moderation examples [025, 026]

¹²⁰ [103] Overview of LMA Course Engagement with Industry 21-22; [043] LMA Prospectus 2023; [044] LMA PDF Entire Website

¹²¹ M5, meeting with administration and professional support staff; [191] Student Guide - Intro to Google Classroom.

¹²² M5, meeting with administration and professional support staff; [104] University of Northampton Changemaker Hub for UoN students

¹²³ M4, meeting with the Executive group

¹²⁴ M10, meeting with the Executive group

¹²⁵ M3 and M8, meetings with teaching faculty

¹²⁶ [027] Assessment and Marking Refresher Training

¹²⁷ M5, meeting with administration and professional support staff

95 Assessed student work¹²⁸ shows that feedback is consistently comprehensive, helpful and timely. The sample includes an item where the feedback was late but this is not representative of the timeliness that is evident in the rest of the sample.

96 Students tend to agree that they are adequately supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.¹²⁹ They are positive about academic support and the networking and industry-relevant opportunities that were available to them.

97 LMA supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. It has robust and credible plans and policies which support students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. Staff clearly understand their roles and responsibility for providing support to students and students were very positive about the support offered. Assessed student work demonstrates that students are given comprehensive, developmental, and timely feedback. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

98 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all evidence recommended in Annex 4 for a provider delivering higher education. This was triangulated in meetings with the Executive group, teaching faculty and administrative and professional support staff. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

¹²⁸ [181] assessed student work sample

¹²⁹ [055] NSS 21-22 Responses; [136] LMA Student Voice Survey

Annex 1

000 - LMA QSR Provider Submission - FINAL .pdf
000a LMA Evidence Document Index.pdf
001 - _THE LMA WAY_ - the LMA vision statement.pdf
002 - LMA Submitted Access and Participation Plan.docx.pdf
003a-SU Programme Specification Acting.pdf
003b-SU Programme Specification Dance Performance.pdf
003c-SU Programme Specification Digital Film and TV Production .pdf
003d- SU Programme Specification Games Art and Animation.pdf
003e-SU Programme Specification Music Performance and Industry .pdf
004a - LMA UoN Programme Specification - Acting.pdf
004b- LMA UoN Programme Specification - Acting (Screen Pathway).pdf
004c - LMA UoN Programme Specification - Dance Performance .pdf
004d- LMA UoN Programme Specification - Digital Film and TV Production.pdf
004e BA Digital Film & TV Production (Directing) example of Pathway programme pdf
004f - LMA UoN Programme Specification - Digital Games Art .pdf
004g - LMA UoN Programme Specification - Music Performance and Industry.pdf
004h - BA Music Performance & Industry (Guitar) example of LMA Pathway programme.pdf
004i - LMA UoN Programme Specification - Musical Theatre .pdf
005 - Report providing an overview of Galileo Global Education Group and its principles.pdf
006 - Example of documentation of LMA Integration Plan meeting 24.06.22.pdf
007a - LMA Governance and Committee Structure Overview 2022-2023.pdf
007b - LMA Academic Committee - Terms of Reference .docx.pdf
007c - LMA Academic Subcommittees Terms of Reference.pdf
007d- Academic Committees Calendar 22-23 .pdf
008- LMA Self-Assessment of Governance.pdf
009 - LMA Organisational and Staffing Structure 2022_23.pdf
010 LMA Student Cohort Data Overview Oct 22pdf.pdf
011- SU data showing LMA Performance Sept 2022 against KPI measures.pdf
012a - London Campus Plan - Planned Extension 2023.pdf
012b - London Campus Plan - Planned Extension view2 .pdf
012c - London Campus Plan - Planned Extension view 3 .pdf
013a - SU academic regulations.pdf
013b - UoN Academic Regulations 2022-23 FINAL (July 2022).pdf
014 - Introduction to UKHE. Training delivered by UoN.pdf
015 - SU 2022-23 Regulatory Changes.pdf
016 - Val 2 Support Documentation for UoN LMA validation.pdf
017a - Example of Minutes from UoN LMA Programme Validation Event 2021 pdf.pdf
017b - Example of LMA's response to UoN Validation Conditions.pdf
018a- SU - external-examiner-policy-and-procedure.pdf
018b - UoN External Examiner Handbook 2022-23.pdf
018c - Examples of External Examiner Reports LMA Programmes 2021-22.pdf
019 SU Schedule C Collaborative Delivery Plan.2022-23.pdf

020 Process for Approval of LMA Module Assignment Briefs.pdf
021a - Example of LMA _ SU Assessment Brief Approval Process - August 2021.pdf
021b - Examples of LMA - University of Northampton Moderation and Approval of Assessment Briefs.pdf
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M7 meeting with Students, Liverpool
M8 meeting with teaching faculty, Liverpool
M9 meeting with Heads of Department
M10 Final meeting with Executive Group

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Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel: 01452 557050
Web: www.qaa.ac.uk