

Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance

Provider Submission for TEF 2023

1. Provider context

Rose Bruford College is a college of higher education funded principally by tuition fees. Following receipt of taught degree awarding powers in January 2017, all undergraduate students are now enrolled on the College's degree programmes. It is a small specialist higher education provider, whose undergraduate enrolment numbers in recent years are set out below. This submission focusses entirely upon the full-time undergraduate students based at the College's campus at Lamorbey Park, Sidcup and also its online undergraduate students.

Table 1. Headcount of undergraduate student numbers, 2018-19 to 2021 to 2022

Year	Full-time	Part-time	Total
2018-19	523	100	623
2019-20	545	93	638
2020-21	596	105	701
2021-22	594	97	691

In 2021-22, the College commenced validation of a suite of three Certificate in Higher Education programmes at the Notting Hill Academy of Music (1). following consultation with the Office for Students, the College agreed to take on 192 students from The Academy of Live and Recorded Arts (ALRA) campuses in London and Wigan following that institution's closure owing to financial difficulties. Chief Executive of the Office for Students stated that 'We are grateful to Rose Bruford College, which is offering a place to all ALRA's students ... Rose Bruford is well regarded across the sector for the quality of its teaching...' (2). Neither Notting Hill Academy nor ALRA students are considered in this submission.

1.1. Vision

The College's Strategic Plan 2019-2025 sets out the following vision: 'to create the change-makers' (3). Building on our founding belief that teaching, learning, creative practice, arts and industries all speak one to another, our vision for Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance is for an institution that creates the change-makers of the future.

The key aims within the College strategy are to:

- Provide an inclusive, collaborative and supportive student experience which empowers, equips and transforms students' personal and professional growth in the wider creative industries.
- Develop and enhance the academic offer to ensure it is inclusive, innovative and empowering.
- Recruit and retain a current, industry-engaged and diverse staff cohort enabled and empowered to develop and challenge the students themselves, and the wider industry.
- Facilitate organisational growth and resilience and underpin staff and student transformation and empowerment by developing the academic offer, alternative income streams and professional systems and services.
- Become a world leading centre of excellence and a leader of good practice across all areas of access and participation within HE, and particularly within the small specialist creative sector.

1.2. Mission

The mission underlying the College's Strategic Plan is to 'achieve social as well as cultural impact through delivering the highest quality vocational training and education across a wide, innovative spectrum of learning and teaching that delivers proactive graduates who are creative, empowered, employable, inclusive and diverse, ethical and intercultural in outlook.'

1.3. Values

The integrity of the College lies in the belief that the programmes offered, the research undertaken and engagement with industry and wider society are all an articulation and reflection of who the College is and what it values. Its core values of integrity, creativity and inclusion are the foundation of Rose Bruford College and are ones that the institution works to maintain. Staff at Rose Bruford College want to have an impact and make a difference for future generations of students and this is reflected in the current undergraduate programmes, the staff whom the College attracts, the students who come here, the professional partnerships sustained, and the institution's research, collaborators, and international partners.

Rose Bruford College has always been an innovator and leader in the field of training. Proud of its history of innovation that saw Rose Bruford College introducing the UK's first university-level BA degree in Acting in the 1970s and the first BA in Lighting Design in the 1990s, Rose Bruford College continues to push the boundaries of training in performance and technical theatre, making it one of the world's leading drama conservatoires and one of the UK's largest in terms of student numbers and the variety of its professional training options. The College prepares its performance graduates for a career on stage and screen and its design, management, craft and technology graduates for production roles across the wider entertainment industries.

1.4. The College's undergraduate provision

The College has an established portfolio of separate acting and performance options at undergraduate levels, a large range of technical arts, design and management undergraduate programmes and online undergraduate provision. Until 2022, the College's undergraduate students were located within two Schools – the School of Performance and the School of Design, Management and Technical Arts (DMTA). The restructure of the College's provision is currently in train, and a Single Academic Framework (SAF) has been developed, in part informed by undergraduate students' requests to reflect more effectively the collaborative nature of their experience by bringing the two subject-orientated schools together, and also as a consequence of the growth of the College's taught postgraduate provision, which had been located principally in the School of Performance, making the School significantly larger than the School of DMTA (4). The SAF has also arisen directly from a new Academic Strategy, developed in 2021, which captured the College's pedagogical mission of delivering a learning and training ethos based on artistry, collaboration, community, discovery, diversity, employability, independence and professionalism.

The student-facing aims of the Academic Strategy include:

- Ensuring that the College's pedagogy remains innovative and relevant
- Improving the whole student experience
- Placing equity, diversity and inclusion at the heart of all programmes of study
- Creating resilient independent learners by coaching more and instructing less

In 2021-22, the College's undergraduate provision comprised 15 honours degree programmes. Their titles and student numbers are set out in Table 2 below.

**Table 2. Number of undergraduate students by degree programme and level (2021-22)
 (headcount)**

Degree programme	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Total
Acting	48	44	41	133
Actor Musicianship	14	18		42
Audio Production			n/a	19
Costume Production	15	13	19	47
Creative Lighting Control	13	15	15	43
Design for Theatre & Performance				20
Digital Content Design for Theatre & Live Events			n/a	
European Theatre Arts	38	38	50	126
Lighting Design	11	11		32
Opera Studies (pt)	n/a			
Scenic Arts	14		11	35
Stage & Events Management	18	20	22	60
Theatre & Social Change	12		n/a	21
Theatre Studies (ft and pt)	52	17	22	91
Virtual Theatre & Digital Experiences			n/a	

The College's online undergraduate provision is an important part of its portfolio. In establishing the distance learning degrees in 1996, the institution broke new ground. Since then, the College has continued to explore and develop dynamic approaches to distance - now online – learning. The BA (Hons) Theatre Studies programme is designed to meet the wide-ranging needs of a global cohort of students. The programme caters for those who intend to pursue a professional career in the creative industries or enhance their existing professional standing, and those seeking to extend their knowledge and develop their appreciation of theatre and performance. Owing to a decline in applicants on the Opera Studies programme the decision was taken in 2018 to suspend recruitment and to focus on Theatre Studies. Students already enrolled on Opera Studies are being fully supported to complete the programme. Successful recruitment on the Theatre Studies degree continues to be achieved.

As a specialist provider of courses engaged with one of the fastest-growing sectors of the economy in terms of digital, creative, and technical skills as well as with performance, the College has strategically advanced its position in recent years. It has responded flexibly and with agility to industry needs in relation to its undergraduate provision. This has led to an expanded portfolio of courses. New programmes of study have been co-designed with industry in direct response to skills shortages brought about through accelerations in digital innovation and the increased demand for the technical knowledge, innovative and creative practice and high-quality adaptable skillsets demonstrated by the College's graduates. These courses are highly distinctive in their subject matter, curriculum, and pedagogy.

1.5. Submission context

Student representatives and the Students' Union executive members have had the opportunity to contribute to the development of the College's TEF submission at provider and subject level

Provider name: Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance
UKPRN: 10005523

through a number of meetings, email exchanges, and through representation on the College's Academic Board and the Teaching Excellence Framework Steering Group.

2. Student experience

2.1 Introduction

The College places much emphasis upon providing a high-quality learning experience for its students. Enhancing the students' learning experience was at the heart of the College's Learning, Teaching and Student Support Strategy which began to be implemented in 2018, with the significant involvement of student representation, particularly via engagement with the Students' Union executive and student representatives at programme level (5). Attention was paid within this strategy for the first time to student support, which through the policy's development it became clear was an important element to sit alongside learning and teaching. Five core themes were identified, which are the focus of the strategy: 1. Promoting flexibility in learning and teaching; 2. Advancing digital strategy and infrastructure; 3. Embedding professional preparation; 4. Collaboration between academic and support staff; and 5. Enhancing continuing professional development. Three cross-cutting elements were incorporated in each of the themes as follows: a. Embedding a culture of diversity and inclusivity; b. Building partnerships with industry, other organisations, and alumni; and c. Fostering research-led learning and teaching of all kinds.

Actions taken linked to the strategy directly enhancing the student experience include:

- The widespread implementation of hybrid learning and teaching, including face-to-face and online provision. Although this was implemented more speedily than initially envisaged as a result of the Covid lockdown, a number of online learning and assessment activities have continued in otherwise on-campus provision, following discussions with students, such as the online viva opportunities on the BA (Hons) American Theatre Arts degree.
- The College's digital infrastructure to support and develop undergraduate teaching and learning has advanced considerably through receipt of substantial capital investment – nearly £1m from HEFCE in 2018 and a further £2m from the Office for Students in 2021. The opening of the College's Centre for Digital Production in 2020, with its state-of-the-art digital resources enabled the launching of a suite of new undergraduate degree programmes developed in partnership with industry in response to identified skills shortages. (See section 2.3.3 for further details).

The Learning, Teaching and Student Support strategy has, in turn, informed the development of the Single Academic Framework, and the College's Academic Strategy, detailed in section 1.4, and which has amongst its core themes a focus upon equality, diversity and inclusion.

In 2019, the College appointed its first Head of Student Experience to oversee all aspects of student experience, beyond the learning experience, in order to ensure that students were appropriately supported in all aspects during their time studying at the College. In 2020, major reviews took place, co-ordinated by the Head of Student Experience and with much student involvement, of Student Services and Study Support, and Student Engagement. Actions arising from these reviews are detailed below in sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.4 respectively.

2.2. Academic experience and assessment

2.2.1. Feedback and assessment practices (SE1)

The College is confident that there is clear evidence that assessment and feedback are used effectively in supporting students' development, progression and attainment. All students are

Provider name: Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance
UKPRN: 10005523

assessed against the learning outcomes which are detailed in the Programme Specification and benchmarked to the FHEQ and aligned with the relevant subject benchmark statement (6). A curriculum map is provided within the programme specification that demonstrates in which module specific learning outcomes are assessed. The external examiner report form asks examiners to verify that they agree the assessment briefs that contribute to the degree classification. This helps to ensure that intended learning outcomes (ILOs) are being met through assessment tasks being in alignment with ILOs. External examiners are also asked to confirm that the assessment methods are appropriate to the ILOs and are consulted on any proposed changes to assessment methods. All responses from external examiners to these questions have been positive.

Regularly, as part of the College's staff development activities, an assessment parity event takes place. This is designed to review and enhance assessment practice. The event ensures that all academic staff involved in assessment discuss and compare assessment standardisation matters and take account of comments from external examiners' reports. These events have taken a thematic approach exploring institutional approaches to written, practical, portfolio and reflective submissions. Within each event there is an overall theme and all staff meet to discuss the issues and share examples of best practice which are then further interrogated in School break-out sessions. Themes recently have included: harmonising practice in assessment briefs and feedback reports, reasonable adjustments in assessment practice and assessing practice in performance. During 2022, as part of staff development activities linked to the introduction of the Single Academic Framework, emphasis has been placed on the implementation of consistent assessment practice, especially building upon the good work on assessment and feedback which has been identified in particular external examiners' reports, across the College's undergraduate provision.

Feedback, written and verbal, is given to students against ILOs and measures performance against grading descriptors from which a numerical mark is created. Performing Arts students regularly receive instantaneous verbal feedback regarding their work through the full range of practice-based learning and teaching methods. The assessment policy, reviewed each year, clearly articulates the College's definition of feedback, the types of feedback students can expect and when they can expect feedback – whether that is formative or summative (7). Additionally, the Student Services team publish a student guide to feedback, included in the student handbook (8).

Following consideration of comments from student surveys requesting greater clarity of feedback, the College's Learning, Quality and Standards Committee observed that the overall College grading descriptors were not entirely in alignment with the varying requirements of the institution's diverse portfolio. Thus, the School of DMTA reviewed its grading descriptors and revised grading descriptors for the School were issued and implemented in 2018 (9). The impact of the changes has been monitored through succeeding academic years. With continuing low NSS assessment scores, a College-wide review of approaches to assessment and feedback has been implemented.

As a result of the low NSS scores linked to assessment and feedback, and which are made clear in the relevant TEF indicators, both overall and in the split indicators, a review of processes has been undertaken across the undergraduate degree programmes. The Stage and Events Management external examiner made reference to the new feedback processes in 2021-22 report: 'The mark sheet design is useful in that criteria are clearly tick boxed and the feedback and feedforward comments are incredibly useful and ensure the marker is clear, targeted and gives helpful action points for the student ... The marking is accurate and the feedback strong and concise and constructive.'

Provider name: Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance
UKPRN: 10005523

Amongst the performance-related programmes, the BA (Hons) European Theatre Arts external examiner commented in report for the academic year 2021-22: ‘the review of tutor feedback and implementation of new templates is welcomed and the quality of the feedback and especially the feed-forward, from what I saw, was of a consistently high quality.’

The quality of assessment and feedback processes has been emphasised by the external examiner in report for 2021-22 for both the Acting and Actor Musicianship degree programmes: ‘The attention and care given to assessment processes is extremely thorough and rigorous ... Module learning outcomes are being met by the assessment tasks required. Great care is taken within the pedagogy and syllabi of the courses to ensure the appropriateness and quality of assessments, and with ensuring the progressive development and learning of the student.’

In 2020-21 report surveying all of the undergraduate provision in the School of Performance, the chief examiner stated that: ‘The assessment strategies across all programmes include clearly written briefs; creative assessment methods and modes; and, criteria for assessment.’

With the introduction of the new Single Academic Framework, further, more radical structural changes are being implemented in part to address the issues raised regarding assessment and feedback. This will lead to a restructuring of programmes, reducing the number of assessment points whilst maintaining the academic rigour associated with the degree programmes. As the chief external examiner for the School of Performance noted in 2021-22 report on all of the undergraduate programmes in the School: ‘employing concise briefs requiring fewer tasks can effectively lead to greater complexity in thinking and work produced by a student.’ also noted in report the good practice which had recently been introduced within the School: ‘American Theatre Arts had piloted online ‘viva’ opportunities and this was identified as good and effective practice. Furthermore, other programmes had instigated peer review elements in assessment and this was also highlighted as having been positively received.’

The College’s assessment practices are tailored to support students’ learning, progress and attainment. This is evidenced through the overall high rates of continuation and completion achieved by the College’s students which are considered below.

2.2.2. Engagement and commitment of students in their learning through course content and delivery (SE2)

The very strong NSS indicators relating to teaching reflect the engagement and commitment of the College’s students to their learning.

Table 3: Teaching on my course

Category	Indicator score (%)	Benchmark score (%)	% of statistical uncertainty to benchmark		
			Below	At	Above
Overall	83.7	81.3	0.1	52.7	47.2
Perf. Arts	84.9	81.6	0.0	31.5	68.5

As seen in Table 3, the College’s overall indicator score for teaching on my course is 2.4 percentage points above its benchmark value. This strong performance is particularly evident amongst the College’s students on its degree programmes categorised within the Performing Arts, where the split indicator reveals a score 3.3 percentage points above the benchmark. Lower levels of satisfaction expressed in other subject areas such as Materials and Technology and Creative Arts and Design have in part informed the recent dissolution of the two schools of Performance,

Provider name: Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance
UKPRN: 10005523

and Design, Management and Technical Arts into one undergraduate school, where the good practice in the Performing Arts subjects can be shared more readily.

Students benefit from intensive teaching in small groups. The College's student-staff ratio is significantly lower than the average HE student learning experience, with a maximum generally of 15:1. This is generated through a combination of permanent lecturers, visiting professionals and contracted freelancers (such as directors). The College provides intensive learning experiences in smaller groupings, to allow maximum access to experiential learning that reflects industry standards. Students learn in a range of ways from one-to-one tuition, generally one-to-five in computer suites and technical studios, with maximum class sizes of 15 for practice-based voice, movement and character work. All three theatres are utilised to their maximum as both production spaces, and technical arts courses for skills or project based learning. In addition to the small-group working, the intensity of the students' learning experience, which reflects the industry standard, is also a significant feature. (Details of range of students' weekly contact hours?)

The College actively promotes a partnership approach to the development of students' own learning pathways, providing them with a dynamic student-centred learning experience. The design, technical arts and production programme tutors, for instance, work in collaboration with students (at levels 5 and 6) to tailor timetables so that students can work on projects of particular interest within the College or externally, engaging them in their own learning agendas. In the Performance courses, BA (Hons) European Theatre Arts (ETA) and BA (Hons) American Theatre Arts (ATA) programmes both take a negotiated and partnership approach to students engaging in their own learning especially in relation to the integral study abroad components that are a feature of both curricula. Students have a choice of international institutions (previously *via* Erasmus arrangements for ETA and College-negotiated agreements with eleven institutions in the USA for ATA students, now funded through Turing Scholarships). Students are able to select from those institutions on the basis of the learning opportunities offered and how these might enable individual students to best fulfil the intended learning outcomes of the programme. In all programmes students choose their own topics for individual research projects, are able to take advantage of exchange opportunities and, where appropriate, negotiate placement opportunities. All full-time programmes use a variety of teaching methodologies appropriate to the performing arts and a spiral curriculum for each degree incorporates simulated professional practice, tailored to students' individual needs and preparing them for their professional lives.

The College pays much attention to ensuring that course design, development, standards and assessment are effective in stretching students to develop their independence, knowledge, understanding and skills that reflect their full potential. A range of different assessment modes ensure that students with specific learning needs are given the opportunity to succeed: in addition to written assessments, students undertake vivas, seminar papers, presentations, filmed and performed submissions. The College's external examiners on all of its undergraduate provision have confirmed the appropriateness of the College's academic standards for all of the period in scope. Key extracts drawn from some of their most recent reports, indicating how students are stretched to develop their knowledge and skills to their fullest potential, are detailed below:

'Students evidence a high level of perception and insight in the processes of performance and are encouraged to be able to evaluate their achievements with a good degree of objectivity. The quality of written work, in particular, is of a high standard and certainly reveals a depth of insight and understanding. Students this year evidenced development in all of the requisite acting skills and to a very good standard.' (Acting and Actor Musicianship external examiner's report for academic year 2021-22).

Provider name: Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance
UKPRN: 10005523

'Students were committed with an outstanding sense of ensemble and sensitivity to their audience. Speaking to students after the performance, their enthusiasm was palpable and it was fascinating to note how they also engaged intellectually with the contemporary themes in the work.' (American Theatre Arts external examiner's report for academic year 2021-22)

'The programme directors are to be commended, not just on the quality of the learning and teaching experience that students receive, but also on the care, compassion, and consideration they give to each and every student. This is not just about an educational experience, but a way of learning to be a person in the world, an artist who is responsive, flexible and able to deal with the challenges of a changing landscape.' (European Theatre Arts' external examiner's comments in final annual report on academic year 2020-21,

'This is a challenging programme of online learning that creates opportunities for students to learn flexibly around other professional and personal commitments. This provides access to HE for learners who might otherwise encounter barriers to accessing similar 'in person' programmes. The quality of student work is consistently high, with broad ranging opportunities for the development of responses to assessment tasks. The use of digital technology for the assessments is strong, and students produce a rich body of evidence that showcases outcomes, reflections, and different ways of working.' (Theatre Studies [online] external examiner's report for the academic year 2021-22)

'The programme deeply embeds employability skills as it is a highly industry-aware course using business models and research into events, theatre and festivals and students must measure up and be aware of their own level of skills, experience and knowledge through SWOT/PESTLE and other frameworks in order to plan and develop their skills to be industry ready. The practical work uses current industry practice and demands in order to ensure students can leave and go into the industry.' (Stage and Events Management, external examiner's report for academic year 2021-22).

Beyond the work undertaken for their own degree programmes, students have multiple opportunities to participate in extra-curricular learning. The annual College Symposium provides undergraduate students with the opportunity to work and learn from each other and external creative professionals, companies and organisations from a variety of contexts, who are invited to participate for part or the whole of the Symposium (10). Students run this week-long Symposium by staging student performances, events, professional skills workshops, industry panels and talks. Symposium gives undergraduates an opportunity to curate, project manage and practise. This is undertaken either as part of the overall Symposium production team, where they take on significant leadership roles, supported by a guest artistic director, or as a contributor or participant in a Symposium event. Students are the producers of their own learning in this unique College-wide event, which also features students' Independent Research Projects (IRPs) or personal and professional development in trialling experimental modes of working.

2.2.3. Use of research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement (SE3)

Research at Rose Bruford College reflects its institutional distinctiveness, mission and specialist nature: vocationality, diversity, collaboration and with an international focus. As a university-sector conservatoire, thinking and doing are combined to produce practical and applied research and teaching, and learning outcomes that heighten the institution's taught disciplines by means of reflection. This wide-ranging engagement with relevant research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer involvement contributes to the College's undergraduate students' academic experience.

Provider name: Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance
UKPRN: 10005523

Staff members' research interests, which feed into their teaching, include acting and performance, design, management and technical theatre. The research is both contemporary and historical and multicultural and international. Growing, too, is the College's ongoing exploration of new theatre technologies and methodologies.

Practice-based and scholarly research results in a range of outcomes, including publications, workshops, study days and academic conferences, complemented by that which interfaces reciprocally with the theatre and wider entertainment industries. Such activity feeds directly into students' learning. Student and staff research is often presented at the College's collaborative Symposium, detailed in section 2.2.3 above.

A number of newly-launched undergraduate programmes, for instance, are aligned closely with staff research interests, such as the BA (Hons) Theatre and Social Change degree programme, which recruited students for the first time in 2020, and the BA (Hons) Contemporary and Popular Performance degree, which was validated in 2022. Research-informed teaching is fully embedded in the curriculum of these degrees which have emerged directly from the research and professional practice of the staff who head those programmes. In other programmes such as BA (Hons) Theatre Studies, modules such as 'Topics in Contemporary Performance' and 'Beyond the Stage: Space and Place' are linked directly to the research interest of the module leader (11).

Many of the College's staff maintain a close and professional understanding of current developments in research and scholarship in their subjects through active involvement in theatre making, upon which they are then able to reflect critically in their pedagogical practice. The College takes every opportunity to appoint staff who bring a different approach to learning. Of nine recent appointments (since 2019), staff have doctorates

. One of the College's Academic Programme Managers working regularly with a group of UK based artists and theatre companies. His research interests lie in all of which have fed into the development and delivery of the BA (Hons) Lighting Design programme.

Staff engage regularly with pedagogically-orientated research initiatives, often undertaken under the auspices of the HEA, the results of which feed directly into teaching delivery and the facilitation of students' learning. Staff members who have recently completed postgraduate certificates in higher education have applied their learning to their own pedagogy and have generated research outputs arising from their own reflections upon their teaching experiences. In such cases, research-informed teaching leads to teaching-informed research.

Individual members of staff belong to a number of professional organisations, in part to maintain the currency of their vocational knowledge. These include the Association of Sound Designers, Association of Theatre Movement Educators, the International Federation for Theatre Research, the Royal Society of Arts, the Society of British Theatre Designers, the Society for Theatre Research, the Staff and Education Development Association (SEDA), and the Theatre & Performance Research Association (TaPRA).

Research outputs completed by staff, some of which have informed pedagogical practice at undergraduate level, formed part of the submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2021). Fifty percent of the College's outputs were categorised as either 3* (internationally excellent), or 4* (world leading) (12).

Professional practice is enhanced by engagements across the sector. Staff are active as external examiners and sit regularly on validation and periodic review panels at national and international

Provider name: Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance
UKPRN: 10005523

higher education institutions including, in recent years, at LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore; and Hong Kong Academy for the Performing Arts.

Over a long period, the College has established: mutually beneficial exchanges with the industry; relationships with cultural organisations, arts establishments and funding bodies both nationally and internationally. These have included undergraduate students working with renowned theatre companies such as The Academy for Theater Practices, Gardzienice in Poland, Complicite, Oily Cart, Punchdrunk, and Theatre Deli, and White Light supporting the College's design, management and technical arts undergraduate students' annual graduate exhibition, 'Face to Face' (13). Through the College's expertise in performance and design processes, community and applied theatre arts, new writing and directing and its commitment over the years to embrace new technologies, the development of research, scholarship, professional practice, and pedagogy in these aspects has advanced through partnerships, collaborations and individual initiatives.

Through these aspects, students are consistently and frequently engaged with developments from the forefront of research, scholarship and practice and are themselves consistently and frequently involved in these activities.

2.3. Resources, support and student engagement

2.3.1 Support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice (SE4)

In 2021, the College's core teaching staff comprised 18 full-time and 33 part-time members (51 headcount; 37.8fte) and over 150 professional staff were employed to teach on its degree programmes. This represents a range of disciplinary expertise in performance and technological areas. The College ensures that its staff have appropriate access to a range of appropriate professional development opportunities. Staff development activities at individual and institutional levels are informed by the strategic significance attached to enhancing students' learning and by the UK Professional Standards Framework. College-wide staff development sessions, which take place at least annually, provide opportunities for good practice to be disseminated and to develop practice. Discussions take place with staff regarding professional development requirements through the College's staff appraisal process.

In 2021-22, five days of staff training were undertaken associated with the implementation of the Single Academic Framework and programme development. Led in part by external consultant these included sessions linked to learning themes, interdisciplinary learning methods, collaborative learning, models of good practice in learning and teaching, including inclusivity in assessment and feedback methods. All-staff training also took place in 2021-22 on equality, diversity and inclusivity related issues and anti-racism.

New and experienced academic staff and those who support learning and teaching are supported in completing the College's Post Graduate Certificate in Learning Teaching and Higher Education: Theatre and Performing Arts (PGCLTHE) (14). In some cases, depending upon previous experience, it is a condition of new staff members' contracts to complete the PGCLTHE. In the programme they consider the scholarship of learning and teaching, curriculum design, assessment and feedback modes, student engagement, employability and accessibility in the performing arts and also undertake action research and share good practice in teaching with fellow teachers and supporters of learning from a range of national and international higher education institutions. As part of the programme, staff-students engage in online discussion on pedagogic issues and observation of teaching practice. The PGCLTHE is HEA-accredited, providing routes to its fellowship, and the UK Professional Standards Framework underpins their design. The College also supports staff to apply directly for levels of HEA fellowship.

Provider name: Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance
UKPRN: 10005523

Evidence of the value the College places on teaching is demonstrated by the number of HEA fellows. In 2021-22, the College employed two Principal Fellows, one Senior Fellow, 18 Fellows and two Associate Fellows, and a SEDA Senior Fellow. A total of 24 staff members have a PGCLTHE qualification.

The impact of staff engagement in the PGCLTHE programme is demonstrated by the number of PGCLTHE action research projects undertaken by staff that have led to curriculum developments in areas such as student feedback, professional preparation and employability, design workshop procedures, the consideration of environmental issues, and the language of teaching in the performing arts and classroom practice.

Good practice by teaching staff in enhancing students' learning opportunities is identified through four main mechanisms: peer observation of teaching, annual monitoring reporting, external examiners' reports, and internal and external student surveys. Team teaching, inherent in many of the College's pedagogical projects, productions, and team meetings also helps to develop a shared culture that supports teaching excellence in a collaborative learning community.

The College has operated a peer observation of teaching scheme since 2009. This is designed to encourage reflection upon and sharing of practice amongst teachers at the College and all permanent staff are required to participate. The outcomes from peer review are used to inform College-wide staff development activities. In September 2018, for instance, informed in part by points raised in the peer review of teaching, a session on working with disabled students was included, led by an external facilitator from GRAEAE, a theatre company that places D/deaf and disabled actors centre stage.

In 2018, the College undertook a review of its peer observation of teaching scheme and has developed a new scheme, closely aligned to the UK Professional Standards Framework, which was to be employed in 2019-20 (15). The Covid outbreak has delayed the implementation of this, but the College will be resuming implementation of peer observation in 2023.

The College's Rose Bruford Teaching Fellowship allows a staff member time to focus on a research project which will have a practical outcome for student learning. This contributes to the quality and enhancement of teaching and learning within the College and promotes an environment in which good teaching practice is researched, developed, shared and evaluated with colleagues. In 2018, the College's Teaching Fellow whose focus was working with disabled students in the performing arts.

The College actively supports activities related to enhancing pedagogical knowledge and expertise. Individual staff members have been funded to attend relevant conferences and in recent years, a number of staff have delivered papers on pedagogical practice at several events. For instance, the College is one of nine European university partners on the CANON Theatre Technical History project, a three-year ERASMUS+-funded initiative, one of the aims of which is to improve the training of future specialists in the field of theatre technology so that they can learn about different approaches and possible solutions from the history of theatre technology in their own country and in other countries.

The College's use of key practitioners also brings renowned national and international practitioners into the College to teach students and enable staff to observe their expertise. The College defines a key practitioner as someone whose work with students is of particular note and will be of value in enhancing practice across several programmes. Their work at Rose Bruford College will be

observed by a number of tutors. In 2019, for instance, a director, an actor and three playwrights were invited to represent the breadth of black and brown practitioners' skills and experience. Leading theatre critic and historian, chaired a platform event with the British-Nigerian playwright and British-Asian playwright director led a week's workshop on *Sing Year Heart out for the Lads* by with the playwright in attendance on one of the days, and fresh from the world tour of the RSC's all-black *Hamlet*, shared experiences as an actor working at the Royal Court and Bush Theatre on the plays of Fred D'Aguiar and Caryl Phillips. This array of experiences and achievements afforded students and staff a great opportunity to inform their study of Contemporary British Black Theatre (Module AT504) with the direct experience of those who have directed, written and performed it.

The College's JISC/HEA-funded innovative Open Educational Resource for the HE performing arts sector: *Reflecting on Learning and Teaching in the Performing Arts* was updated in 2018 (17). It has been used elsewhere in the sector and by CPD schemes in some other institutions.

Thus, significant support for staff professional development and developing academic practice is embedded through College-wide processes, such as peer observation of teaching, staff appraisals, staff development activities, institutional teaching fellowships; and individual support is provided for staff, for instance to undertake HEA fellowships, or to apply for relevant conference funding.

2.3.2 Supportive learning environment and academic support tailored to students' needs (SE5)

The institution is confident that students have access to a supportive learning environment and receive academic support that is tailored to the individual, through highly personalised provision, thereby maximising rates of continuation and completion.

Table 4: Academic support

Category	Indicator score (%)	Benchmark score (%)	% of statistical uncertainty to benchmark		
			Below	At	Above
Overall	77.3	78.3	19.8	78.0	2.2
Mixed ethnicity	81.5	76.2	15.2	20.4	60.4
IMD quintile 1 or 2	79.1	77.2	11.1	45.2	43.7
Eligible for free meals	80.0	74.9	11.6	22.6	65.8

As shown in Table 4, the College has an overall indicator value of 77.3% for academic support, with the percentage of statistical uncertainty distribution materially at, or above benchmark of 80.2%. Amongst the split indicators for academic support for which information is available, there are strong performances in the categories of mixed ethnicity, IMD deprivation quintile 1 or 2; and eligibility for free school meals, reflecting the College's determination to offer significant and targeted support to students in groups where the need is greatest.

A Student Services team, managed by the College's Student Services Manager, works closely with academic staff. The team provides focused students services with a one-stop shop. Support is provided for students with disabilities, students preparing for study abroad placements, specialised guidance is offered for international and exchange students, and advice is available regarding financial matters, which is particularly valued by students from less wealthy backgrounds, as the split indicators demonstrate. The College's Student Experience Committee, with high levels of

Provider name: Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance
UKPRN: 10005523

student representation, provides a focus and forum for discussion of non-academic student support matters.

The College's Student Services and Study Support have been the focus of significant attention in recent years, with a major review of its provision occurring in 2020, as mentioned above (18).

Actions arising from the Review included:

- study support and student services were combined into one team;
- out-of-hours student support services were instituted to supplement the on-campus student support infrastructure;
- the number of mental health first aiders was increased;
- mandatory staff training was instituted in areas including mental health, neurodiversity, equality and diversity.

It seems from analysis of the TEF split indicators that there is further work to be undertaken to address the needs of male students, who seem to be less satisfied with the academic support provided than their female counterparts. The College is currently exploring how best to address this issue. Similarly, further work is being undertaken to meet the needs of the College's students with declared disabilities more effectively. The College does have a dedicated Specialist Support and Equality Officer who supports students with disabilities, and the institution also provides specific support to dyslexic students, with a member of staff in the College's Student Support Team providing support for students with this specific learning disability.

The College has experienced a significant proportionate rise in students with declared disabilities in recent years. Within the College's student population, a substantial number are reporting neurodiversity, and also mental health conditions. The latter aspect has been the focus of much recent staff development activity, as is detailed below.

Mental Health

Mental health has become an increasing issue for Rose Bruford College students (as it has across the whole higher education sector) owing in part to the effects of Covid: isolation and uncertainty have caused considerable anxiety across the student body. Rose Bruford College was the first drama school to sign up to the Time4Change Mental Health Charter in 2017 and has been actively involved in leading the discussion around mental health and well-being, not only on campus but also across the Federation of Drama Schools. Fourteen trained Mental Health First Aiders from teaching and non-teaching staff work alongside the College's Student Services team to support students. In 2021 the College appointed a permanent dedicated Mental Health and Student Well-Being Manager to work with the Specialist Support and Equalities Officer as part of the Student Services Team. Having this counselling capacity on campus has substantially enhanced the service the College is able to offer its students. This is supplemented by freelance counsellors, as appropriate, together with an out-of-hours telephone counselling facility (19). The Head of Student Experience works with academic and professional colleagues, on a Well Campus initiative that has created a supportive environment that is proactive around both student and staff well-being within all areas of the College. During 2021-22, staff training workshops included sessions on supporting neurodiverse learners, supporting learners with Dyslexia, and supporting students with mental healthcare issues.

The College thus ensures that its undergraduate students have a supportive learning environment with wide and readily accessible academic support available to them, which has been tailored to their needs.

2.3.3. Physical and virtual learning resources tailored and used effectively to support learning (SE6)

The resource-rich environment of the College's undergraduate campus greatly informs its students' learning experience. The College ensures that students' learning is supported by the practices that are current in industry or wherever possible seeks to develop new methods and techniques, as is currently happening in the institution's newest digital design courses.

Table 5: Learning resources

Category	Indicator score (%)	Benchmark score (%)	% of statistical uncertainty to benchmark		
			Below	At	Above
Overall	75.9	75.9	7.4	85.8	6.8

The overall and split TEF indicators reveal a strong performance in this area, as Table 5 shows, with the percentage of statistical uncertainty distribution materially at, or above benchmark being 92.6%. The year 2 score – coinciding with Covid lockdown – saw a temporary dip in satisfaction in students' NSS scores in this area. This was particularly evident in the responses of students on some technical courses where access to high-powered computer software was difficult remotely. The College has since addressed this issue by adopting the use of cloud-based provision, which was planned before the impact of Covid. It has significantly enhanced the College's ability to support students creating heavy data design and visualisation projects. The institution will continue to factor the additional costs of these services into its annual budget as they raise the quality of the student learning experience. The College has been developing a blended model of delivery in BA Creative Lighting Control, BA Virtual Theatre and Digital Experiences and BA Digital Content Design, particularly for students learning the specialist software skills that are core to these programmes. [Deleted mention of LinkedIn Learning.] The institution has also piloted cloud-based virtual workstations to allow students to join classes and undertake individual and group project work remotely.

The College has made, and continues to make, significant efforts to ensure that the physical and digital resources are 'fit for purpose' and used effectively to aid students' learning and the development of independent study and research skills. The College has a core of good quality purpose-built teaching facilities which was built with capital support from HEFCE. It also has a mix of listed buildings, including a large Grade II-listed house.

Responding to the changes in the technological landscape, in 2018 the College successfully secured nearly £1m of HEFCE Catalyst funding and additional industrial sponsorship to create the Centre for Digital Production. In 2020 the College launched new degree programmes developed in partnership with industry in response to identified skills shortages. Building on its ethos of innovation, in 2021 the institution was awarded nearly £2m of capital funding from the Office for Students to future proof its technical subject areas by investing further in its resources that prepare students to work in high demand, technical skills shortage subject areas.

The state-of-the-art facilities which underpins learning across the College's portfolio of undergraduate courses include a 330-seat theatre-in-the-round; an 80-seat end-stage theatre; black-box studio theatre; and an outdoor concert stage. All of the stages are equipped with automated LED lighting as well as professional sound re-enforcement systems. The College has 11 fully-equipped rehearsal, movement and voice training studios; a large-scale motion capture studio with green screen; a projection-mapping, 3D audio, XR stage and live mixing station and a

Provider name: Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance
UKPRN: 10005523

vision-mixing suite. The College's undergraduate students also have access to four fully-equipped lighting design laboratories; a digital arts complex with two recording studios and offline video and audio suites, four Costume Production studios, a large scale costume/wardrobe complex; a scenic workshop with specialist prop-making facilities; theatre design studios with computer-aided design facilities; stage management offices, and production teaching studios. This investment in new infrastructure has supported the College's continued development of new modules within its programmes to advance students' skills and exposure to the latest technological opportunities.

The College's library houses over 50,000 items to support the performance and design courses, and it also accommodates the College's Special Collections, an IT suite, academic support and equipment and music stores. In response to a student need, the IT suite and an ICT helpdesk have recently been made available outside core library opening hours.

The Library supports students in their learning by embracing a philosophy and pedagogy that encourages students to become independent and self-sufficient library users and researchers. The Library has a mission to ensure students are information literate, knowing where to locate information, how to interrogate the resources (particularly online), and to encourage critical reflection of the information they gather and use.

In addition to the College's own estate, students regularly undertake work in professional spaces rented by the College such as the College's London season of productions, which in 2018, 2019 and 2020 took place at the Stratford Circus Theatre and in 2021 and 2022 was held at the Unicorn Theatre, and the annual showcase of graduating Acting and Actor Musicianship students which has been held at the Arts Theatre, Soho, and most recently, at Trafalgar Studios.

As has been indicated, the College's physical and learning resources are regularly updated to ensure students are able to develop academic and professional skills and acquire experience working in an environment which is tailored to their needs and simulates industry provision.

2.3.4. Embedded engagement with students so as to ensure continuous improvement to experiences and outcomes of students (SE7)

The College places much emphasis upon engaging directly with students regarding their learning and their broader experiences at the College. In 2019, a Student Engagement Officer was appointed as part of the College's Student Services Team with responsibility for co-ordinating engagement with students, particularly through liaising with both the College's Students' Union and also its undergraduate programme student representatives. It is, therefore, rather disappointing to view the below-benchmark student voice indicators, both overall and in many split indicators. The overall indicator value for student voice is 64.1% against a benchmark score of 68.0% (with the percentage of statistical uncertainty distribution materially below, at, and above benchmark being respectively 75.1%, 24.8%, and 0.1%). Detailed below are the mechanisms embedded in the College's processes by which engagement with student takes place. Examples are also given of changes brought about as a consequence of engagement with the College's undergraduate students, notably through dialogue with the Students' Union and student representatives. More attention in future will be placed upon ensuring that the outcomes of student engagement are reported back to the wider student body. Attention is also being paid to ensuring the Students' Union and student representatives have the opportunity to report back to their constituencies on the important work that they do on their behalf within the College.

The roles of both the Students' Union and student representatives are key ones in ensuring dialogue on quality assurance-related matters. Student representatives from the College's

Provider name: Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance
UKPRN: 10005523

undergraduate programmes are appointed each year by their programme level cohorts and take on responsibility for representing their fellow students. Each year, an induction event takes place at which the student representatives are introduced to their roles and an induction pack is presented detailing the main aspects of the role and key contacts (20). The student representatives play a key role in the programme committees which take place at least twice a year where students are able to comment on all aspects of the delivery and content of their programmes. They take part in discussions regarding annual monitoring and programme development proposals, such as programme modifications. Programmes' student representatives conduct module surveys amongst their fellow students and report back to programme committees (21). In addition, student representatives are appointed to many College-wide committees. These include Academic Development Committee, Equality and Diversity Committee, Health and Safety Committee, Learning, Quality and Standards Committee, School Boards and the Student Experience Committee. A member of the Students' Union sits as an *ex officio* member of Academic Board. The Students' Union President and an additional student representative are full members of the College's Board of Governors. Regular meetings take place between a representative of the College's senior management and the Students' Union executive.

In recent years, a yearly report on Student Engagement has been presented to the College's Student Experience Committee. This details the involvement of members of the Students' Union and student representatives in the work of the College's committees and its quality assurance and enhancement processes. The Student Engagement Report of 2018-19 provided a summary of a range of recent developments undertaken in part as a consequence of student engagement in committee discussions (22). These included:

Student Experience Committee

Library evening opening and some Saturday opening arising from student requests; provision of gender-neutral toilets; implementation of mindfulness sessions by Student Services; improvements made to the College's mental health first aid room; joint campaigns by SU/Student Services discussed at Student Experience Committee – e.g. mental health awareness (also raised at Equality and Diversity Committee); and anti-drug campaigns.

Learning Quality and Standards Committee

Student partnership agreements considered — changes made as consequence of student representatives' comments – e.g. increasing emphasis placed upon student voice (2018); student involvement in development of Learning, Teaching and Student Support strategy; actions taken to improve wi-fi and institution of facility to enable multiple devices to be accessed in part as consequence of issues raised by student reps at LQSC; and student representatives involved directly in discussions informing development by the committee of revised policies such as those relating to assessment regulations and the College's mitigating circumstances policy.

Online student rep meetings:

changes to online student surveys at both level 4 and level 5 following students' recommendations; amendments made to 2019-20 student handbook arising from discussions with student representative; and transgender policy developed with student representative and Students' Union involvement

Health and Safety Committee

Provider name: Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance
UKPRN: 10005523

Student Services opening times – ensuring Student Services open over lunchtimes; and issues raised about need for more storage space for musical instruments – additional space now in use.
Academic Development Committee

Student representative contributing constructively and with much insight to discussions regarding curriculum developments; and valuable and influential student involvement on validation panels.

Academic Board

Lack of production office space raised by student representative; more production offices have now been provided; student request that with removal of Environment and Sustainability Committee environment-related agenda items are considered elsewhere – placed on SU exec agendas and also on Student Experience Committee agendas. (N.B. The Environment and Sustainability Committee was reinstated in 2019-20 in part as a consequence of student requests.)

In addition to their engagement in programme committees and the College-wide committee detailed above, student representatives also play an important part in curriculum development initiatives, with students participating as full members of periodic reviews - such as the recent Library Review (2019), Student Engagement Review (2020) and Students Services and Study Support Review (2020) - and validation panels, working as partners in the development and enhancement of provision.

During 2020, the College's Students' Union executive and student representatives were consulted in the development of the College's no detriment policy and in the development of emergency academic regulations made necessary by the Covid lockdown. These discussions and consultations took place through the channels of communication between the Students' Union and student representatives that were already in place.

A College-wide Student Engagement Review also took place during 2020, led by the Head of Student Experience and including substantial student input (23). Key actions taken following this Review included:

- updating the student and College Partnership Agreement (a successor to the Student Charter);
- the appointment of new Students' Union posts, including a representative for off-campus students (first appointed in June 2020);
- ensuring that students are fully involved in the development of new policies and procedures and involved in 'road-testing' them;
- ensuring the internal student surveys are not too text heavy, and that actions arising from surveys are clearly and concisely communicated to students;
- the documentation and training for new student representatives was made more user-friendly and accessible.

Student feedback is obtained through module and level-based surveys. The results are reported to College committees with student representation, including Programme Committees, School Boards, Academic Development Committee, Learning, Quality and Standards and Academic Board. In the years immediately prior to the Covid pandemic, a College-wide Level 5 student survey has been conducted amongst full-time students, mirroring the questions raised in the National Student Survey. A First Impressions Survey was also conducted amongst level four students. It is intended to recommence these surveys in 2023.

Provider name: Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance
UKPRN: 10005523

Through the wide range of ways detailed above in which the College engages with its undergraduate students the institution seeks to ensure continuous improvement is undertaken to the experiences and outcomes of its students.

3. Student Outcomes

3.1. Positive outcomes

3.1.1 The College's approaches to ensuring its students succeed in, and progress beyond, their studies (SO1)

All of the College's programmes are designed and delivered to ensure that students acquire the knowledge, skills and attributes that are valued by employers, both within the creative industries sector and beyond, that are key to forging successful careers in a sector characterised by entrepreneurship, enterprise and self-employment, and that enhance their personal and/or professional lives. The simulated professional practice that is a feature of all full-time students' learning experience by level 6 ensures that students have variously engaged directly with live projects, undertaken significant production-related leadership roles, dealt with real budgets and worked in front of large audiences by the time they complete their studies, preparing them directly for their professional lives.

The College maintains considerable contact with professional organisations including the Actors' Centre, Association of British Theatre Technicians, Association of Lighting Designers, the Association of Sound Designers, British Actors' Equity Association, the Federation of Drama Schools, the Guild of Theatre Directors, the Society of Light and Lighting, Spotlight and The Stage Management Association. Where they are able, students are encouraged to become student members of such organisations.

Alumni return to the College and help students by giving careers advice and professional mentoring, providing professional placements and work experience opportunities. This helps to support students in their transition to the profession by providing them with understanding and experience of the reality of the years after graduation.

The College ensures that programmes reflect changing vocational practices through consultation with the industry as programmes are developed and reviewed. Indeed, within the College's programme approval processes, in addition to external academics, relevant industry practitioners are also centrally involved. At all of the College's validation and programme development events, there is always at least one professional external panel member.

Within the College's current undergraduate provision professional development, entrepreneurial skills and employability are embedded explicitly in the programmes of study themselves. Key transferable skills are identified in individual programme and module specifications and developed by students through a personal development programme led by permanent staff and taught by those from the industry.

Students are able to engage with industry during their studies in a variety of ways, from industry placements, engagement with industry-based extra-curricular activities such as the annual outdoor lighting competition held on the College's campus, Ready Steady Light (25), to showcases for graduating Acting and Actor Musicianship students and the annual Face to Face industry networking event held for graduating undergraduate students on the College's technical and creative degree programmes.

Provider name: Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance
 UKPRN: 10005523

External examiners across the undergraduate provision have commented positively on the programmes' links with industry and the vocational preparation that students receive. In their reports for the academic year 2021-22, external examiners commented that:

'There is no question that a range of opportunities is being offered to students specifically designed to address employability and lead to industry engagement. The students themselves demonstrate in their practice, and in the level of performance work, that they are ready for entry to the industry upon graduation.' (Acting/Actor Musicianship);

'Since beginning external examining the programme has consistently had the student's skills and employability at the core of the teaching and live projects. Staff experiences of working in the industry and understanding of the specific skills required to work in the field of costume was highlighted as an asset of the programme by the students.' (Costume Production);

'Through learning and assessment tasks students are encouraged to engage with the discipline through an industry specific lens. It is possible to identify an employability focus within practical and written work, as well as within the digital and academic literacy skills that they are encouraged to develop ... In the examined work that I witnessed, students made direct links with the industry. In fact, it was possible to see how a part-time student working within an educational setting, might be situating their assessment responses in ways that align directly with their professional experience.' (Theatre Studies [online]).

The Chief External Examiner in the School of DMTA commented that 'The use of teachers who are or have recently been involved in practice was commended, as it provides the students with direct information about the profession that they are about to join.'

Many graduating students acknowledge the skills and personal development which are embedded and promoted in the curriculum and the broader student experience. Of the 75 comments included within the 2019 NSS responses, 23 of them specifically made positive reference to personal development and their acquisition of employability skills. Particular attention was paid to: readiness for industry (10 comments); working with visiting tutors/professionals (6); placement opportunities (4); and industry connections (3)

Thus, through its tailored employment-focussed provision, the College is confident that its undergraduate students are prepared to succeed in and progress beyond their studies.

3.1.2. Rates of continuation and completion for the College's students and courses (SO2)

3.1.2.1. Continuation

The College's overall continuation rates are above benchmark, as Table 6 below reveals.

Table 6: Continuation rates

Category	Indicator score (%)	Benchmark score (%)	% of statistical uncertainty to benchmark		
			Below	At	Above
Overall	93.0	90.5	0.0	50.6	49.4
ABCS quintile 1	90.5	85.8	3.3	28.3	71.7
Free school meals	90.5	87.3	6.3	36.7	57.4

The percentages of statistical uncertainty distribution materially at, and above benchmark are particularly high, as Table b shows, with the overall figure being 100%, and the proportions for

Provider name: Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance
UKPRN: 10005523

students in ABC quintile 1 and amongst students who had been eligible for free school meals, being respectively 96.7% and 93.7%.

The College's academic and student support processes which have resulted in such high indicator values are detailed above. The College has introduced an institution-wide 'Well Campus' initiative, in which all aspects of the College's support for students have been reviewed and enhanced. The Student Services and Study Support Review conducted in 2020 and the actions subsequently taken, together with the College's focus on developing its mental health provision, detailed above in section 2.3.2, are part of the Well Campus initiative and are evidence of the College's commitment to ensuring high rates of continuation amongst its students.

The support provided by the College during the disruptive years of Covid, which saw continuation rates remain generally high across the College were commented upon by the institution's two undergraduate chief external examiners in their reports:

'The staff and students of the School are to be commended for continuing to meet the challenges of the COVID19 pandemic and finding a range of creative and supportive approaches to ensure that Page 4 of 4 students had as rich a learning experience as possible and were able to meet the Programme Learning Outcomes.' (School of Performance chief external examiner).

'[With regard to] student wellbeing and mental health - it would appear that the staff had responded well and most students felt supported.' (DMTA chief external examiner).

Amongst the split indicators regarding full-time students, there was one element where continuation rates fell below the benchmark – in the subject of Materials and Technology, which encompasses the College's Creative Lighting Control and Audio Production degree programmes. These are degree programmes where students are in high demand in employment sectors encountering acute staff shortages. Several students have left these programmes of study to take up employment opportunities. This is regrettable. The College has attempted to address this issue by allowing students to engage in assessment activities related to some paid work. As one external examiner in the School of Design, Management and Technical Arts noted in their report:

'I was impressed with the flexibility of the course and staff that ensures students who find additional work outside of the course ... can use this work to develop skills and to be assessed on and then reflect upon it and share experiences with the other students. This is a way of being up to date and relevant when it comes to industry working and building contacts and networks before a student even graduates'. (Stage and Event Management external examiner)

Within the indicators related to part-time students the data reveals below-benchmark student continuation rates. This is largely a consequence of students deciding to leave without fully completing a particular level of the programme. This has been a relatively common occurrence amongst students on the College's online programme, where many students undertook the degree for leisure purposes.

Recent external examiners' reports for both programmes have commented on the high quality support provided to students undertaking these degrees:

'They were appreciative too of the really effective tutorial support provided ... the support provided by the subject librarian has been particularly highlighted by students as exemplary in supporting them through the COVID19 pandemic.' (2020-21).

‘From my encounters, I saw that students value the programme and the input of tutors who they find highly supportive. Where they identified the potential to feel isolated due to the online nature of their learning, they also indicated that they are provided with ample opportunity to connect with others and their tutors.’ (Theatre Studies, 2021-22).

3.1.2.2. Completion

Table 7: Completion rates

Category	Indicator score (%)	Benchmark score (%)	% of statistical uncertainty to benchmark		
			Below	At	Above
Overall	91.9	88.8	0.0	30.3	69.7
Perf. Arts	92.6	89.7	0.0	37.1	62.9
Black students	87.5	81.2	7.5	19.2	73.3
Mixed ethnicity students	92.5	89.8	23.7	31.2	45.1

As shown in Table 7, the College’s overall and most split-indicator completion rates are above benchmark. Particularly strong completion rates are identified in a number of split indicators, such as those for Performing Arts students, black students and amongst mixed ethnicity students. It is particularly notable that, for the overall category and the Performing Arts, the percentages of statistical uncertainty distribution materially at, and above benchmark are 100% in each case.

Completion rates on the BA (Hons) Lighting Design programme, partially categorised in the subjects of Creative Arts and Design, were somewhat below benchmark. This is due to a small number of students leaving the programme for employment in the industry prior to the completion of their degrees. Staffing shortages in this industry sector are particularly acute at present.

Within the indicators related to part-time students the data reveals below-benchmark student completion rates. This is largely a consequence of students deciding to leave with intermediate qualifications rather than continuing to study up to honours level. This has been particularly common amongst students on the College’s online programme, where many students undertook the degree for leisure purposes. The continuing undergraduate Theatre Studies online programme has a high proportion of part-time students who are intending to complete the programme to honours level.

As the indicators demonstrate – both overall and in most split categories – the vast majority of the College’s undergraduate students achieve consistently high rates of continuation and completion.

3.1.3. Rates of successful progression for the College’s students and courses (SO3)

Particularly strong split progression indicator values have been returned for the College relating to categories associated with social and economic deprivation, as Table 8 indicates below. The progression indicator value for IMD quintile 1 and 2 is 17.8 percentage points above the benchmark value; and for students who had been in receipt of free school meals, the progression indicator value is 25.3 percentage points above the benchmark value, with the percentage of statistical uncertainty distribution materially above benchmark being 99.9%.

Below benchmark values for progression are evident for years 2 and 3, which coincide with the Covid pandemic. It is noticeable that, whilst the live events industry recovered relatively quickly

from the pandemic, employment opportunities in drama-related areas have been slower to recover (24). A number of other specialist performing arts providers with a high drama-orientation in their undergraduate populations have also recorded similar progression patterns. However, it is pleasing to note that, of the College's 2021-22 graduating cohort of 52 BA (Hons) Acting and BA (Hons) Actor Musicianship students, 50 (96.1%) have been signed by agents.

Table 8: Rates of successful progression

Category	Indicator score (%)	Benchmark score (%)	% of statistical uncertainty to benchmark		
			Below	At	Above
Overall	67.1	67.3	18.4	67.9	13.7
IMD quintile 1 & 2	80.0	62.2	9.9	31.6	58.5
Free school meals	88.9	63.6	0.0	0.1	99.9

As has been indicated above, the College undertakes significant work to ensure that its undergraduate students are industry-ready upon graduation. Post-pandemic, this support has been significantly fortified. The College has recently appointed an Industry Relationship Manager, whose role is to lead on industry engagement and employability. The College's industrial placements programme is one of the key elements of its taught provision and the Industry Relationship Manager plays a key part in ensuring its effective operation. Partners offer the College's undergraduate students work experience, act as future employers, and provide the institution with much in-kind support.

The College ensures that its relationships with future employers are active by engaging with them through multiple contact points: as advisors, consultants, sponsors, project leaders, directors, speakers, as masterclass hosts and mentors. The institution also ensures that its graduates meet with early career alumni and up and coming practitioners in order to provide current knowledge on entering industry.

An interdisciplinary Industry Advisory Board was appointed in 2021 (26). It comprises 18 highly-regarded industry professionals drawn from across the performing arts and live events industries. These experts meet to advise on specific topics such as increasing graduate employability. Staff are given the opportunity to discuss with the board current issues such as post-Covid recovery, diversifying the sector and how to prepare the College's students for the evolving workplace.

Through such actions, the College seeks to ensure continued successful progression for its students and programmes.

3.2. Educational gains

3.2.1 The educational gains the College intends its students to achieve (SO4)

The College's Strategic Plan articulates a number of component elements associated with the educational gains students are expected to achieve by the time they complete their studies at the institution. Linked to the College's vision, its graduating students are expected to be:

- committed to creating social and cultural as well as artistic and economic value;
- distinctive and innovative in their artistic practice, characterised by a commitment to diversity, equality and inclusivity;
- internationalist in outlook.

Following graduation, the College's students are expected to be able to lead change as well as meeting current professional needs within their workplaces.

Provider name: Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance
UKPRN: 10005523

The College aims to produce graduates who can meet the increasing demand for a workforce that can deliver in a diverse and diversifying artistic and cultural industries sector where working is largely project-based, collaborative and creative, yet risk averse. It is therefore essential for the College's graduates to be adaptable, able to work both independently and collaboratively and be resilient to change and rejection in order to survive.

3.2.2. Supporting students to achieve these educational gains (SO5)

The educational gains detailed above are embedded into the College's learning ethos and methods from the outset. The College supports students' learning by emphasising the importance of self-development and professional behaviours, that students will encounter in model creative workplaces. The key skills of professionalism, learning to learn, adaptability, collaboration, creative problem solving and self-awareness create graduates that employers say they value. Equipping the College's graduates with these skills prepares them to manage their own professional development and sustainable freelance portfolio careers.

Resilience is developed at all levels of the students' learning, both directly in learning encounters and also more widely in their experience of campus culture, through the acquisition of both personal and professional development skills. These abilities are learned through a combination of:

- pre-HE induction, particularly for post-Covid-affected undergraduate students who have not fully experienced independent learning or living;
- learned professional behaviours – such as politeness, good time keeping, kindness;
- a coaching-led learning culture which places the student at the centre of their learning rather than the staff member;
- gaining of collaborative skills acquired through project-led and production-led processes;
- work experience;
- the honing of soft skills – listening, presenting, supporting, problem solving, managing stress and difficult situations;
- the use of mentorship and networking opportunities;
- the acquisition of leadership skills with which to effect change, developed within industry- or industry-simulated environments.

3.2.3 The College's evaluation of students' educational gains (SO6)

The principal way in which the College evaluates students' educational gains is through ensuring that many of these gains are built into programme and module learning outcomes. The integration of educational gain into the assessment of students is an important way in which the College can be assured that students are graduating having demonstrated acquisition of these qualities.

The employability aspects associated with educational gain are also subjects on which undergraduate external examiners are asked to report. The monitoring of these reports enables the College to evaluate the extent to which students are achieving these educational gains.

Direct contact with students' employers and industry professionals who have worked with the College's graduates is another means by which the institution is able to evaluate the extent to which these educational gains are being applied or require further development within both the

formal and informal curriculum. In a recent communication in March 2022 the internationally-renowned lighting designer Patrick Woodroffe,

wrote the following of Rose Bruford College graduates:

‘I understand how important the skills of adaptability, vision and collaboration are in the role of the technical artist. At Rose Bruford students learn these skills through working collaboratively ... They learn the importance of thinking independently as well as working as part of a creative team when collaboration is critical ... As technology changes ... what is most important is to bring a curiosity and temperament that allows the professional to continue to learn and sustain their careers throughout their lives. This is the added value the Rose Bruford experience provides.’

Conclusion

The College is proud of the high quality of its specialist vocational provision, evidenced by student and graduate surveys, employers, external examiners and assessors. Whilst acknowledging areas in which further enhancement is required, this document has aimed to demonstrate the multiple ways in which the College ensures that its undergraduate students, from a diverse range of backgrounds, successfully engage in an excellent learning and teaching experience, providing them with high-level skills to equip them for a broad range of fulfilling and successful career destinations, both nationally and internationally.

Endnotes

1. Details of Rose Bruford College-validated CertHE provision at Notting Hill Academy of Music can be found here: www.nottinghillacademyofmusic.com.
2. Office for Students press release relating to ALRA and Rose Bruford College, 4 April 2022: www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/students-offered-places-at-rose-bruford-following-alra-drama-school-closure/.
3. Strategic Plan, 2019-25.
4. Single Academic Framework – PowerPoint presentation.
5. Learning, Teaching and Student Support Strategy, 2018-22.
6. See for instance the BA (Hons) Theatre & Social Change programme specification.
7. Assessment and Feedback policy, 2021.
8. Student Handbook, (e.g. 2019).
9. Revised grading descriptors for the Department of Management, and Technical Arts, 2018.
10. See sample Symposium programmes. (www.rosebrufordsymposium.wixsite.com/website-6).
11. See for instance for BA (Hons) Theatre and Social Change, BA (Hons) Contemporary and Popular Performance, and BA (Hons) Theatre Studies

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UKPRN: 10005523

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