

The Arts Educational Schools TEF Submission 2023

1. Provider context

The Arts Educational Schools (ArtsEd) is a small, specialist provider of conservatoire education focused on the constantly evolving needs of the performing arts industry in the 21st century. ArtsEd is structured as the School of Acting and the School of Musical Theatre through which our higher education provision is delivered, and an independent day school and sixth form for pupils from 11-18 years. We also provide a broad range of non-HE evening, weekend and holiday courses. Our vision, as set out in our Strategic Plan 2020-2025, is to nurture the finest creative talent, fuelling each individual's passion for performance and enabling careers in the arts through exceptional teaching and outstanding pastoral care.

This submission is focused on our full-time BA (Hons) courses in Acting and in Musical Theatre and our full-time CertHE courses. There is substantial competition for places on our courses. In 2021-22, the ratio of applications to places was: BA Acting 26.2:1; BA Musical Theatre 24.3:1; CertHE Acting 2.7:1; and CertHE Musical Theatre 3.6:1.

In 2021-22, there were 316 students studying on our BA and CertHE courses, of which 80.1% (253) were BA students and 19.9% (63) were CertHE students. We also offer an MA Acting which is outside of the scope of this submission.

Our higher education courses are validated by City, University of London (City), through a partnership that has been in place since 2001. The BA Musical Theatre was most recently revalidated in 2017 and the BA Acting was revalidated in 2020. The CertHE courses were validated for the first time in 2020. These are 1-year foundation courses and on completion students normally progress onto a 3-year honours degree either at ArtsEd or another institution. All our higher education courses are subject to City's quality assurance framework and are overseen by the ArtsEd Course Board which meets termly. The Board's membership includes senior academic staff in cognate disciplines from City, senior academic staff from ArtsEd and an external advisor who is a practitioner in the performing arts. This long-standing partnership with City enables mutual dialogue, debate and engagement in course design and pedagogy, and provides our students with access to City's library and IT services and associate membership of its Students' Union, complementing the resources available at ArtsEd.

Our courses are predominantly delivered from our premises in Chiswick, West London. The CertHE course in Acting is based in specialist studios at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre a short distance from ArtsEd's main building. Students on this course are also able to access all the facilities and resources at the main building.

Our BA courses are also validated as Level 6 Professional and Performing Arts Diplomas by Trinity College London enabling us to offer Dance and Drama Awards funded by the Department for Education. These awards provide financial support for tuition fees and living costs for a third of our BA students, widening access to students who are unable to self-fund their studies, and enable them to receive a widely-recognised Level 6 Diploma award on successful completion of their course as well as the BA degree award. The curriculum, teaching and assessment of the Level 6 Diplomas are identical to the BA courses but are subject to the additional validation and external assessment processes of Trinity College London. We also receive inspections by Ofsted in relation

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to these Level 6 Diplomas and were rated Outstanding in the last Ofsted visit in November 2015 with the inspection report commenting that '*Staff have excellent subject knowledge, and use their insight and experience of the performing arts profession well to motivate and engage students. Leaders skilfully blend the expertise of full-time teachers with that of professional practitioners, who make an invaluable contribution, for example to key performance projects. All staff help to prepare students very well to understand the industry in which they aspire to work.*'

We are an accredited school of the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre (CDMT), which makes periodic assessments of the quality of professional performing arts training through an institutional review by a panel of industry experts. CDMT accreditation is highly regarded within the profession. It enables us to attract leading professionals to contribute to course delivery (SE3) and increases the attractiveness of our graduates to potential employers (SO1). Our current CDMT accreditation period, which relates to our BA courses, began in January 2020 following a visit by a panel in which all CDMT accreditation criteria covering leadership and management, curriculum, student experience and student outcomes, were fully met. We received a routine re-accreditation visit in November 2022 with the CDMT panel's findings due to be received in spring 2023.

Development of the independent student submission has been led by three of our elected student representatives who are joint heads of the ArtsEd Students Union. Our students have chosen to prepare a video submission which we have supported by providing access to filming and editing facilities, and technical staff support to edit the submission under the students' direction. Our primary and secondary TEF contacts, along with the Director of each School, had an initial meeting with the TEF student leads to discuss the purpose of the TEF and the assessment process. A subsequent meeting took place between the student leads, these staff, the Principal and the member of our governing body who chairs our Higher Education (HE) Committee, to discuss progress with the development of the provider and student submissions, and to answer queries that the students had. These meetings have been supplemented by informal discussions between staff and the student leads.

Draft provider and student submissions were shared between the staff and student teams working on them to obtain feedback. Our provider submission was also considered by our HE Committee, which has staff and student representation covering all our HE courses.

There are a number of developments arising from our strategic plan which underpin our commitment to promoting and practicing inclusivity and diversity in every aspect of our provision. We consider that a diverse student body is a key aspect of this and have taken steps to maintain our success in attracting students from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and other widening participation backgrounds. These include reducing the cost of audition attendance via free online first round auditions, audition fee waivers and second round auditions across the country, increasing the diversity of our teaching staff and their visibility at auditions, and revising our curriculum and pedagogy to be genuinely inclusive and appealing to a diverse group of students.

In 2021-22, 31% of new student entrants to our BA courses were from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds compared to 21.3% in 2017-18. The proportion of students from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds across our CertHE and BA student body was 27.2% in 2021-22. In 2021-22, the proportion of our BA and CertHE students who had declared one or more disabilities was 25.6%, 57.6% were female and 42.4% were male. In 2020-21, the proportion of BA and CertHE students from IMD quartiles 1 or 2 was 16.5%.

To help widen opportunity we have an extensive outreach programme. This programme is central to our commitment to access and inclusion. We aim to build strong connections and long-lasting relationships with our local communities and youth groups providing resources, mentorship, and practical programmes inspiring people of all backgrounds to explore the diversity of the arts. We manage a Scholarship and Bursary Fund to assist students to study to a higher qualification; this comprises externally-sponsored scholarships and our own bursaries, distributing 73 awards in 2022 amounting to £300,326.



2. Student experience

2.1 Teaching, course content, feedback and assessment and professional practice (SE1, SE2, SE3)

The student learning experience at ArtsEd is characterised by intensive and specialist technical teaching with a substantial theoretical underpinning, delivered by contemporary practitioners from the in-house teaching staff as well as visiting industry professionals, which enables the development of students as rounded professional practitioners. All our students receive 30-35 contact hours of teaching each week over 30-36 weeks per year depending on the course. Classes have a maximum size of 18 students and all students receive frequent timetabled one-to-one teaching focusing on their individual needs and development. In addition, we have an open-door policy through which students can organise one-to-one sessions of up to 45 minutes to support their practical lessons.

The quality and effectiveness of our course content, teaching, and assessment and feedback practices is confirmed by the feedback we receive from our students and by professional bodies which accredit and validate our BA courses. Our TEF indicators for teaching (11% above

benchmark) and assessment and feedback (9% above benchmark) evidence the outstanding educational experience at ArtsEd, which is achieved through our individualised approach to student learning, the integration of professional practice and employer engagement, and the active steps we have taken to embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within our provision.

All ArtsEd students benefit from a deliberately individualised approach to their learning, which stretches them to their fullest potential and promotes their engagement with the learning process (SE1, SE2). This contributes to our high levels of student satisfaction (SE1) as well as continuation and completion (SO1 and SO2). For example:

- Our teaching and curriculum are tailored to the diversity of each cohort recognising the wide spectrum of student backgrounds from a global and inclusive perspective. This breaks away from the established and traditional way of performing arts training in which students are expected to change themselves to fit the mould. In contrast, we have taken active steps to enrich our course content and delivery using the multitude of qualities and cultural references our students and staff bring with them as a lived experience. Specific examples of how this takes place are provided on pages 7-8.
- BA Musical Theatre students are streamed according to their dance ability at audition which enables us to observe and assess student potential. This approach also allows us to ensure the teaching is tailored to each group's abilities. Additionally, notes are made during the admissions process at audition on students' singing voices so that appropriate technique and repertoire teachers can be assigned to each student.
- BA students receive weekly one-to-one tutorials for the duration of their courses focusing on discipline-specific individual skills development. In Acting, this is through weekly one-to-one voice tutorials, which support the development of vocal technique in a detailed and bespoke manner. In Musical Theatre, individual singing lessons twice a week focus on individual singing technique and development of a personal song repertoire.
- Final year BA Acting students work in pairs on duologue preparation with an external director that feeds into mock auditions set up with industry professionals. The focus is on the individual development of the actors, supporting their transition to industry. All plays and films chosen are inclusive and reflective of race, gender and the culture of each student cohort promoting their engagement with the learning process.
- Final year BA Musical Theatre students undertake their showcase presentation on a one-to-one basis with a director and a musical director. The songs for the showcase are specifically selected by each student with the approval of staff to highlight their individual performance strengths for presentation to agents and casting directors, contributing to successful employment outcomes (SO3). Students have 5-6 individual practice auditions with visiting casting directors in their final year, giving them the opportunity to practice real world auditions while putting into practice the skills developed in year 2.

Our successful approach to teaching has received external recognition from professional bodies based on direct observation in the learning environment. In its revalidation of the BA courses as Level 6 Diplomas in October 2019 which involved a 3-day panel visit to ArtsEd, Trinity College London observed a range of classes and noted in the revalidation reports for both BA courses that *'the standard of teaching throughout was at a very high level, with a strong focus on individual student needs and development.'* Teaching on our BA courses was also observed in the classroom and its quality recognised by the CDMT at its reaccreditation visit in January 2020 during which it observed eight classes covering all BA years. The visit report arising from that event states that

'Members of the Panel who observed teaching and learning were unanimous in agreement to the excellence of what was seen. Students were completely engaged with the learning process, working to their full potential...The teaching observed at ArtsEd was uniformly inspired, well-prepared and delivered with clarity and imagination. It was clearly part of an overall plan of integrated learning which was appropriate to the professional and intellectual needs of students'.

Our CertHE students are taught by the same staff who deliver our BA courses and they benefit from the same individualised approach to their learning, but with a focus on preparing them for application and transition to BA programmes (SE1). Our annual surveys of CertHE students at the end of their course provide evidence of the outstanding quality of their educational experience. In the end-of-course survey of CertHE Musical Theatre students, we asked whether students agree with the statement 'the standard of the teaching on the course is high'. All respondents agreed with this statement in both the 2021 and 2022 surveys, which had response rates of 93% and 83% respectively. Using an open approach to our end-of-course survey for the CertHE Acting, students were asked for qualitative opinions about their experience in 2021 and 2022. Comments were received from 72% and 97% of those surveyed, respectively, with positive comments on their learning experience from all respondents.

Like the BA students, CertHE Musical Theatre students are grouped according to their dance ability, are allocated singing teachers following assessment of their singing voices and receive twice-weekly one-to-one singing lessons. We work with each CertHE Musical Theatre student to build a repertoire folder of singing material that is specific to them to further their development in preparation for auditions for entry to BA courses. CertHE Acting students receive individual support and feedback for audition monologues and, like BA students, work in pairs on duologue preparation designed for their individual development, with a focus on preparing for auditions for BA courses.

Our TEF indicator for assessment and feedback is outstanding (9% above benchmark) in an area which the sector traditionally finds challenging providing evidence that our approaches in this area are highly effective (SE1). Targeted actions were taken in response to the indicator for assessment and feedback in 2019-20 of high quality (in line with benchmark), which was the first year affected by the pandemic. These actions included developing a personal approach to checking students' understanding of assessment and feedback and its application to learning; greater focus on providing students with clarity about what is being assessed, how this relates to their learning and the timing of assessments; consolidating and enhancing best practice guidelines for staff and students on giving and receiving assessment and feedback; and consolidating verbal feedback into a written summary to avoid ambiguity. The impact of these actions is demonstrated by a return to outstanding indicators in 2020-21 (9.6% above benchmark) and 2021-22 (9.7% above benchmark).

Assessment is an integral part of the educational experience at ArtsEd with a focus in the design of assessment on the progressive development of students' knowledge and skills to meet industry expectations (SO4, SO5). Formative assessments are designed to give continual verbal and written feedback to support student learning. They are programmed to enable time for students to work with tutors to address their individual challenges, prior to summative assessment for any given project or module (SE1).

Students receive formal written feedback after each project from the heads of department and the Director of the relevant School. Students also receive verbal feedback as a group from the creative

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team for each project. Following, summative assessments at the end of each year, heads of department provide tailored and bespoke feedback to each BA student and CertHE Acting student thereby consolidating all feedback given by teaching staff and assessors. CertHE Musical Theatre students are assessed on a continuous basis throughout the year and receive continuous formative feedback all through the year.

All External Examiners reports are independently scrutinised by our validating partner university to identify areas of strength and good practice that exceed expected practice and requirements. Through this process, City identified nine areas of strength/good practice relating to our assessment and feedback practices highlighted in External Examiner reports received during the period 2018-19 – 2021-22. For example, the CertHE Acting External Examiner commented in their 2021-22 report that *'The assessment diet is broad ranging from different performance tasks, portfolios, digital reflective tasks and skills assessments. Commendably learner's feedback is integrated into one assessment task which was in the form of call and response, with learners writing their essays based on the practical performance feedback they had received. This modality of authentic feedback is an outstanding example of relevant, practical, tailored assessment.'* In commenting on the ensemble singing assessment in year 1, the BA Musical Theatre External Examiner noted in their 2021-22 report that *'This was an excellent method of assessment based on the requirements of a professional rehearsal, taking into consideration the application of the technical voice in year 1: release, alignment, support, resonance, and articulation.'*

The content of our BA courses and their delivery are designed to develop students' skills and attributes in strong alignment with the needs of the profession, inspiring them to engage with their learning and stretching them to their fullest potential (SE2, SE3, SO4). Frequent engagement with working stage and screen professionals ensures course content remains current and relevant and our employment outcomes (SO3), as set out in section 3, demonstrate that graduates meet the needs of the profession. Our strong reputation within the industry enables us to secure the performing rights to shows before other drama schools and occasionally before professional theatres, including recent productions of *Bandstand* and Disney's *Newsies*, which exposes students to a range of material and learning not available in other courses. Our television work within the BA Acting has been recognised internationally demonstrating our students are working in line with industry expectations. For example, an original short film, *The Phoenix*, with a cast of third year BA Acting students as part of their final year of study, directed by ArtsEd's Head of Film, TV and Audio, and competing with films produced by industry professionals, won Best Short Film at the ARFF International Film Festival Paris in 2021.

Musical Theatre students are developed to be highly skilled in all three key musical theatre disciplines of acting, singing and dance (the so-called 'triple threat') and Acting students develop strengths in the breadth of skills required to work across all media including the stage, screen and radio. The majority of teaching in the first year of the BA courses is by in-house staff, developing students' understanding of the theory underpinning their practice and building their confidence in their technical skills. Engagement with the industry progressively increases in the second year as students are introduced to a wide range of practitioners through professional practice modules, projects and production showings to staff and students on other courses including the CertHE courses. These increasingly require the students to successfully combine their skills and understanding across disciplines such as connecting work between the stage and screen in their projects. The final year is fully industry-facing with students stretched to apply and demonstrate all their learning across disciplines through the demanding rehearsal processes and performances of

public productions, showreels and films. For example, when filming BA Acting showreels, students must also undertake all film set roles in public-facing locations as part of the crew for other students as well as demonstrating their skills as actors. This process is upscaled further for the filming of six short films in the following term, working with professional directors and cinematographers to shoot each film in 3 days. BA Musical Theatre students are required to distil their learning into 30 minutes in the third-year showcase as a fully-fledged 'West End' performance.

The numerous ways in which professional practice and employer engagement (SE2 and SE3) are embedded within our provision include:

- BA students working exclusively with external creatives and directors on their third year shows and productions requiring them to work in line with industry standards and expectations. Trinity College London commended this as a model of good practice in its revalidation of the BA courses in October 2019.
- The self-taping of auditions, which was introduced as a component within the BA Acting in 2019 as part of audition technique prior to the pandemic. This generated positive feedback on the outcomes and pre-empted later developments within the industry. Shortly after the start of the pandemic, this practice became the only form of auditioning within the industry and the higher education sector and has been retained by ArtsEd due to the positive feedback received on the outputs. It has since become the predominant mode of auditions for many types of production, including film, television, theatres and first round drama school auditions, and has been extended to musical theatre where it has also been adopted by the industry.
- Professional filming of the BA Musical Theatre showcase performances in an ArtsEd theatre with production support for two filmed songs for each student. This development was one of our active responses to the constraints of the pandemic when live performances attended by agents were not possible and has been retained for the future. The films are edited and presented on the ArtsEd website, and links are sent to agents, casting directors and other industry professionals, which supports students in securing their first professional contracts.
- The use of industry-based freelance directors to accompany song workshop sessions (BA Musical Theatre students), undertake BA professional auditions and deliver guest classes to all BA students.
- The First Year Development Week in which first-year BA Musical Theatre students work with acclaimed creatives across all three musical theatre disciplines (acting, singing and dancing) on professional work in different stages of development.
- Third year 'new writing' weeks where BA Musical Theatre students work with creatives and companies on more detailed and sophisticated development of real-life productions. Often this continues work from First Year Development Week, so that students are involved in a long arc of the development of new work.
- External performance opportunities where students put their learning into practice in professional performance environments. For example, performances at awards ceremonies including the Olivier awards, BBC Carlton Hobbs Prize and Spotlight Prize events.
- Four fully-produced musicals or plays, as appropriate to the course, for final year BA students are performed in the state-of-the-art, Andrew Lloyd Webber theatre. This enables the students to experience fully the environment of a working professional theatre and understand how to implement and translate skills learnt across the first two years into a

professional musical or play including working with a live orchestra, radio mics and fully designed sets.

- BA Acting students develop a complete package to showcase their work to industry agents and casting directors by the end of their course, including a showcase performance in a central London venue, production of showreels and six original screenplays made to industry standard with professional directors of photography and directors from industry, and production of voice reels directed by an experienced voice artist and director.
- BA Acting students undergo mock auditions with agents and casting agents, and senior casting directors from the National Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Theatre in preparation for the industry.



Whilst the primary aim of our CertHE courses is to develop the skills that students require for successful entry and transition to BA programmes in the performing arts, employer engagement is also a key feature of their learning experience (SE3). Workshops with industry professionals take place throughout the year and they deliver seminars on audition preparation. In the final term, students rehearse and perform in a public production at an external venue to invited guests and industry professionals.

Over the period covered by this TEF submission we have taken active steps to embed our Strategic Plan commitment to 'Promote and Celebrate Inclusivity and Diversity' within our course content and teaching delivery. This work has been directly informed by research undertaken by the then Director of the School of Acting, now Principal, as part of her Doctorate in Education completed in 2021 (SE3). The research explored how inclusivity could be practically actioned in UK Higher Education actor training by finding space and time for an equitable platform of embodied learning and embodied knowledge, challenging the established assumption that acting teaching practices are universal. The research contributed to broadening the discourse in how HE actor training is taught, introducing a creative pedagogic transcultural call-and-response approach. It

fed into a holistic review and redesign of the content and delivery of the BA Acting course for its last revalidation in 2020 in order to embed equity, diversity and inclusion throughout. The BA Acting External Examiner commented in their 2020-21 report that '*the course is at the forefront of the debate of decolonising the curriculum...*'. Specific changes that were introduced within the redesigned BA Acting course from 2020-21 include:

- Increasing the diverse range of materials and visiting industry and academic professionals that students work with.
- The development of commissioned plays, where writers are invited to work with students over the 18 months before their final plays. These plays are specifically developed with students and written for the specific cohort. This allows the director/writer to tailor the drama to the students encompassing their gender and the diversity of the student group.
- The inclusion of British Sign Language (BSL) where students work with a qualified BSL tutor to reach level 1 standard. Through using the whole body in this 3D form of physical communication, students engage with non-verbal interaction as a form of expressivity.
- Embedding inclusive language and an inclusive approach within the teaching of 'global voices' (traditionally known within drama training as 'accents') so that all voices are considered equally, and so that students value and develop respect for all voices. Our students are able to develop their own symbols for the notation of the sounds of people's voices rather than being required to learn and use the phonetic alphabet traditionally used in actor training, which can be challenging for dyslexic students in particular.

Our outstanding split teaching indicators provide evidence of the success of this work, which for black students is 12.4% above benchmark compared to 10.5% above benchmark for white students, and for students with a reported disability is 12.2% above benchmark compared to 10.8% above benchmark for students with no reported disability. Notably, all of these indicators are well-above benchmark, suggesting that our approach is not to the detriment of any student cohort.

As part of the development of an institutional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, we conducted surveys with students in March 2021, the results of which provide evidence of the impact of actions undertaken within the School of Acting on course content and delivery (SE7). The survey was conducted with 118 BA and MA students in the School of Acting with the following results:

- 92% agreed that 'ArtsEd creates an environment that upholds Equality, Inclusion and Diversity in contemporary Actor training' with a 96% response rate.
- 90% agreed that 'ArtsEd delivers a robust curriculum that embodies Equality, Inclusion and Diversity for its Actors in training' with a 91% response rate.

This work has also informed the content and delivery of the BA Musical Theatre course and our CertHE provision, including the integration of approaches to inclusivity within global voice training established within the BA Acting and the diversification of the materials and professionals that students engage with in their courses. For example, since 2020, acting projects within the BA Musical Theatre have been directed by at least 62% female-identifying directors and 35% by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic directors, with 50% written by female-identifying writers and at least 25% by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic writers, as well as a play by a non-binary writer. This is a deliberate and progressive development from the two years prior to this (2018 and 2019), where half were directed by female-identifying directors, 17% were written by female-identifying writers,

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and there were no Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic writers or directors. Global Dance has been introduced within the BA Musical Theatre curriculum from 2020-21 in response to current industry trends and student feedback, which has broadened the range of diverse dance genres that students experience both practically and from a cultural and historical perspective. This has been formally embedded within the BA Musical Theatre curriculum from 2022/23, building on informal inclusion within class content and workshops in previous years. Further changes to embed diversity and inclusivity are planned as part of a comprehensive review of the BA Musical Theatre course for revalidation in summer 2023.

In its October 2019 revalidation reports for the BA Musical Theatre and Acting courses as Level 6 Diplomas, Trinity College London commended ArtsEd for *'...its pro-active work in promoting diversity and inclusivity and its commitment to provide access and opportunities for BAME and students from less privileged backgrounds.'* More recently, our work to embed inclusivity within our provision has been acknowledged in various ways within seven of the eight reports from External Examiners for our CertHE and BA courses relating to 2020-21 and 2021-22. For example, in 2020-21, the CertHE Acting External Examiner commented that *'ArtsEd are leading the way amongst conservatoires in addressing equity in performance training, and in particular the notion of bespoke-ness around the student experience.'*

Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

Lockdown and social distancing restrictions posed particular challenges for the continued delivery of our courses given their practical nature and high levels of in-person contact time. Our indicators for teaching and assessment and feedback, while still of high quality, came in line with benchmark, in 2019-20 but our learning resources indicator remained outstanding (4.4% above benchmark). In 2020-21, our indicators for teaching (13.9% above benchmark) and assessment and feedback (9.6% above benchmark) returned to outstanding and remained so in 2021-22. Following the initial lockdown in March 2020, teaching staff worked quickly to reframe the content of individual classes for online delivery. A combination of asynchronous and live delivery was used, the method chosen depending on the material being taught, whilst maintaining the overall contact time that students would have previously received in-person. For example, pre-recorded dance sessions were used to demonstrate steps and choreography, which students were able to practice at home, prior to recording and uploading their performance on which they would receive feedback. Live teaching was used where possible such as for small group and one-to-one teaching. Time lags and technical issues were challenging in some areas such as performing harmonies in ensemble singing. Consequently, performance projects were adjusted to focus on duologues, monologues, duets and solo pieces. Students were provided with equipment to enable them to film their scenes at home (SE6). Final plays were edited and hosted on our website, with links sent to agents and casting directors as it was not possible for them to attend live shows; verbal feedback we have received indicates that these were a very good development (SO1).

In sessions 2020-21 and 2021-22, it was possible to deliver the majority of our teaching face-to-face with teaching reverting quickly to online for student groups required to isolate in order to manage outbreaks and when further lockdowns were imposed. During online delivery periods, students with outdated computers were provided with appropriate equipment to enable them to fully engage (SE5 and SE6), and students required to self-isolate during the year were contacted individually to check on their overall wellbeing (SE5) and to ensure they were able to access online learning. ArtsEd was set up as a Covid test centre and was able to undertake regular onsite testing

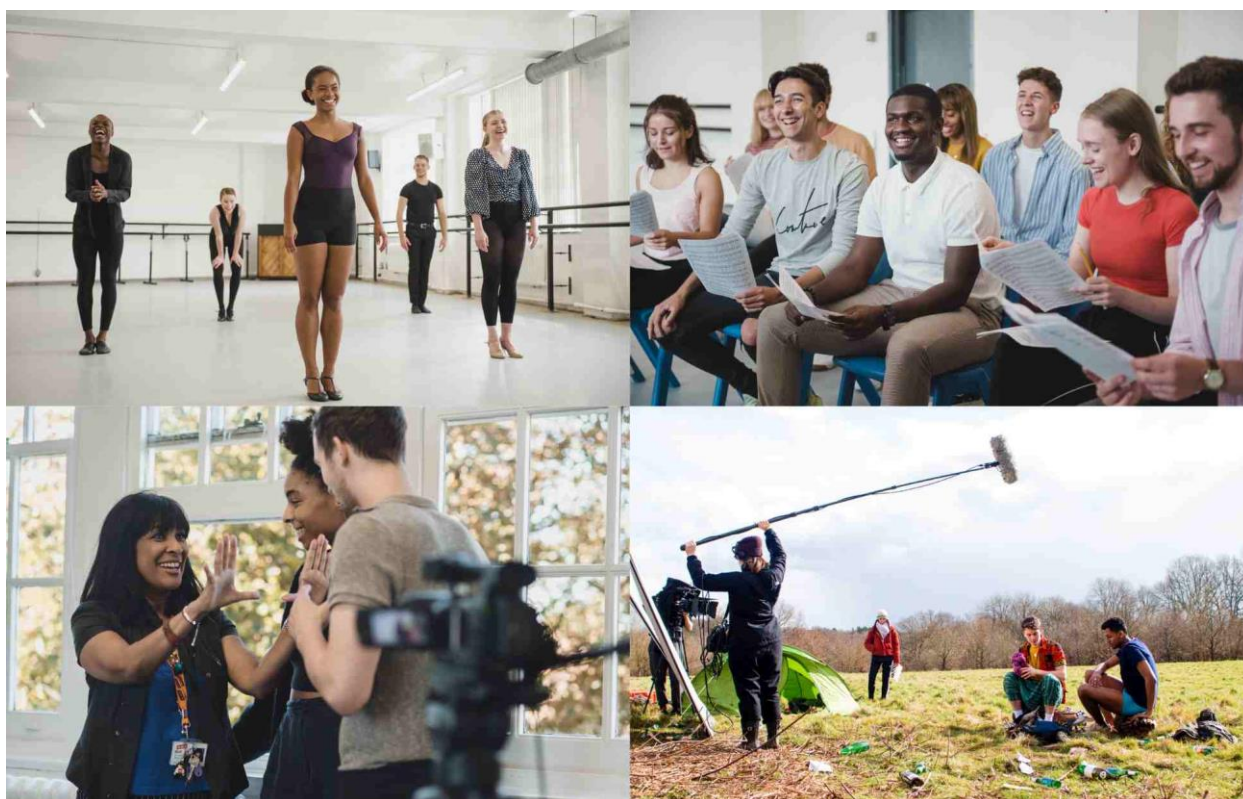
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of students and staff, which enabled a swift return to in-person teaching and the ability to keep the building open as the pandemic progressed. The indicator for academic support was high quality (in line with benchmark) in 2019-20 and outstanding in 2020-21 (12.4% above benchmark) and so too in 2021-22 (8.7% above benchmark).

Our results for the Covid-19 questions in the NSS 2021, provide evidence that our approach to maintaining the quality of the student experience was effective in the challenging circumstances. With a response rate of 62%, the percentage of BA students who agreed with the following statements was as follows:

- 'I have received useful information about changes to my course from my university or college during the Covid-19 pandemic.' – 96% agree
- 'I am content with the delivery of my learning and teaching of my course during the Covid-19 pandemic' – 83% agree
- 'I have been able to access the learning resources I need (lecture notes, course materials, journals, Virtual Learning Environment) for my course during the Covid-19 pandemic.' – 88% agree

The pandemic resulted in adjustments to the student experience of our 2022 graduating BA cohort in all three years of their study. Our 2021-22 indicators, which capture the experiences of this cohort are outstanding in all five areas (materially above benchmark), provide further evidence that the actions that we took throughout the pandemic were effective in maintaining a consistently outstanding experience.



2.2 Staff professional development and academic practice (SE4)

Our institutional commitment to staff development is set out in the 'Enable Excellence' theme of our Strategic Plan through our priority to 'promote a culture of continuous professional development that creates exceptional learning opportunities for all students and staff' (SE4). Regular continuing professional development of our staff is also a direct commitment that we make to our students as set out in our Student Charter.

Permanent teaching staff are supported and encouraged to participate in a range of professional development activities. Each year, these include institutional-level activities aligned with institutional priorities and expectations (e.g., workshops on inclusive language, assessment, beyond bias, GDPR and safeguarding) as well as training and professional engagement activities focused on the needs of individuals which support the enrichment of the curriculum and teaching. For example, the doctoral research undertaken by the Director of the School of Acting (now Principal) on pedagogic practices in Actor Training have informed the design of revised modules within the BA Acting curriculum in 2020 such as World Stories and Restoration – Stage and Screen (SE3). All visiting staff are required to complete mandatory training covering regulatory and policy compliance matters prior to commencing teaching.

The Principal is a Senior Fellow of HEA and all permanent teaching staff have been encouraged to seek Advance HE Fellowship from 2022. Some of our Executive Team and teaching staff members within each School started their applications in 2021-22 and the remainder intend to start their applications during 2022-23. This is a new opportunity for teaching staff at ArtsEd, which we expect to build on in future years to encourage and recognise excellent teaching and learning practices.

Individual staff development activities over the four-year period covered by this submission have been wide-ranging and numerous as demonstrated within annual records of continuing professional development (CPD). These activities are identified through one-to-one discussions between managers and staff in teaching staff meetings or through the staff appraisal process. Examples of discipline-specific development which have informed teaching and our work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, include workshops on Working with Transgender Vocalists, Neurodiversity in Teaching Voice Work, and a Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Actor Training Symposium.

The majority of teaching staff are active practitioners within the performing arts in roles as directors, choreographers, writers and producers of new creative works, and performers on the stage and screen. The intersection between teaching and practice ensures our curriculum and teaching is current and relevant to industry needs and trends.

Teaching staff are also regularly engaged as visiting and guest lecturers on other performing arts courses at conservatoires and universities in the UK and abroad, as external assessors for Trinity College London diplomas and as external examiners at other higher education institutions, which in 2021-22 included the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Chichester University and Royal Northern College of Music. They also undertake roles with industry professional associations including the British Voice Association Council and the British Academy of Dramatic Combat.

In accordance with our appraisal policy for teaching staff, observation of classroom practice takes place regularly. Observations are undertaken by the relevant head of department to assess the

effectiveness of teaching; these take place at least annually for each tutor and operate in conjunction with the annual appraisal process. Staff also conduct observations of their peers to enable good practice to be shared. Each class observation includes reflections from the observer and the tutor being observed about strengths and areas for development, and results in an agreed action plan focusing on the maintenance and enhancement of academic practice. Where necessary, observations have been targeted to areas where a concern has arisen from students via one of our student engagement channels (see section 2.5) in order to support the relevant staff member and to maintain the quality of the student experience (SE7). This process is overseen by the head of department or line manager and supplemented with further dialogue with students, where appropriate, as well as the staff member to gain a deeper understanding of the issue to inform the actions to be taken. Further follow up takes place with the member of staff to provide any further support required and to ensure any concerns have been fully addressed.

2.3 Learning environment and academic support (SE5)

Our outstanding indicator for academic support (9.3% above benchmark) provides evidence that we ensure a barrier free supportive learning environment and outstanding access to academic support that is tailored to individual students regardless of background (SE5).

Each student is allocated a designated tutor to act as their first point of contact to discuss any academic, personal development and pastoral matters, to implement individual support through a student support plan where a student is facing challenges with their studies, and to signpost students to other sources of support where appropriate. Students may also schedule a meeting with any tutor, the Course Director or the Principal to discuss any aspect of their experience. As a small institution, there are frequent informal interactions between students and staff where academic support is sought and provided beyond the classroom and formal support channels.

In 2020-21, the School of Acting introduced an Independent Learning Plan for each Acting student. This is developed through a meeting between a member of the School Executive Team and the student to discuss their individual learning needs, prior experience and living environment in which they may be undertaking self-directed learning hours, in order to take a holistic view of the student's learning circumstances and develop an individual plan to support their learning. Students are referred to relevant support services based on the development needs identified in the plan. This system has been extended to the School of Musical Theatre from 2022-23.

Student progress, conduct, attendance and professional discipline are monitored in each course throughout the year via weekly meetings of the Executive Teams in each school. This enables swift action to be taken to address concerns including the provision of additional and targeted support. For example, in 2021-22, all causes of concern raised through Executive Team meetings were resolved proactively through the provision of additional support.

Our students demonstrate very high levels of attendance and punctuality, which is essential for a successful career in the performing arts industry, and attendance and timekeeping are therefore introduced as part of the expectations to instil professional behaviours in our students. This expectation is underpinned by our attendance policy and as a result we have observed excellent attendance by our students.

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In 2021-22, the proportion of our BA and CertHE students who had declared one or more disabilities was 25.6% and the proportion with a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) was 21.3%. SpLD assessments are supported financially by our SpLD bursary scheme, which, as well as covering the cost of the initial assessment, may also cover the provision of specialist equipment and related expenses. Students may self-refer for assessment or may be identified for referral by staff. Students with a disability are supported to apply for Disabled Student Allowance and reasonable adjustments for learning and assessment are agreed on an individual basis. Our disabled students benefit from outstanding support as demonstrated by our split indicators for teaching (12.2% above benchmark) and academic support (10.5% above benchmark).

Students have access to a Study Skills Tutor during term-time who provides 1:1 and group support for students experiencing difficulties in any area of the curriculum. Study skills sessions are primarily aimed at students with dyslexia, dyspraxia and related learning difficulties, but are available to any student experiencing issues with processing and organisation who would benefit from regular support. During the pandemic lockdown periods, these sessions continued online.

In September 2019, we received the Training Institute Award at the inaugural Industry Mind Awards which recognise mental health organisations and mental health work carried out within the arts industries. We have invested in mental health training for staff and in 2021-22, we had 18 trained Mental Health First Aiders (SE4). These staff are trained to be the first point of contact for students who are experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress, having initial conversations with them and supporting them to get appropriate help. Students elect student Wellbeing Representatives annually who are trained as mental health first aiders funded by ArtsEd and who work with Heads of Year to raise awareness of mental health issues and promote good mental health (SE7).

As a small institution with a small student body, we continually keep under review how we can provide timely and effective counselling support whilst making best use of our resources. In 2019-20, we outsourced counselling provision to an external organisation, with the intention that this would better meet increasing levels of need from students. However, from 2021-22, following a review of the external service and concerns about increased waiting times of up to 5 weeks for a counsellor to be allocated once referred by ArtsEd, we have reverted to providing counselling support through counsellors directly contracted by us. By April 2022, waiting times for a counsellor to be allocated had been reduced significantly to no more than a week in all cases. Students (and staff) continue to have access to the external provider's web platform, which provides access to an online global community and resources to help students manage their health and wellbeing.

Our courses make significant physical demands of students. Injury prevention is embedded within the curriculum and students are taught how to take account of their personal physical limitations and action to take in the event of an injury. We reviewed and revised our approach to injury prevention and rehabilitation during 2021-22 to address concerns raised by students in various forums that those with injuries felt pressured to continue to perform. The development of the revised policy followed extensive discussions at the Student Wellbeing and Student Support Working Group (see section 2.5) that year (SE7). Students are now assessed by an independent specialist who provides advice on injury rehabilitation for individual students and approves each student's return to training. On-site physiotherapy treatments are provided at subsidised rates to all students with ArtsEd covering 45% of the cost of sessions to support injury prevention as well as supporting students with continued or recurring injury.

All joining students are allocated a second-year or third-year BA student as a buddy who makes contact with them in the summer prior to their arrival to answer any questions they may have, including such matters as accommodation, equipment and reading material. Students are able to contact their buddy during their first year if they encounter issues that they would rather discuss with a fellow student. Informal feedback from students to staff indicates that the buddy scheme is a useful support mechanism.

2.4 Learning resources (SE6)

ArtsEd has been based in its West London home since 1986. Built for Chiswick Polytechnic in the 1950s, the building was in need of significant extension and refurbishment at the time of our last TEF submission and in July 2019 we embarked on a major capital development, as part of the Build for the Future theme in our Strategic Plan, led by architects De Matos Ryan. The £10m, fifteen-month project was completed to time and within budget, despite the significant constraints of the pandemic, and has been selected as one of the winning projects in the 2023 Civic Trust Awards from over 250 national and international entries. The impact of this is evidenced in our outstanding learning environment indicator (11.5% above benchmark).

This ambitious scheme saw the infilling of an extensive courtyard space to create outstanding, additional teaching facilities, namely:

- 4 x full-height, professionally equipped dance studios
- 2 x full-size rehearsal rooms
- 2 x breakout rehearsal spaces

The dance studios are fully equipped with spring Harlequin floors, mirrors, ballet barres and air handling systems. The rehearsal rooms have been designed to reflect the dimensions of our performance space, ensuring an industry standard experience. These beautiful new teaching spaces complement our existing facilities and provide students with excellent opportunities for their vocational development.

Key amongst our long-standing facilities is the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation Theatre, a proscenium arch theatre, designed by Norman Bragg and fully equipped with professional-standard equipment. The high specification of this performance space, combined with the expertise of our in-house production team (which includes two full-time wardrobe staff), ensures that our students' experience of public performance is outstanding. This winning combination also enables us to secure the services of leading directors, choreographers, and musical directors, sixteen in total, for our ten BA final year productions each year. Tickets for these performances are in high demand sometimes selling out within minutes.

Our training for screen and audio is grounded in our TV, Film and Radio studios, recently upgraded to include a sound booth and supported by investment in new camera and sound equipment (~£12.5K in 2021) supporting location filming. A significant proportion of our screen training takes place on location and in 2021 we invested in a new minivan for the transportation of equipment to and from shoots.

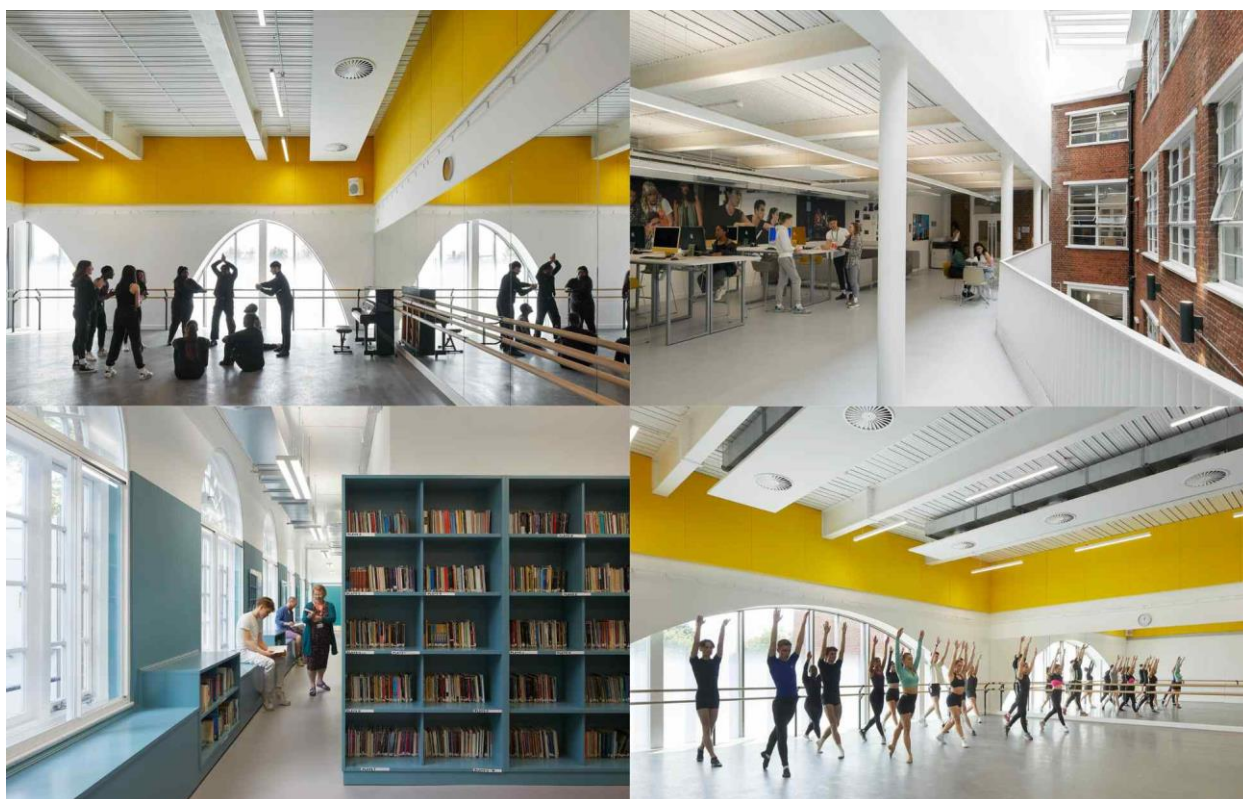
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This investment has enabled us to maintain high levels of student satisfaction with course-specific resources. The percentage of NSS respondents agreeing with the statement 'I have been able to access course-specific resources (e.g., equipment, facilities, software, collections) when I needed to' was 90% in 2019 (84% response rate), 83% in 2020 (73% response rate), 90% in 2021 (85% response rate) and 91% in 2022 (85% response rate).

Students' high levels of satisfaction with our library service, which houses a comprehensive range of plays, musical scores, DVDs, references books and theoretical works, have been maintained by the relocation of the library into a new architect-designed space in the heart of the building from the start of 2021-22. The percentage of NSS respondents who agreed with the statement 'The library resources (e.g., books, online services and learning spaces) have supported my learning well' was 95% in 2019 (84% response rate), 100% in 2020 (73% response rate), 97% in 2021 (85% response rate) and 99% in 2022 (85% response rate).

This key learning facility sits alongside additional communal spaces created in the new build, all of which have a direct and positive impact on students' day to day learning experience. These are:

- Fully equipped gym and new changing facilities
- HE Hub (common room space, complete with 12 x Macs)
- Atrium (communal space for HE students)



Students on our CertHE Acting course benefit from studying in a working theatre environment in state-of-the-art facilities at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre providing regular connections with industry professionals. These students have access to a fully functioning TV studio, which is regularly hired by mainstream television producers, as well as the theatre's rehearsal studios.

Since our last TEF submission in 2019, we have made sustained investment in IT increasing our annual capital and operational IT expenditure by 63% between 2018-19 and 2021-22. In 2019, we

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recruited a new Head of IT who has led the acceleration of many of the developments foreseen in an earlier 7-year IT plan to meet the needs of virtual learning and our new built environment. On-premises infrastructure has been significantly enhanced with high-speed internet access, full WIFI coverage for student Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and the 12 new computers in the student common areas. IT services are now provisioned to students immediately upon enrolment. Resources are available online to students using Microsoft SharePoint. Throughout the pandemic ArtsEd maintained continuous course delivery using Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams and Zoom, and most resources are now provided as cloud services. A fit-for-purpose student database has been developed, supporting the student lifecycle from audition to alumni and monitoring of the attendance policy is now supported by applications allowing for real-time reporting.

We aim to continue to enhance the curriculum with IT by promoting the use of virtual learning environments and fostering collaboration with online tools. The Head of IT is a member of the Senior Leadership Board ensuring that best practices are implemented and embedded in all areas.

2.5 Student engagement (SE7)

There are several ways in which engagement with students is embedded at ArtsEd (SE7), the impact of which are evidenced by our outstanding Student Voice indicator (9.5% above benchmark). As a small institution where students spend most of the teaching day within the classroom, there is frequent and ongoing dialogue between staff and students alongside our formal student engagement channels. This enables us to be responsive and to address many issues as they arise without the need for formal escalation. A challenge to us, however, is ensuring students recognise this is an important way in which their voice is heard and acted on.

Each Head of Year holds a timetabled weekly structured meeting (we call them 'company' meetings) with each student year group to discuss academic concerns that might be affecting the group and to monitor group wellbeing, injury and attendance. These meetings provide students both individually and as a group with a regular forum to provide feedback to senior staff on their learning experience. Issues that are raised are escalated to the next weekly meeting of the Executive Team of the relevant School, and any actions agreed are recorded in the minutes and reported back to the year group.

Students are viewed as partners in the development of their education and two student representatives from each course year group are members of each School's Board of Studies, which meet three times a year to consider course development and quality matters. These meetings are chaired by the Director of the relevant School, and senior members of the course team and administrative staff are also members. A substantial part of these meetings is dedicated to discussing feedback from students on their learning experience and how this will or has been acted on. The introduction of Global Dance within the BA Musical Theatre is a recent example of how student feedback via the Board of Studies has informed curriculum developments.

In 2021-22, we established a new Student Voice Steering Group to enhance partnership working at institutional level between students and staff complementing the work of the School Boards of Studies at course level. This group acts as a sounding board for any student-related matters from initial offer through to graduation. It is co-chaired by a member of the Student Union and one of ArtsEd's EDI Coordinators, and the majority of its members are students. To support students with accessing affordable kit in support of their learning, the Group advocated for a Swap Shop during

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induction week. With the support of the Student Union, a Swap Shop for uniform during induction week was held for the first time in September 2022. Third-year students were encouraged to sell their uniforms which they no longer needed at an affordable price to new and returning students.

During 2021-22, we set up a Student Wellbeing and Support Working Group with student and staff members, and the Head of Student Wellbeing Service from the University of Brighton acted as an External Advisor. This task and finish group provided input and feedback on the creation of a new Student Services department at ArtsEd from 2022-23 to consolidate and underpin further enhancement of our extensive existing support mechanisms. It also provided critical feedback on the revision of a number of policies relating to student support and wellbeing as part of a comprehensive review which included those on personal tutoring and physical injury reporting and recovery (SE5). As part of the new Student Services department, we have established a new role of Head of Student Support and Engagement, which was appointed to in December 2022. A key priority of this role is the further enhancement of our student engagement framework working in close collaboration with our Student Union and its elected student representatives.

In addition to considering and responding to feedback from the NSS, we undertake internal surveys and evaluations to obtain student feedback from all courses and at all levels. The results and proposed actions are considered through our academic governance structure which includes student representation. Our Higher Education Committee, which is chaired by a member of the Board of Trustees and has student members, has internal oversight of quality assurance processes and action plans arising from student feedback. Students are actively engaged in the development and review of our policies and procedures, particularly those that directly impact on their learning experience. For example, during a review of our Hardship Fund Policy, student members of our Higher Education Committee fed back that the timeframe proposed to consider applications to the fund was too long. Consequently, this timescale was reduced in the final policy to better support students requiring unforeseen short-term financial support to remain on their courses.

3. Student Outcomes: continuation, completion and progression (SO1, SO2, SO3) and educational gains (SO4, SO5, SO6)

Our overall TEF indicators for continuation (5.3% above benchmark), completion (2.7% above benchmark) and progression (7.7% above benchmark), which cover our BA students, are outstanding demonstrating that the teaching and learning approaches and course content set out in the Student Experience section above are highly effective in ensuring that students succeed both on their courses and after they graduate (SO1, SO2, SO3).

As set out in section 2.3, student performance is monitored continuously so that risks to student progress and completion are addressed at an early stage. Cert HE Acting students and BA year 1 and 2 students are given indicative participation grades twice a year in their classwork which sit alongside their marks for their summative assessments but do not contribute to their degree classification. Participation grades are based on grade descriptors and assess each student's level of engagement, effort, attendance, preparation, contribution and homework. They are designed to provide students with feedback in these areas, to enable them to reflect on the areas in which they may need to improve and to identify students at risk of failing or in need of additional support (SE1, SO1). The Head of Year meets individually with any student receiving a D grade (satisfactory) or

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below, and unsatisfactory participation may lead to further support being implemented through our formal support to study procedures with the aim of students being able to continue successfully on their courses. CertHE Musical Theatre participation and engagement is embedded within continuous assessment on the course on which students receive verbal and written feedback.

A prevalent aim of our BA courses is to enable students to secure relevant employment as performers in the professional theatre and screen industries and our approach throughout the three years is aligned with this aim. As described earlier, the professional ethos of our courses is embedded within course content, delivery and support, alongside opportunities to enrich and influence the development of the creative industries more broadly. This supports our students to develop a deep understanding of the requirements of professional work and the knowledge and skills to be able to meet those requirements successfully by the end and, in many cases, before the end of their courses (SO1).

BA students are given continual guidance through their course on how to behave professionally and promote themselves to the industry. In the second and third years, students gain experience of how to market themselves and promote their careers through extensive audition practice and careers workshops. During the third year, students are introduced to professional agents, directors and casting directors and are given one-to-one tutorial advice on agent representation and employment opportunities. Professional directors and casting directors often contact ArtsEd for casting recommendations or to arrange auditions and until students have signed professionally, we operate as an agency promoting them and finding them work. This support continues, if needed, after students have completed their course (SO1).

Both BA courses contain a Professional Employment Skills module in the third year. These modules include careers workshops which prepare students for the business aspects of employment including contractual and legal obligations, professional practice workshops through which students are required to create a reflective professional practice portfolio, and workshops that develop their skills and resilience at auditions. The modules are supported by professional guest practitioners and resident staff who are all working professionals (SE3).

A member of staff within each School is designated to lead on industry liaison and whose purpose is to retain and build on our extensive links with industry. These staff members coordinate meetings between agents and students and will present students to agents and casting directors to support them in successful progression by securing professional work. This individualised approach contributes to the high proportions of students who are signed with an agent prior to graduation and their subsequent successful employment outcomes (SO1).

We have undertaken work to maximise the opportunities that our third year BA students have to showcase their skills to the industry. For example, in March 2019, 63 agents and industry representatives attended the BA Musical Theatre showcase in person. The showcase in March 2020 took place days before the first pandemic lockdown and attendance was minimal. In January 2021, the BA Musical Theatre showcase was replaced with the emailing of showreels to 786 agents and industry representatives. 469 (60%) opened the email and clicked through to the online profile of at least one student. As a result, we have retained the filming, publication and sharing of students' showreels and in 2022, they were emailed to over 830 agents and industry representatives. This forms part of our package of digital communications to industry representatives each year which also includes digital graduate books for our BA students and

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invitations to BA productions and showcases. Our level of engagement (50-60% click-through rate) is very high across all our digital communications with industry representatives. The average click-through rate for email marketing and newsletters in the education sector is 28.5% according to Campaign Monitor. We have also invested in a new customer relationship management (CRM) system that enables the tracking of engagement with individual student profiles and tailored our follow up from staff with industry representatives.

Feedback from agents and casting directors on the preparedness of our BA graduates for the demands of the industry is positive. In January 2023, we conducted an anonymous email survey of 407 agents and casting directors, which had a 10% response rate at the time of writing with the following results:

- 98% agreed that 'ArtsEd graduates are well prepared for the demands of the industry.'
- 95% agreed that 'ArtsEd training provides graduates with the skills to work successfully on the stage and screen.'
- 95% agreed that 'ArtsEd training instils in its graduates a professional work ethic that strengthens the likelihood of long-term success in the industry.'

Comments received from respondents include '*ArtsEd grads are definitely at the top of the tree as far as dedicated performing arts courses go, they are well trained and have the confidence to forge successful careers*' and '*ArtsEd prepare their graduates to be industry ready, and we find that the graduates we take on from the school work very successfully.*'

The purpose of our CertHE courses is to act as a foundation to prepare students for entry to vocational performing arts training at Honours degree level. They have been designed to offer students who demonstrate potential but lack the skills required to succeed at audition for entry to degree courses, a route into undergraduate degree study at ArtsEd or at other institutions. Whilst the focus is on preparation for progression to degree courses, students are also supported to consider immediate progression to professional performance work in the industry, non-performance roles in the industry and to degrees in other subjects (SO1).

As the CertHE courses progress, staff and graduates from other drama schools are invited to speak to the students, helping them to make informed choices about their onward study or other progression routes, thus enabling them to prepare appropriately for the differing demands of different providers. Students undertake modules in audition preparation with professional directors in which they are supported and developed to present themselves with competence and confidence applying the skills they have gained in performance, to demonstrate awareness of their own strengths, interests and needs, and to research and select appropriate audition material (SO1).

Completion rates (SO2) for the first two cohorts of our Cert HE courses were:

2020-21	93%	4 students (7%) withdrew before the end of the course for personal reasons
2021-22	97%	1 student transferred to another course at ArtsEd. One student was withdrawn.

We collect destination data from our CertHE graduates directly (SO3), which shows that for the 122 CertHE students who successfully completed their course in 2020-21 and 22:

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- 56 progressed to a performing arts degree course, of which 17 progressed to a degree course at ArtsEd.
- 5 progressed to a non-performing arts degree course.
- 12 progressed to professional work.
- 3 had signed with agents and were seeking professional work
- 12 were still in the application and audition process at the time the data was collected and their final destination is unknown. Some of these students had been recalled for second-round auditions and/or had received offers but had not yet made a decision.
- 4 were reauditioning for entry to performing arts degree courses in 2023.
- 30 did not provide details of their destination.

Many CertHE students decide to defer and reapply for entry to a BA performing arts course at their preferred institutions the following year if they are not successful in the initial year of application, and tutors work hard to support students who have not received an offer by the end of the CertHE. This has included assistance in finding tutors to work with them to maintain and further develop their skills until the audition cycle for the following year commences and help to produce audition tapes (SO1).

We are committed to ensuring that all our students to develop the skills and qualities needed to succeed both in the performing arts profession and in their lives more broadly. The educational gains that we expect our students to achieve are set out at both a general and a subject-specific level within the programme specification for each course and strongly align with our aim that our BA students will be ready for employment and employed in the profession, and that our CertHE students will be demonstrably prepared for further HE study in the performing arts (SO4).

In summary, by the end of their courses, we expect BA students to have:

- Developed a thorough knowledge and understanding of the industry and current creative practice in the relevant performing arts discipline (i.e., acting or musical theatre).
- Acquired technical skills in their discipline to a professional level.
- Gained a set of professional employment skills and personal qualities that will enable them to secure and maintain a career in the professional arts industry, including increased confidence, resilience, good communication skills, the ability to work collaboratively, a strong work ethic and appreciation of a diverse range of views and contributions.
- Developed the ability to critically reflect on and appraise their own practice.
- Developed personal values and qualities that will enhance their professional and personal life.

We expect that by the end of our CertHE courses, all students will have gained the following to be appropriately prepared for entry to Honours degree courses:

- Foundational knowledge and understanding of current practice within the discipline.
- Foundational level skills in the discipline developed through practical experience.
- The ability to reflect on their own progress and practice.
- A collaborative approach to the creative process.
- A clear understanding of the area of higher education that would be best suited to them.
- Personal values and qualities that will enhance their personal life and attitude to study.

We have a strong focus on the needs of each individual student in order that they achieve discipline-specific gains (SO5). Teaching staff undertake an assessment of each student's starting point, technical strengths and development needs in performance during the audition process for entry to the courses and through introductory classes during induction. As set out in the Student Experience section above, individual student progress is carefully monitored throughout the course by the Executive Team in each School through weekly meetings, and targeted and tailored support put in place for individual students where there are development needs or concerns. Acting students are required to keep project journals during play rehearsals which support them in formulating ideas about their personal process and growth evidenced in performance, and these enable support needs to be determined. Musical theatre students are grouped in dance classes according to their ability assessed at audition in different dance styles. Musical Theatre students' singing voices are assessed at audition so that appropriate technique and repertoire teachers can be allocated in accordance with their needs.

All students keep personal journals and logbooks throughout their projects and productions requiring ongoing self-reflection on strengths, development needs and progress in achieving any improvements needed. These are submitted as part of the formal assessment requirements for some modules and students are encouraged to maintain journals for modules where they are not formally assessed, so that they can evidence cross-curricular understanding and application of skills within formal journal assessments. Critical reflection is also encouraged and developed within BA Contextual Studies modules.

Key measures of the success of our BA education which demonstrate that students are achieving our intended educational gains regardless of their background and characteristics (SO6), are the progression of our students to employment and the successful and sustained careers of our alumni (SO3). Whilst our overall TEF indicator for progression to employment for our BA students is outstanding (SO3) (7.7% above benchmark), we consider that this gives only a partial picture of the employment success of our graduates within the context of the performing arts, and evidence that they have achieved the gains intended. Firstly, the TEF indicator does not include the successes of our most recent graduates, and secondly, it only provides a snapshot of what the graduates covered by the indicators were doing at the time of the Graduate Outcomes survey. The very nature of the industry means that past students are unlikely to be continuously employed in the performing arts and may therefore take up employment in other sectors, often in work not classified as highly skilled, during the gaps between professional contracts.

Each year, we collate information about professional work in the performing arts secured by our graduating BA students during their first 12 months following completion, as well as their success in securing agent representation prior to graduation. Our most recent BA graduate destinations report covers the destinations of students graduating in 2019 – 2022, with information on 2022 graduates relating to the period between the end of their courses in July 2022 and October 2022 (SO3).

Our data shows that for BA graduates finishing their courses over the period 2019 – 2022, 97% secured agent representation prior to completing their courses. However, the ability of our 2021 and 2020 graduates and, to a slightly lesser extent, our 2019 graduates to secure work in the first 12 months in industry was severely affected by the pandemic, which led to theatre closures and other limitations on professional work across the country. As a comparison, 97% of our 2018 graduates and 88% of our 2019 graduates had worked professionally in the performing arts in the

12 months following completion. For 2020 and 2021 graduates, the figures were 75% and 82% respectively.

We also collate data annually, covering contracts secured by our alumni in the West End, off West End, on tours and in the foremost regional theatres, alongside major films and television dramas, and key award nominations and winners. Between October 2018 and October 2022, 47 of our alumni were nominated for key industry awards such as the BAFTAs, the Olivier Awards and the Black British Theatre awards and 17 of these were winners. There was particular success at the Black British Theatre Awards in 2022. ArtsEd graduates were nominated for 6 of the awards and were winners in the awards for Outstanding Performance in a Musical, Best Female Actor in a Musical and Best Supporting Male Actor in a Musical. During the period July 2019 – October 2022, the number of roles undertaken by BA students graduating in 2019-2022 included 63 in West End musicals, 38 in off West End musicals, 42 in straight plays, 44 in musical theatre tours, 39 in regional musical theatre productions, 25 in European and international productions, 34 television roles and 7 in feature films (SO6).

We are starting work to develop other systematic measures to evaluate and demonstrate the gains that our students achieve from their initial starting point which go beyond our continuation, completion and progression data (SO6). Existing evidence which demonstrates that our students are achieving the educational gains we intend is as follows:

- In the National Student Survey years 2020, 2021 and 2022, our BA students were asked to answer the optional provider question 'As result of completing my course, I believe that I have improved my career prospects'. This elicited the following results and response rates:
 - 2020: 84% agreed with a 34% response rate
 - 2021: 94% agreed with a 62% response rate
 - 2022: 97.5% agreed with a 49% response rate
- In the NSS 2020, BA students were asked the optional bank of questions relating to Personal Development. With a response rate of 34%:
 - 72% agreed with the statement 'the course has helped me to present myself with confidence'.
 - 76% agreed with the statement 'my communication skills have improved'.
 - 80% agreed with the statement 'as a result of the course, I feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems.'

Whilst we consider a response rate of 34% to be quite low, the response rate for England for this bank of NSS questions was only 7%.

- In an internal experience survey of all BA Year 2 students conducted in December 2022, 96% of students agreed with the statement 'the course is developing my knowledge and skills that I think I will need for my future'. The response rate for this question was 57%.
- The average proportion of students who agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements in an internal end of course survey of CertHE Musical Theatre students in 2021 and 2022, was as follows with an average response rate across these 2 years of 89%:
 - 'I understand what is expected of me at auditions for BA programmes' – 100% agreed
 - 'The course has given me greater confidence' – 96% agreed
 - 'The course has helped me to improve my acting skills' – 100% agreed
 - 'The course has helped me to improve my dance skills' – 100% agreed

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- 'The course has helped me to improve my singing skills' – 94% agreed
- CertHE Acting students were asked for qualitative feedback only in the end-of-course surveys in these years so comparable figures are not available for this course. Survey questions will be aligned across both CertHE courses in future years.

We have undertaken a thematic analysis of qualitative positive student comments in the NSS between 2019-2022 and the internal end-of-course surveys for CertHE students for 2021 and 2022. Positive comments have been categorised under 6 thematic areas, including an Employability and Personal Development theme capturing positive comments made about preparation for progression to employment or further study, increased confidence, development of greater independence and professionalism. Whilst there is some subjectivity in this analysis, it provides an indication of what our students have gained through their educational experience at ArtsEd. 131 positive comments were made by BA students in the NSS 2019-22 which were categorised into 161 theme mentions across the 6 themes. 27% of these theme mentions related to the Employability and Personal Development theme. 61 positive comments were made by CertHE students in the end of course surveys in 2021 and 2022, which were categorised into 79 theme mentions across the 6 themes, 33% of which related to the Employability and Personal Development Theme.

In conclusion, we audition for exceptional potential regardless of background and nurture it through outstanding teaching and support. This starts right from the earliest moment of contact through to alumni engagement. Our curriculum is designed by professional practitioners to create rounded professional performers, using practising staff and leading external representatives of the industry. We are an engaging and learning organisation which shares experience across all of our courses.

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