

Performance review process report

The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, 2018 - 2021

Executive summary

Process stage – final visitor recommendation reached, covering:

- We have found the Provider to have fully engaged fully with this review process. They have been open with their reflections on the challenges they have faced in the review period and cooperative when responding to our queries. We explored the information from the initial submission and sought points of clarification. No risk or concerns with the Provider’s performance were identified. We completed our assessment and have not identified a reason or risk to refer themes to another process but have made recommendations for the Providers next Performance Review.
- We acknowledge that the Provider has undertaken a considerable amount of work to try to supply this data and that this has set the groundwork for future reviews to consider these data points.
- We note that the Provider does not have the traditional four data points required for longer than two-year monitoring periods. But recognise their suggestion to submit two data points regarding programme continuation rates and learner satisfaction. We note they also have an existing TEF rating having been awarded the gold standard award.
- We have identified two area of development that we are recommending to the Provider next Performance Review. These concern the resources available for learners on their programme and the involvement of Service Users and carers in their provision. We note that the provider has plans in place for these areas and are recommending they implement these, reflect on their progress and seek feedback on them to be reviewed at their next Performance Review.
- The education provider supplied observations which will be considered in decision making.

Previous consideration N/A – This is the Provider’s first engagement with the Performance Review process since the launch of the HCPC Education department’s Quality Assurance Mode

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

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

Next steps

- Outline next steps / future case work with the Provider: · Subject to the Panel’s decision, the education provider’s next performance review will be in the 2023-24 academic year

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- We shall work with the Provider to ensure the regular (annual) delivery of the required data as set out in the data section to be considered for their next Performance Review.
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Section 1: About this assessment

About us

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

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

Our standards

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

Our regulatory approach

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

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

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

The performance review process

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

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

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

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

Thematic areas reviewed

We normally focus on the following areas:

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

How we make our decisions

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

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

The assessment panel for this review

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

Jane Fisher-Norton	Lead visitor, Art Therapist, Drama Therapy
Karen Diamond	Lead visitor, Art Therapist, Music Therapy
Catherine Rice	Service User Expert Advisor
Alistair Ward-Boughton-Leigh	Education Quality Officer

Section 2: About the education provider

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers 1 HCPC-approved programme across 1 profession. It is a Higher Education provider and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 1999.

Practice areas delivered by the education provider

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

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

Institution performance data

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

Data Point	Benchmark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	22	40	2022	This change in the number from the benchmark number of 22 when the programme was originally approved to its modern-day number of 40 learners does indicate a substantial increase. However, we would expect reflections on this to show how this is resourced and that practice-based learning capacity made available.
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	N/A	2019-2020	This data point was marked as non-applicable as the data was not available at the start of the review. This may normally be available on the institution level but may not be available for HCPC specific programmes

				(programme is post graduate). We have since gained the data point as shown here in the value column. We usually obtain this data point via HESA, but this provider only has postgraduate HCPC approved programmes and therefore does not have HESA data.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	93%	N/A	2019-2020	This data point was marked as non-applicable. This may be available on the institution level but may not be available for HCPC specific programmes (programme is post graduate). We usually obtain this data point via HESA, but this provider only has postgraduate HCPC approved programmes and therefore does not have HESA data.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award		Gold	June 2017	A Gold award is the very highest award that TEF issued and indicates that a provider is performing very well and delivery high quality provision. TEF states the following regarding the gold award: “Based on the evidence available, the TEF Panel judged that the higher education provider delivers consistently outstanding teaching, learning and outcomes for its learners. It is of the highest quality found in the UK.
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	N/A	N/A	2022	This data point was not available for providers that offer only post graduate provision. The visitors were advised look at the reflections given (as well as in other non-available areas) and use that as the basis of their judgment. Additionally, we could explore whether the

				provider has alternative arrangements for this kind of data (PRES survey or another PG focussed survey)
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Section 3: Performance analysis and quality themes

Portfolio submission

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

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

Quality themes identified for further exploration

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

Section 4: Summary of findings

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

Overall findings on performance

Quality theme: Institution self-reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Resourcing, including financial stability –**
 - The Provider has reflected on various factors that has impacted them during the review period. These include the impact of Brexit and its effect on European Union learners' fees and the Covid-19 Pandemic. This meant for the 2020/21 academic year the financial outturn was a deficit.
 - The Provider has worked with their insurers regarding business interruption because of the Covid-19 Pandemic. They also stated it should be recognised these actuarial losses represent the value at a certain point in time. Furthermore, fluctuations of this nature (positive and negative) can occur over time. They reflected on how they continued to manage and oversee its financial position through its

Governing Body, Executive Management Group, and related committees. They maintained a ratio of 4:1 to 5:1 of applications to enrolled learners in the period under review. This demonstrates good levels of interest in dramatherapy and their specific programme.

- The Provider has a commitment to remain fully resourced to ensure the quality of learning outcomes can be maintained. Furthermore, also enhanced and ensuring there is appropriate support in place for staff involved in programme management and delivery.
- We noted concerns in their reflections regarding the post-Covid era, Brexit, and resourcing of programmes. We noted one point of development regarding the availability of resources for learners. This was being developed at the time of submission and would like to make a recommendation that once this work is concluded, and resources are made easily available to all learners the Provider reflect upon this and detail their progression at their next Performance Review.
- **Partnerships with other organisations –**
 - The Provider reflected on how since 2018, their placements officer has significantly improved the communications and contractual aspects of partnerships which create placement opportunities for learners. They recognised the importance of partnerships with industry and other professional organisations in terms of knowledge exchange, collaborative practice, and interdisciplinary opportunities. For this programme, the most significant partnerships are within the placement providers.
 - The Provider continued to host placement managers for a partnership in practice day annually. This enabled the programme team to outline developments in placement practices. Furthermore, to talk through the placement handbook and address some of the more challenging processes such as feedback on student practice from placement hosts. The training day also allows for trainers and placement providers to identify good practice.
 - The Provider discussed challenges they have faced. Example of these included a significant increase in the number of schools which have contacted them to enquire about placements. Many are unable to access or resource the therapeutic support financially and turn to learner placements for support. This has created additional administrative pressure on the Provider. They have worked to build and maintain this relationship and now have over 50 institutions in their placement partner organisation database.
 - They continued to develop partnerships within mental health care provision and already have partnerships with several of the London Mental Health Trusts. They reflected how this can take time but ultimately enables learners to gain experience of the National Health Service and mental health provisions. They continued to welcome a broadening of possible placement environments for learners. They continued to monitor and review the internal structures and resources in place to ensure placements can be successfully administered, delivered, assessed and reviewed.

- We noted the Provider's reflections and developments in this area and agree they are performing well. We have found the Provider to be performing well in this area with no risks to their quality or concerns going forward.
- **Academic and placement quality –**
 - The Provider reflected that learner experience of placements can be diverse. They worked to ensure their learners engaged a wide number of placements contexts as possible. They also recognised the experience gained and challenges presented by these varieties. Due to the diversity of placement across sectors, the monitoring and assessment of placement quality presented significant challenges. Certain placement providers were better resourced than others. Diversity of placements remained a feature the Provider wishes to maintain. They acknowledged it sometimes required specific and detailed attention to each placement host and each student's learning trajectory. This is achievable as the programme is small.
 - They reviewed learners' feedback on placements via their 'learner feedback document' comments on the quality of the learning experience. Following this feedback, they are developing agreements for placement providers to ensure hosts remain focused on the outcomes of placements. As well as providing support for placement providers in understanding how they can locate placed learners within their organisations and delivery. Feedback was being collated ahead of their annual 'Partnership in Practice Day' with placement providers where feedback is reviewed and future practices discussed.
 - The Provider also discussed how learners can anecdotally and through the graduate outcome surveys progress into related employment following graduation and industry. They reflected on how this demonstrated the effectiveness and quality of placement provision as part of learner training in preparing them for practice. They will continue to raise awareness of the Graduate Outcomes Survey for learners with the aim of achieving the highest possible response rate.
 - We found the Provider to have demonstrated a good and broad offering of placements for learners. Learners are being offered a varied level of placements that support their needs and ensure they meet the learning outcomes.
- **Interprofessional education –**
 - The Provider reflected how their approved programme is distinct as the only clinical training within their provision. This therefore means there is limited opportunity for interprofessional learning. They reflected on how they do however have a thriving postgraduate community. This creates opportunities for interdisciplinary engagement, practice, and research in areas such as movement, facilitation practice and production. Dramatherapy learners' collaboration with other learners they reflect, enhances their understanding of skills in other theatre/arts practices.
 - Where possible, the programme team encourage and facilitate interdisciplinary learning on placement via; ward rounds, learning opportunities or co-facilitated arts therapy practice. They reflected that

the majority of interprofessional learning takes place on placement where learners can work alongside a range of other professionals. The Provider continued to draw on learner feedback to review and enhance placement provision. It will be kept under review the need to reemphasise the importance of interdisciplinary learning.

- We found that the Providers approach to interprofessional education relies heavily on their placements. We noted that collaboration with other Higher Education Institutions (HEI) could achieve further levels of interprofessional education. There are other HEI's in London running arts therapy programmes who could be available for collaboration. The Provider expanded on their initial submission and demonstrated how visiting lecturers are made available to expand the breadth of interprofessional experience.
- **Service users and carers –**
 - The Provider reflected on how they have used service users' feedback to look at some of the languages employed in describing dramatherapy to different service users in order to make it understandable and accessible.
 - They have also discussed the audit they conducted in 2020 and SU&C feedback has been used in programme review and development. They also recognise that this is an area of ongoing development for them.
 - They have collected data from placement providers about the work of the learners and their professional practice and conduct on placement. Many of these providers worked closely with service users and used this first-hand feedback to inform their evaluation of the learners' work. The Provider is planning on running a pilot study which aims to draw together responses from service users about the learners dramatherapy practice in different settings. This will form the beginnings of a piece of research which tackles some of the complexities and ethical challenges of service users' involvement in the programme.
 - We found from the Providers submission that they have a system in place to involving service users and carers in their provision. We found this to be covered, but not extensively developed. We would expect a more robust system of service user engagement on programme co-production and a dedicated service user feedback mechanism rather than relying on placement feedback to ascertain this. The Provider has also detailed the plans they have in place to develop this area over the next academic year. Their strategic plan has also been made available and we welcome this development, the inclusion of the strategic plan and providers understanding of the need to develop this.
 - We would like to make an ongoing recommendation to this area, recommending; that their developments are implemented and reflected upon in their next Performance Review.
- **Equality and diversity –**
 - The Provider discussed how there has been a school-wide effort to address questions and issues of equality, diversity and inclusion within

its own structures. They have put in place institutional processes and support for inclusive and accessible practice throughout their operations at all levels.

- They recognise that issues for social mobility remain, particularly for learners entering postgraduate education from lower participation areas and socioeconomic groups. They continued to seek out opportunities to enhance access for learners, including expanding their existing scholarship and bursary availability and other support mechanisms.
- The Provider also discussed their 'repairing the curriculum' project. This focused on supporting programme teams to critically engage with their curricula and pedagogies. Reference lists and learning materials are being reviewed as part of this process. Further guidance was also developed to support increased accessibility of digital resources and systems, and identification of training and guidance needs for staff in delivering this.
- We noted the work the Provider has taken and that they have further plans going forward to develop this area further. We also note how the core reading list has been updated for 2022 and welcome the plan in place for annual reviews of this list. We have identified no risks to the Providers provision in this area and have no concerns. We note the Providers robust future plans and ongoing developments.
- **Horizon scanning –**
 - The Provider has discussed the ongoing minimisation of the arts within secondary and tertiary education as a risk to their provision. These subjects diminish in the secondary curriculum, this impacts on prospective student confidence in the viability of a career in the arts and as a result entering their programme.
 - They also reflected that the presence and profile of the arts therapies continues to develop as a psychological therapy. This has the capacity to reach and work with people in innovative ways. As research continues and evidence grows, different sectors are considering arts therapies as a viable and effective provision in different contexts. This raises the profile of art therapies in the wider wellbeing and within the context of psychological therapy whilst remaining distinct.
 - We noted the Providers reflections to this area and have found them to demonstrate that they are aware of the potential issues and is monitoring this. They have demonstrated how they are committed to continuing to provide training and we have no concerns going forward.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: We note two areas of development regarding the resources available for all learners and also on the involvement of Service Users and Carers in the Providers Provision. We did not identify these as a risk to their programme or quality of their provision.

Outstanding issues for follow up: We have identified two areas for development regarding programme resourcing and ensuring all resources are available for all learners and also on the involvement of Service Users and Carers. As the work remains ongoing here, we are noting these as points for development to be reflected upon at their next Performance Review

Quality theme: Thematic reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Impact of COVID-19 –**
 - The Provider reflected that moving to online learning and delivery was challenging for them, given the embodied and interpersonal nature of dramatherapy practice. This was compounded due to the added complexities of learning from home and online delivery resulted in learners often feeling isolated. This was made more complex as some learners returned to their home countries, meaning learning was spread across multiple time zones, and online delivery
 - The Provider has developed new approaches such as online workshops. The programme team went through a process of reflecting on what experiences / innovations can / should be incorporated into future models. Learners felt that a lack of in-person teaching compromised their overall experience created a sense of isolation and compromise.
 - Placements working online required support and guidance for learners, given the additional complexities and challenges to established protocols and ethical considerations. A guidance document on Zoom was created for learners and the programme team considered what experiences innovations can or should be incorporated into future models or approaches to programme delivery.
 - We noted from the Provider's learner satisfaction surveys has reported low levels of satisfaction in the provision. The Provider has clarified that satisfaction rates are improving, and they have plans to work on this. We also note the Provider's rapid response to the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of programme delivery. This includes their move to online learning. We have also found the Provider to be open in acknowledging the challenges present by Covid-19 both in the onset of the pandemic and in terms of ongoing challenges. This includes the isolation learners faced through the need to move learning online. We note the Provider having used the opportunities by the Covid-19 pandemic to develop a hybrid approach that supports learners. We are satisfied that the Provider provided a rapid and robust response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Furthermore, we note the system they have in place to support the needs of their learners in terms of pastoral support and curriculum delivery. We have no concerns going forward.
- **Use of technology: Changing learning, teaching and assessment methods –**
 - The Provider discussed how the Covid-19 Pandemic necessitated a move to delivery using online and technological tools and environments that staff had varying levels of confidence and capability. This demonstrated a need for more training, guidance, and reflections on their strategic approach to digital learning. The school-wide reflections continued to promote innovations and developments, training and strategic actions are being identified to support the School in technology enhanced learning.

- The Provider discussed how technology can be better used to increase engagement in their programme. Much of this was introduced as a necessity due to the challenges of the Covid-19 Pandemic but has included the recording of lectures. Being able to store sessions had the added benefit of enabling access for those Learners who wished to review the materials during their own time. Simulation of placements also developed as a possibility because of technological innovations. Learners were set alternative assessment tasks and more research led assignments to do with clinical practice.
- The Provider reflected that learner satisfaction increased due to these technological innovations, particularly in relation to the clarity of assessment criteria in advance of particular tasks. The Provider has begun the process of moving all possible assessment submissions and feedback to its virtual learning environment. This was to support learners and markers in engaging meaningfully with assessment criteria as part of learning and development.
- We noted that the Provider adapted quickly to the needs of delivery during Covid 19 and has seen benefits especially for neurodiverse learners of adapting delivery and will continue this. We found the Provider to be performing well in this area.
- **Apprenticeships –**
 - The Provider has acknowledged the Governments published documentation for allied health professions regarding apprenticeship provision. At the time of their submission they had not considered adopting apprenticeships as articulated here. They will continue to monitor developments and documentation and be ready to open conversations internally as part of any strategic planning for the future.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Quality theme: Sector body assessment reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Assessments against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education –**
 - The Provider stated that following the change to quality assessment in England, they have not been subject to the new Quality and Standards Review process. However, whilst they have not been subject to review, they have been reviewing their policies and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure we remain compliant with the Quality Code. They stated they will continue to benchmark their performance, policies, and practices in line with the new B1, B2, B4 and B5 conditions following their commencement.
 - We found the Provider to be performing well in the area and achieving the ‘gold standard’. The Provider has demonstrated the work that has gone in to achieving this and we have no concerns.
- **Assessment of practice education providers by external bodies –**

- The Provider stated that they have not been subject to reviews as a practice education provider by external bodies. They have not reflected further on this area but will continue to review this area going forward.
- We have found the Provider to have demonstrated that they have a system in place for this area and for using these assessment outcomes. We have found the Provider to be performing well in this area and have no concerns going forward.
- **National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes –**
 - The Provider has stated that their only provision within this review is at postgraduate level, and therefore out of scope for the National Student Survey. Further reflections are made on relevant student survey outcomes under ‘Data and Reflections’.
 - We noted and welcomed the introduction of the providers termly internal survey to provide this data point, and this was able to provide data of increasing learner satisfaction. We found this to be an important development and have no concerns going forward.
- **Office for Students monitoring –**
 - The Provider reflected that they have not been subject to any conditions of registration or monitoring following their acceptance to the OfS register in 2017. They stated that they maintain ongoing compliance with the OfS conditions of registration. They will continue to benchmark their performance, policies and practices in line with the new conditions once they commence.
- **Other professional regulators / professional bodies –**
 - The Provider stated that they have not been subject to any reviews by other professional regulators or professional bodies associated with the HCPC-regulated professions.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Areas of good and best practice identified through this review: The Provider has introduced termly internal survey to monitor and receive data on learner levels of satisfaction on this programme. We welcomed this as an important development and recognise their enterprising concept here.

Quality theme: Profession specific reflection

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Curriculum development –**
 - The Provider reflected that the structure of their curriculum has in essence remained the same since their last HCPC review. However, each year the programme team consider and review the content, in line with annual monitoring procedures and the learning and teaching committee. The added pressures of the Covid-19 Pandemic since 2020 resulted in a decision to pause to periodic review internally. This resulted in a more granular focus of curriculum development on elements of subject matter and sources across different units.

- The focus of development was predominantly framed in terms of remote delivery and hybrid approaches to programme delivery. The programme team are drawing on two recent publications to support critical engagement with the curriculum, and this is also helping learners engage with contemporary discourses.
- The programme team have reflected on the programme and contributed to the 'Repairing the Curriculum' project conducted centrally at the Provider. They did this to identify meaningful ways to decolonise the curriculum, in particular reframing and critically engaging with established norms. They began to teach race theory and outline epistemic frames which refer to intergenerational trauma, systems theory and group analysis. The cohort was always international, and learners bring cultural differences in learning styles and approaches. As well as a rich diversity of previous qualifications and professional experiences. The programme team have also looked at how the nature of learning itself can be addressed. In doing so acknowledging not only different learning styles in neurodiverse learners, but different attitudes in learners from various parts of the world who bring culturally specific values, beliefs and inherited knowledge.
- We found the Provider to have responded to the External Examiners feedback and made amendments to their provision following this. We also noted that learners had fed back on this and would recommend the Provider continued to monitor learner feedback in relation to this area. We have found the Provider to have a robust system in place for curriculum development and reviewing / incorporating advice and feedback from their stakeholders. We have no concerns regarding this area.
- **Development to reflect changes in professional body guidance –**
 - The Provider stated that their programme leader is a member of the training sub-committee of the British Association of Dramatherapists (BADth). They have been involved in the updating of the curriculum guidance document. This document, once mandated by the BADth executive will be passed on to the HCPC to inform and update the Standards of Education and Training and also the Standards of Proficiency (SETS and SOPS).
 - We have no concerns and have not identified risks regarding this section. We have found the provider to be performing well in this area.
- **Capacity of practice-based learning –**
 - The Provider reflected that they have been required to address their approach to managing and administering placements over the review period. The Provider's Placements Officer has updated and revised the administrative processes to support the agreement, allocation and assessment of placement activity by the programme team.
 - The Provider stated that they will keep under review the effectiveness of processes and practice for administration and modelling of placements. They are currently in the process of procuring a new learner management system. This will assist in the way in they manage host communications and centrally record placement activity and relationships.

- We noted the Providers reflection in this area and have no concerns and have regarding this section following our complete review. We have found the provider to be performing well in this area.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Quality theme: Stakeholder feedback and actions

Findings of the assessment panel:

- **Learners –**
 - The Provider stated that the Covid-19 pandemic significantly impacted and continued to affect learner's overall satisfaction with their experience. In the 2019/20 academic year, the provider reflected that, learners struggled with the sudden isolating shift to online learning. During 2020/21 academic year despite efforts to deliver up to one third of 'normal' teaching onsite the national lockdown in the spring term was difficult for learners and staff. Additional support and activities were put in place which are being delivered to alumni from these cohorts to support their ongoing development.
 - The Provider reflected that the biggest impact to learners was the loss of in-person teaching. Survey outcomes showed that as they've been able to increase their onsite delivery during the 2020/21 academic year, learners have been more satisfied with their experience. The Provider managed this delivery through its emergency management procedures and teams, in close liaison with local and national public health organisations.
 - The Provider reflected that since the 2018/19 academic year, they have had no learner or graduate complaints progressed through their internal procedures or processes. They discussed that this demonstrated that the learning opportunities, environment and related pastoral / academic support are well regarded by learners and meeting their expectations. Furthermore, this demonstrated the effective way they have been able to manage and respond to complaints in-house. They will continue to ensure that where applicable, recommended steps for enhancement are actioned in response to formal complaints.
 - We noted the Providers reflection in this area and have no concerns and have regarding this section following our complete review. We have found the provider to be performing well in this area.
- **Practice placement educators –**
 - The Provider reflected on how placement educators are involved in their annual 'Partnership in Practice Day' in briefings on hosting learners and discussions about previous feedback from learners, hosts and service users. Host are also able to discuss issues, concerns and areas for development with the programme team and Placements Officer throughout the year. .
 - We noted the Provider's reflections in this area but would have expected further feedback from the practise educators. We note a day of training is in place, but not an opportunity to gain feedback. We also

noted the positive developments such as their plan to reinstate the annual 'partnerships and placement days', the associated training days and the 'placements forum meeting'. We have no concerns going forward.

- **External examiners –**

- The Provider reflected that in recent years their external examiner has identified a trend in some learner work of being inward facing. , Having the capacity to critically engage with single or multiple theoretical concepts / frameworks. This highlighted a need to support learners in using such frameworks and concepts to enhance the investigations within their work. An introductory session on Ontology and Epistemology is being developed to help develop learners' critical engagement with theory.
- They reflected on how they have acknowledged feedback received from examiners and have worked to respond to this. This includes criteria focused on session planning, facilitation and working within emergent process of client sessions has been incorporated into the Facilitation Practice unit. Additionally, the programme team reviewed their pedagogical approaches, drawing on Schon's model of reflective praxis as an accessible framework for learners.
- The Provider also stated that their examiners during the period under review have consistently confirmed the appropriateness of academic standards, and the fairness, validity and reliability of assessment and marking processes.
- We note from the Providers submission that their External Examiner is not on the HCPC register. We found that we would benefit from further information on their level of experience, qualification and knowledge of HCPC training. The Provider clarified the system in place which includes them using their nomination form to demonstrate knowledge and experience. Additionally, their induction process, the requirements for HCPC training were revisited to re-affirm awareness of these and they are continuously considered as part of their external examiner processes. We noted the Providers ongoing monitoring of this area and are assured that there is a robust system in place to monitor and review their External Examiner's.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Data and reflections

Findings of the assessment panel: In our assessment we reviewed several data points regarding learner continuation rates, employability of learners after completion, Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) scoring and the National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score. Not all providers have this data available, but we ask if they can provide this data via alternative means. The Provider has reflected on each of these areas as shown below:

- **Aggregation of percentage of learners not continuing:**

- The Provider reflects that their learner numbers are small, with 123 learners enrolled on years 1 and 2 of the programme between 2018/19 and 2020/21. A further 44 learners were currently enrolled in 2021/22's academic year. They discuss how a 3% threshold is challenging in context equating to just over 1 full time educator learner across two concurrent cohorts. However, they closely monitor learner progress and reflect on challenges, successes and areas for development through annual monitoring processes. A variance of one or more student year-on-year can significantly affect continuation percentages.
 - An average of 92% of learner progressed from year 1 to year 2 between 2018/19 and 2020/21, with 92% of learners completing their degrees. Only 4 learners in the past three years have taken a break in studies. Further, only one learner has withdrawn during this period of time. They reflect that they have been able to achieve this by supporting their learners throughout the challenges presented by the Covid-19 Pandemic. They will continue to monitor this as we move to the new normal and working alongside continuing covid challenges
- **Aggregation of percentage of those who complete programmes in employment / further study:**
 - The Provider discussed the transition from the Destination of Leavers of Higher Education survey to the Graduate Outcomes Survey. A lag in reporting meant that the most recent available data on leavers is from 2019/20 academic year. Similarly to many providers across the sector, we have also seen response rates fall and issues with learner resits falling across reporting years impacts on reporting cohorts. Furthermore, due to their our low learner numbers, a difference of one or two learners can have a substantial impact on how data is presented.
 - Despite the challenging context their learners found themselves in during the Covid-19 Pandemic, less than 10% of respondents were unemployed following their completion in 2020. The Provider will continue to monitor this trend as more data becomes available in the new format the survey provides as part of annual and periodic programme review processes. This will also enable them to highlight developments more usefully in future HCPC Performance Reviews.
 - **Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award:**
 - The Provider discussed various points regarding their ongoing relationship with TEF. This includes the institution retaining the Gold standard award and their commitment to fully engage in future TEF exercises, following the outcome of the recent OfS consultation on the future of TEF. But also, that their Learners actively boycotted the National Student Survey between 2016/17 and 2019/20 due to the TEF's proposed relationship to increasing fees and its wider role in the marketisation of higher education. They stated that whilst the NSS is not directly relevant to their provision, as a provider they have worked

with their learners and programme teams to re-engage staff and learners in the NSS, resulting in publishable results for 2020/21 and 2021/22. Once the outcome of the OfS consultation on the future of TEF is confirmed, they will engage with the next exercise.

- **National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27):**
 - The Provider reflects that the NSS is out of scope for their post-graduate (HCPC-approved provision) but, they do provide alternative opportunities through an internal and external survey for Drama and Movement Therapy learners to feedback on their experience.
 - The Provider also stated that they have taken part in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) offered by AdvanceHE in 2018 and 2019. Following the Covid-19 Pandemic, the School introduced a more bespoke survey to understand learners views and experience of remote and hybrid delivery in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. This resulted in a decision not to take part in PTES in 2020. Overall satisfaction for the previous three years was however:
 - 100% (PTES, both years 2019)
 - 45% Overall, 33% Year 1 50% Year 2 (internal survey focused on the remote summer term 2020)
 - 89% (PTES 2021, 93% Year 1, 75% Year 2)
 - This they stated demonstrates the significant challenges posed to learners in switching from a highly face-to-face and group-based experience to studying remotely. But also shows high levels of satisfaction before the Covid-19 Pandemic and in 2021. The success of the programme team in responding to the challenges of a testing teaching year navigating national lockdowns and teaching predominantly at distance. They discussed that now the wider sector moves to acclimatise to working in a post-covid environment they are examining what changes to the curriculum and pedagogy which may be beneficial and appropriate to retain.
- **Data and Reflections:**
 - In terms of supplying data, the Provider has stated they are able to supply two data points. We usually work with four data points provided by HESA, TEF (we already have this for this Provider) and OFS (NSS). The Provider has stated they will be able to Provider the following data:
 - Continuation rates: Provider is able to provide this, but would seek clarification from the HCPC as to whether this would be in line with HESA publication cycles (up to 18 months behind prior to the sector-wide deployment of data futures) and rounding methodologies (to 5 learners). We would expect to receive the data the provider can supply on an annual basis.
 - Graduate outcomes: due to their small learner numbers and the nationwide difficulties in achieving high thresholds, this data may be limited in its utility and coverage.
 - Teaching quality and learning satisfaction: The Provider to provide student feedback in this area. However, as this provision

is postgraduate and at this time there are no mandatory means to collect this data (e.g. a PG NSS). It may be that the nature of this changes from year to year. We note that the Provider has introduced a termly survey to monitor learner satisfaction. We propose that we could receive this data on an annual basis. This would satisfy our request for this data point.

- We noted that the Provider has worked hard to comprehensively supply data and has reflected on this well. We note a good approach to the Performance Review process and the development of this data will lead to its inclusion in their next Performance Review.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Outstanding issues for follow up: None

Section 5: Issues identified for further review

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

Referrals to next scheduled performance review

Programme Resourcing

Summary of issue: We noted from the Providers submission that they have systems and procedures in place and that their provision is fully resourced and sustainable. The provider also reflected on the challenges they have faced throughout the monitoring period but are working to ensure that all resourced are available to all learners. They have reflected that their financial models relating to the resourcing of programmes is currently being reviewed. We noted that this is being developed and are making a recommendation that this work is concluded, and resources are made easily available to all learners. This is to be considered by the provider and reflected upon to demonstrate their progress here at the next Performance Review.

Service User and Carer Involvement on the Providers Programmes

Summary of issue: We noted from the Providers submission that they have a system in place to involving service users and carers in their provision. But have not found this to be extensively developed or thorough. We do note that the Provider has plans in place to develop this as explained in their strategic plan over the next academic year. We are recommending that they continue as planned and reflect on how this developed. Furthermore, how the new plans were introduced and if they have had any feedback on their new system as part of their next Performance Review.

Section 6: Decision on performance review outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

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

- The education provider's next engagement with the performance review process should be in the 2023-24 academic year

Reason for this recommendation: We are recommending an ongoing monitoring period of 2-years. This recommendation is to allow the provider to act upon the recommendations for development we have made and to implement the plans they have for the next academic year. Furthermore, to also pilot these new processes, making any adaptations or changes as necessary. We also want to acknowledge the work the Provider has put in to develop their data points. We are unable to consider this for this review. But want to develop a formal system to receive this data over the ongoing monitoring period and for it to be included in their next Performance Review.

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	First intake date	Cohort number	Learner number
MA Drama and Movement Therapy	FT (Full time)	01/10/2016	1	22

ROYAL CENTRAL

SCHOOL OF SPEECH & DRAMA · UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Performance Review Observations

1 Context

- 1.1 The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama ("Central") is a specialist, conservatoire provider within the English higher education sector. Our specialisms span the performing arts, including the training of *onstage* (performance), *offstage* (production) and *in society* (practice) practitioners. We have one programme which has received ongoing approval for from the HCPC, a two-year Master of Arts in Drama and Movement Therapy.
- 1.2 Central provided a submission for the Performance Review Process on the 27th May 2022. Following a request for additional information, we submitted further evidence and clarifications on the 25th July 2022.
- 1.3 In September, we were updated that the allocated visitors met on the 1st September 2022 and would be recommending a three-year monitoring period. In December 2022 we were informed that, due to a number of factors internal to the HCPC, the Education and Training Committee Panel (ETCP) would review reports based on the order in which they had been submitted by providers in January and February 2023.
- 1.4 In March 2023, we were informed that the visitors would now be recommending an ongoing monitoring period of two years to the ETCP on the 31st March 2023, due to clarifications from the ETCP regarding their expectations for data used as part of the Review process.
- 1.5 The report from the visitors acknowledged that the School did 'not have the traditional four data points required for longer than two-year monitoring periods' [p.1].

2 Observations

Clarifications

- 2.1 The data points for intended learner numbers are benchmarked at 22, with an assigned value of 40 which is highlighted in the report as a 'substantial increase' [p.6]. We would wish to clarify that our annual intake of students remains approximate to 22 students, however given the two-year duration of the MA this results in a duplication in numbers rather than intake. This has been consistent throughout our previous ongoing approval from the HCPC.
- 2.2 The data points for non-continuation of learners and percentage of graduates in employment/further study was 'This data point was marked as non-applicable as the data was not available at the start of the review' [p.6&7], which is highlighted as being down to the data being unavailable to the HCPC from HESA. We provided the data which we have submitted and verified through HESA data returns processes as evidence in support of our submission.
- 2.3 The data point for the School's Teaching Excellence Framework was available [p.7], however we would wish to clarify that in the context of our provision the rating is not applicable as the TEF assessment exercise relates exclusively to undergraduate provision.

- 2.4 Relatedly, data was not available for the National Student Survey as the School's provision in this area is out of scope for the NSS as it is postgraduate. We would reflect that this will not be an uncommon factor affecting arts, drama and music therapy provision (though recognise this may be in the context of a larger portfolio of approved provision at other providers).

The Outcomes

- 2.5 We acknowledge the risks and outstanding issues to follow up at the point of the School's next Review, and do not wish to contest these.
- 2.6 As previously outlined [paras 1.2-1.4], the timeline for receiving an outcome from the submission has been nearly a year. In the context of a two-year recommended monitoring period, this means that the provider will only have been 'out' of the review process for perhaps one complete academic cycle. We hope that, as part of the ongoing development of this process, the risk-based approach which was highlighted as an important part of the revised approach to quality assurance by the HCPC will be able to provide confidence in providers such as Central, who are not uncommon in the scale and scope of their accredited provision in arts therapies (in terms of student numbers and level of study). It would be concerning if the unavailability of data at the outset of a process cannot be satisfied with confidence by providers submitting data as has been submitted and confirmed by HESA as part of ongoing statutory reporting in future iterations of the process. Further, the use of TEF and NSS as metrics for institution performance data within the exercise for postgraduate taught provision can only be given a proxy by internal or opt-in external reference data (such as the AdvanceHE Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey) in England whilst there remains no Masters-level NSS equivalent (though this has previously been considered).

The Process

- 2.7 We wish to make observations regarding the timeframes associated with Performance Review, particularly to help manage the expectations of providers. It was unclear throughout the process what the related timelines would be. We would recommend that the following deadlines be clarified for providers to help plan appropriately to efficiently and effectively engage with this process:
- when providers can expect to receive further requests for information from visitors;
 - when the visitors reports will be received, and;
 - which ETCP meeting a provider is intended to be considered.
- 2.8 We would also observe that the process for submitting clarifications in response to visitor questions in our experience at several points required signposting references within evidence already provided as part of the initial submission. We wonder if it would be helpful to have templates for providing supporting information which may be of assistance to the visitors and the process more widely.
- 2.9 Finally, we would like to place on record our thanks to our Education Quality Officer for their support and engagement throughout this process.

3 Further information