

# **RADA**

## **Provider submission for TEF 2023**

**Provider name: Royal Academy of Dramatic Art**  
**UKPRN: 10009292**

## Provider submission for TEF 2023

### 1. Provider context

The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art is a small, specialist institution located in the heart of London, offering undergraduate and postgraduate vocational training for theatre and performance. Founded in 1904, RADA has an unparalleled record of success in training some of the world's most renowned actors, writers, directors and technical specialists. We work in partnership with the industry to produce graduates who take their place at the vanguard of their profession and make a lasting impact on local, national and international cultural life.

RADA is a small institution with a global reach. With 193 students across our five undergraduate and postgraduate courses in 2022-23, we are one of the smallest providers of higher education programmes in acting and technical stagecraft in the UK. In 2022 we were recognised as a world-leading specialist institution by the Office for Students for funding purposes. Our undergraduate provision consists of three programmes: a BA (Hons) in Acting (with a current student body of 75), and a Foundation Degree in Technical Theatre and Stage Management (56 students), with a 'top-up' third year BA (Hons) (22 students), all validated by King's College London.

Our mission is to deliver world-leading training in the dramatic arts by cultivating exceptional talent in a community dedicated to curiosity, rigour, creativity and craft. Maintaining our small size and specialist focus enables us to offer an exceptional depth of practical, vocational training that is uniquely tailored to each student's needs, showcasing each individual's talent and skill whilst training them to work collaboratively as a member of an ensemble. In 2022-23 we are in the process of developing a new institutional mission, vision and strategy in collaboration with our students, staff and trustees, with whom we have held ten facilitated workshops over a three-month period since September 2022. These key stakeholders have been able to contribute to the development of a strategic approach that will reflect RADA's core priorities and aspirations for the next five years, as we emerge from the challenges of the pandemic and continue to equip our graduates with the knowledge and skills to maximise their professional impact within a rapidly changing industry.

Our key priorities for the 2022-23 academic year as outlined in our annual report [1] are:

- Development of a new 3–5-year strategy and business plan.
- A curriculum review of RADA's core programmes ready for revalidation in November 2023.
- Ensuring the high standards of training and student experience are maintained.
- A new People Strategy, which includes supporting continued development for all staff, through training and updating professional practice.
- Growing income through commercial activity and fundraising.
- Development of new postgraduate programmes.
- Continued investment in RADA's anti-racism and equity work.

RADA's reputation as a world-renowned centre of excellence is built on the extraordinary success of our graduates, who occupy leading roles in theatre, film, television and radio, as actors, directors, writers, producers, lighting, sound and costume designers, prop makers, scenic artists, stage managers and production managers. Many of our alumni also gain global recognition in the form of major international awards. We achieve these outcomes by attracting talent from every part of society and delivering an outstanding learning experience. Diversity, equity and inclusivity are at

the heart of our educational approach and we have a long track record of working to remove barriers to access. To ensure that places on RADA courses are allocated on the basis of talent and potential, regardless of background or circumstance, we run youth companies in acting and theatre production targeted at young people from high deprivation and low-participation areas and offer substantial financial support to undergraduate students. Of our full time undergraduate students, 24.3% over the past four years have come from IMD quintiles 1 and 2, a higher percentage than any of our competitor institutions [2]. Many of our students come from low income households and we offer £3,000 per year in bursaries to those with a household income below £43,000 plus additional discretionary and full scholarship awards, and provide financial support to around half of our student body (45% or 87/192 in 2021-22, 59% or 92/155 in 2020-21, 49.5% or 99/200 in 2019-20) [3].

One of our graduates commented on their experience:

*the idea of being a student at one of the most renowned, prestigious drama schools seemed an unrealistic and unreachable goal. This could not be further from the truth.*

*RADA is a community that undoubtedly encourages its students, from all walks of life, to believe that they can be whatever they want to be. Whether it be an actor, stage manager, designer or director, the sky is our limit and we are shown that anything is possible if we put our minds to it.” [4]*

Demand for our BA Acting programme is high, with 4298 applications for 28 places in 2022. We aim to recruit a diverse cohort of students with an even gender balance that is representative of different ethnicities and disabilities and supports our strategic commitment to be an inclusive and diverse institution. In the current academic year over 40% of acting students are from Black and Global Majority backgrounds. In 2020, the External Examiner for the programme commented that, ‘RADA has a more diverse cohort of students than any other conservatoire I am aware of, and the multi-racial casting of actors enriches the productions of a wide repertoire by bringing those diverse backgrounds to bear.’ [5]

The applicant pool for our FdA Technical Theatre and Stage Management programme is much smaller with around 120 applications for 30 places and one of the goals set out in our Access and Participation Plan is to increase the diversity of this cohort to include a minimum of 15% Black and Global Majority Students. We are beginning to see progress though the work of our Access and Participation team and 24% of applicants for 2022 entry were from Black and Global Majority backgrounds [6].

We have a significant disabled student population, with around 25% of our undergraduate students over the past four years declaring a disability. These students contribute to the diversity of the institution and have led us to innovate and diversify our approaches to learning and teaching as outlined within the Student Experience and Student Outcomes sections of this submission. We provide a range of services for these students from support for Disabled Students’ Allowance (DSA) applications, to tailored learning agreements and in-house specialist learning support.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on RADA that is reflected in our size and shape of provision data and in our TEF indicators. Moving our courses online was a particular challenge for the institution due to their intensive and embodied nature, incorporating extensive hours of practical group work. We were forced to admit a smaller number of students in 2020 in order to accommodate safe numbers within workshops and studios and as the theatre industry came to a

standstill during periods of lockdown, graduate employment outcomes have been negatively impacted. There were some positives however and our students benefitted from a number of innovative learning opportunities using online platforms and new technologies to engage with peers, teachers, audiences and industry professionals during this period.

As RADA is a very small institution, we do not have a formal Students' Union or Student Association. We do however have an active student representative system and students elect two student governors to the Council. Within this context, our student governors have been the main points of contact for student input into the TEF process.

In preparing our provider and student submissions, staff and students have contributed to the process in the following ways:

- The Student and Academic Services team briefed student governors on the structure and purpose of the TEF
- In the absence of a Students' Union, we employed a temporary administrator to work independently with students to arrange feedback meetings, collate information and support the creation the student submission
- Those involved in the student submission have been given access to internal student feedback data
- The main student contact is in touch with the main provider contact and has been able to approach them with any questions
- We have sent joint surveys to graduates including questions from both the provider submission team and student submission team
- We have surveyed current students in relation to educational gains
- We arranged student focus groups that provided an opportunity for all current undergraduates to input into the student submission
- The main submission was discussed and approved by our Academic Board (including staff and student members)

## 2. Student experience

### 2.a. Academic Experience and Assessment

#### Learning and Teaching

We provide our students with a transformative and highly practical training where each element of learning and teaching is purposely designed to help prepare them to start successful careers. The Acting programme uses the analogy of the spine, with the idea of project work forming the spine of the training and classwork the ribs that support and engage the spine, both working together to take the student on a developmental journey through the course. The team's pedagogy is based on an integrated developmental model whereby each stage is the foundation for the next stage and all learning continues to be drawn upon as the student progresses through these stages. Reflecting on their first performance project, one second year acting student commented in 2021-22:

*"I found the overall production process very positive and learnt a lot about how to transfer acting skills learnt in training into the process of rehearsing for a show."* [7]

An integrated, developmental pedagogic approach is also employed by the technical theatre arts team, who provide foundational skills in a range of technical departments, such as lighting, scenic

art, sound, props and wardrobe, before working individually with students to mentor them through projects and productions as they choose a particular specialism.

Employment destinations (see p.19) illustrate the positive impact of our approach, and our students are consistently highly satisfied with the excellent experience they receive. This is exemplified in the overall indicator for 'the teaching on my course' which is rated at 92.4%, 9.2% above our benchmark, and is supported by many of the comments made by our students in the NSS.

*"Brilliant teaching and staff. Have been really pushed, challenged and nurtured. Feel like the school really cares about the quality of the teaching and learning."* [NSS 2021 student comment] [8]

RADA offers students a bespoke learning and teaching environment founded on small group and one-to-one teaching that supports their individual development. The classes, workshops and tutorials within our undergraduate programmes enable students to develop as creative, reflective practitioners, technicians and actors, and to nurture and fulfil their potential. In addition, students spend many hours engaged in supervised projects and productions that mirror professional contexts, enabling them to benefit from high contact hours (typically 30-40 hours per week for 36 weeks per year). Through this intensive training, students learn to adopt a rigorous, professional attitude in all they do and are encouraged to engage open-heartedly with the process while taking responsibility for their own learning and development.

Students benefit from a high staff-student ratio, extensive individual tutorial support and continuous personalised feedback. In 2020-21 we had 190 enrolled students across all our taught programmes (145 undergraduates, 45 postgraduates) and 75 members of academic staff (30 full time and 45 part time), giving a ratio of 2.53 students to each member of staff. This is more than double that of the nearest competing drama institution (LAMDA at 5.63 students per academic staff member) and many more times that of most large universities [9] [10]. Our relatively large staff body enables us to be highly attentive to students' individual development needs and the impact of this is demonstrated by our outstanding student continuation and completion rates (see p.17).

### Course content and delivery

Our students are stretched to develop their knowledge and skills to their fullest potential through the developmental content and delivery of the curriculum. The BA Acting programme provides an in-depth cumulative training, moving from process (where students learn through creative experimentation, failure and risk) to application in performance. Over three years students learn and develop skills in acting, voice, movement, singing, research, critical and contextual studies and personal/professional development, all necessary to sustain them in a professional career in theatre, television, film, radio and audio. Teaching draws upon established acting techniques (through Stanislavski and some of his successors) set within broader global contexts, while also introducing new approaches developed through staff research and scholarship. For example, speech systems rather than specific accents are now used in vocal training, which primes students to articulate the various sounds for any accent a future role may require while drawing upon their individual life experiences. Understanding that all vocal qualities can be perceived as valuable leads to an awareness of human speech diversity in an intentionally equitable way. RADA is uniquely placed to harness this combination of tradition and innovation to train actors who are highly successful in a wide range of contexts.

FdA Technical Training and Stage Management starts with a foundational year within which each student experiences a rotation through the areas of lighting, sound, stagecraft, wardrobe, scenic

construction, scenic art, property making and stage management. We are the only institution to adopt this model, which is fundamental to the ethos of the training, and RADA graduates are unique in their ability to understand the relationship of each part to the whole. In the second year, students specialise in one or two chosen areas and undertake an industry placement, which provides them with both real-world experience and employment contacts. Within the BA year students build on the skills and experience from the foundation degree to gain specialist knowledge and replicate working at high-level industry standards. Most teaching takes place in authentic vocational and practice-based contexts, with staff and students working closely together in RADA's state-of-the-art workshops, studios and theatres, and making use of the extensive opportunities to work on our many public productions and showcases. In 2019, the External Examiner for the programme made the following comments:

*"The developmental design of the TTSM programme, with rotations at level 4, moving into further specialism at levels 5 then 6 enables students to fully understand their shared environment before they specialise. This broad contextual understanding empowers them to graduate as rounded professionals, ready for what is an essentially collaborative industry or set of industries."* [5]

Our programme of 13 undergraduate public productions per year is at the heart of our training model, providing a framework within which all of the skills and knowledge accumulated through the curriculum are integrated and through which students from across programmes work together as collaborative ensembles. These productions also provide the context for the integrated assessment of our programmes' learning outcomes within an authentic, professional context. Our graduates testify to the efficacy of this approach:

*"I think RADA really supported me and provided me with a huge toolbox of skills to be able to approach different types of acting and scripts. I think a lot of people ask: "Do you want to do theatre or film or TV or musical theatre", like they are all separate but I think the skills RADA teaches you are so blended. You will be able to approach anything you're given, learn to take risks, and learn to really push yourself to be able to delve into things that you never thought you would."* [4]

The content and delivery of our courses inspire our students to fully engage with their learning and to stretch themselves to achieve their full potential.

*"The quality of teaching is extremely high, it is absolutely sensational. I truly feel like I have worked with some of the best acting tutors in the world. I have been challenged and stretched in every area of the course. The quality of our work is expected to be high and the staff go above and beyond to help us achieve that high quality."* [NSS 2020 student comment] [8]

Students are enabled to develop their creative process and find creative solutions within a learning environment that encompasses safe spaces for experimentation. One of the learning outcomes for first and second year BA Acting is to, "Work with bravery and curiosity with a willingness to embrace mistakes and failure and learn and grow from these." [11]. The programme adopts a process-led approach to training in which the idea of the finished piece of work is unpicked and the experience of performing and being observed is reflected upon at length within the curriculum.

Technical Theatre and Stage Management students have opportunities to complete projects based on self-led experimentation and skills development. These include an escape room that forms part of RADA's public production programme, video projects and design projects.



A very recent example is an immersive student-led video installation produced in one of RADA's theatre spaces to complement our productions in term one of 2022-23.

Reflective practice is embedded within learning, teaching and assessment. Technical Theatre and Stage Management students complete a self-assessment exercise after each six week teaching block, through which they complete a form asking them to reflect on their achievements, identify areas for improvement and in some cases to assign themselves a mark using the same grading criteria that staff use. The self-assessment forms are not marked but are reviewed at profile meetings and form the basis of feedback tutorials with the Programme Director or Head of Department. Acting students take part in reflective practice classes throughout the course, keep reflective journals and participate in a reflective session at the end of each project which is explored further within individual tutorials. These activities contribute to our students' development as reflective practitioners, a quality that they take with them as they progress into their professional careers.

RADA students' timetables are intensive and attendance is closely monitored. As such, students are required to commit fully to their learning and to develop the stamina to perform at a high level within a production schedule that includes tight turnarounds and long working hours, reflective of the industry. The developmental structure of our courses enables students to build that stamina over time and to take on increasing levels of responsibility within the production context as they progress through each level of study.

*"The course gives you amazing insight into what it's like in the industry, the hours worked, real-life workplace scenarios, as we work on many productions across the year. We are given plenty of autonomy, protected and supported when needed but allowed to make mistakes and given the space to figure things out as if we were already working."* [NSS 2020 student comment] [8]

## Assessment and Feedback

RADA's assessment and feedback practices are constructively aligned to our teaching methods and are tailored to support students' learning, progression and attainment. In the NSS, students rate their experience of assessment and feedback highly and our overall indicator in this area is in line with benchmark. In particular, students consistently indicate high levels of satisfaction with the quality of feedback that they receive, with 84% in 2021, 97% in 2020 and 93% in 2019 agreeing that 'I have received helpful comments on my work'. In 2020 a student commented:

*"The feedback I've received has been specific and personal which has allowed me to work on my craft in forensic detail."* [NSS 2020 student comment] [8]

An analysis of our time series indicators for assessment and feedback shows that they are materially above benchmark in all but the most recent year. The 2022 cohort was the most significantly impacted by the pandemic and it is our view that this had a bearing on satisfaction levels, as the only changes to assessment and feedback processes during this period were those made to accommodate COVID restrictions. We did however, put alternative assessment arrangements in place during this time and which have been effective in enabling our students to achieve at a level consistent with pre-pandemic cohorts.

Our students benefit from continuous assessment methods that enable them to focus on their creative process as they develop throughout their training. First and second year acting students

are assessed through cumulative classwork, class-based exercises and projects. In the final year they are assessed in films and public productions with both process and performance contributing to the final result. This enables us to assess students within an authentic context and to provide formative feedback that they can draw upon throughout their time with us. It also directly impacts their success as graduates as they learn how to use feedback from directors, creatives and other colleagues to maximise their success as they move into their professional lives. Our External Examiners have identified the integrated nature of our assessment strategy as good practice.

*“The performance drew together many of the disciplines the students had been acquiring in the two years of study so far, within an excellent framework for assessment, and gave the students an opportunity to really show creative thinking, high levels of technical skill and a real warmth in audience engagement.” [BA Acting 2019] [5]*

Technical Theatre and Stage Management students are assessed in each six-week block of study, during which they undertake either a production role, a project or a work placement. Students are assessed on a mixture of common skills (such as time management, organisation and communication skills) and technical skills relevant to the department (lighting, sound, stage management etc.) they are in at the time. There is a focus on common skills for first year students before they begin to specialise in year two. As with the acting programme, these modes of assessment enable students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in an authentic professional context.

Students receive exceptionally high volumes of feedback from academic staff and visiting professionals throughout their course, which enables them to focus on their individual development. Technical Theatre and Stage Management students receive continual one-to-one feedback throughout their rotations through different departments and production roles, in addition to discussing their overall progress at regular individual tutorials with the Course Director. Acting students receive continuous feedback in class. Each student has regular opportunities to share their work with others (for example through open classes) after which they receive further individual feedback from teachers. Termly scheduled tutorials with the Course Director and additional open access tutorials with the Course Director and Lead Tutors are offered (and well utilised) throughout the year.

Teaching teams on both programmes hold either termly or twice termly profile meetings, at which students' progress, assessment marks and feedback are discussed and any follow-up actions relating to additional academic support are agreed. These meetings also enable each team to calibrate their knowledge of academic standards and to gain a shared understanding of assessment criteria, leading to a more consistent assessment experience for students.

### **Research, scholarship and professional practice**

RADA's highly experienced teachers are professional practitioners in their fields, bringing a currency and connection with industry that supports students' progression and attainment of high academic and professional standards. Students also have multiple opportunities to work with and learn from leading practitioners from across the industry, through projects, talks and masterclasses, providing additional insights into the variety of career paths available and the skills and experience sought by employers. The technical theatre arts team includes several Associate Tutors, all of whom are industry based and bring specialist professional experience to teaching and marking teams. RADA engages a range of highly experienced professional directors for each of its



Provider name: Royal Academy of Dramatic Art  
UKPRN: 10009292

public productions, who provide students with continuous oral feedback and contribute to written feedback for production-based assessments.

We support our staff to develop their professional practice, which directly informs their pedagogy and creates an enriching and inspiring student experience.

Within small group and one-to-one settings, students encounter a range of excellent academic practice, developed and shared by teaching staff who, in addition to their professional practice, use their research and scholarship to inform their pedagogical approach. Their practice is disseminated through publications, conferences and collaborations with other educational and arts institutions. In the past two years RADA staff have been invited to teach or deliver workshops for the Chekhov Collective, Accademia Teatrale di Firenze, Stratford East, Universität der Künste in Berlin, Madrid Audio visual Drama School, National Institute of Dramatic Art in Sydney, the BBC and University of the Arts London amongst others [13]. The approaches of our esteemed teachers are also reflected in a series of RADA Guides published by Bloomsbury, which provides students and teachers with practical workbooks on all aspects of drama training. The most recent of these, *The Moment of Speech: Creative Articulation for Actors* was published in December 2021.

Research into representation in actor training is fundamental to RADA's commitment to become an anti-racist institution and to diversify the learning experience of all of our students.

Through this work we aim to train articulate, curious and socially conscious practitioners who will be change makers and leaders of future industries in whatever role they choose.

In the past year we have also initiated research into the use of British Sign Language in actor training,

teachers and BSL interpreters are developing a visual vernacular, creating signs for words and concepts used in the training environment that do not exist in BSL.

RADA staff have secured funding to undertake a related research project in collaboration with Imperial College and the Royal College of Music.

## Employer and industry engagement

Whilst at RADA, students have a wealth of opportunities to engage with industry professionals and employers.

A number of leading companies and casting directors regularly come to RADA to conduct mock auditions with our final year acting students, including the Royal Shakespeare Company, Shakespeare's Globe, Lucy Bevan CDG and Kenneth Branagh Productions. These are important employers for our students and have cast many recent RADA graduates in their productions, including films *Death on the Nile*

Additionally, third year acting students are supported to enter annual competitions such as the Spotlight Prize and the Carlton Hobbs Bursary award and consistently rank amongst winners and finalists.

Our Technical Training and Stage Management students develop their skills through regular training with technical specialists on industry standard equipment. Each year students specialising in lighting undertake a Son et Lumiere project in RADA's Jerwood Vanburgh Theatre with the help of equipment from sponsors NEG Earth and VER and headline fixtures by ROBE lighting, who support RADA through in-kind training partnerships. The event not only gives the students the freedom to experiment with a huge range of lighting fixtures, but also provides a training opportunity in learning how to use different LX platforms.

In recent years RADA has increasingly worked with new technology and software to create new and innovative working practices that ensure our students are prepared for the needs of a rapidly changing industry. As our President reflected:

*"The increase in screen work available due to the rise of streaming services has seen a greater focus in the training on acting for camera. The demand from the video gaming industry for voice actors has led to students working more with microphones in specially equipped recording studios. All this is to ensure that nothing fazes a RADA acting graduate and they can respond to any given professional situation."* [14]

In response to COVID, RADA was the first drama school to successfully transmit Streaming Architecture for Control Networks (ACN) over the internet, allowing for remote lighting programming, visualisation and control. This meant that at the height of the pandemic technical students were able to work on live shows, remotely, and in real time. Students also worked with Capture Lighting Design Software that allows the user to visualise and work in a virtual space. Led by our lighting department working in collaboration with our stage management team and other departments, this innovation was invaluable to our students and will continue to be used to enhance the student learning experience.

RADA has led the way in embedding live captioning within its production programme. Since September 2021 we have captioned a performance for every staged production, thereby offering a greater number of captioned live performances than any other provider we are aware of. This is achieved using a variety of technology such as large format displays, projection and LED panels, broadening the training for technical students. As in the industry, captioning introduces a new level

of workflow for the Stage Management department, liaising with captioners and script checking, whilst our video students have been a part of the engineering team to setup, rig and ensure the systems are all working.

RADA is proactive in responding to changing industry priorities and we use our close connections with the industry to inform our approaches to teaching and to enhance student outcomes. Responding to a rising tide of actors revealing traumatic on-set experiences when performing intimate scenes, we have introduced training to ensure that both our acting and technical graduates are now better equipped to deal with the staging and/or filming of sensitive and intimate scenes which may previously have been exploitative. RADA introduced intimacy protocols for final year stage productions in 2019

Workshops for teachers on intimacy and consent ensured informed practices could be incorporated in classwork, and in 2020 we formalised intimacy protocols for all project work and consent guidelines for acting classes (in collaboration with students). An ongoing relationship with Intimacy on Set ensures our protocols and practices remain at the forefront of industry standards.

Our External Examiners have indicated that RADA is leading the way in its enhancement of the curriculum to meet industry demands:

*“RADA now teaches more screen acting than most conservatoires. This is vital for the future careers of graduates. The vast majority of Equity members’ incomes comes not from the live theatre, but the recorded media. Yet most drama training in this country is still heavily, if not almost exclusively weighted towards a theatre-biased curriculum.”*

[BA Acting External Examiner report 2020] [5]

## **2.b. Resources, support and student engagement**

### **Support for staff professional development**

RADA supports its staff to develop their academic practice through structured training opportunities and through support to engage with external events and networks. Recent international conferences attended by RADA staff include Granice W Tearze Limites in Theatre, in Warsaw; Making of the Actor: Actor-Dancer Conference Practical Workshop, in Athens, Shanghai Theatre Academy 2nd International Forum on Actor Training and Education in China, and VASTA Converging Pathways voice conference in the USA [13].

Involvement in such events enables our staff to remain connected with excellent academic practice around the world and to bring a wider perspective to their teaching practice.

RADA currently has five Advance HE/HEA Fellows, three Senior Fellows and one Principal Fellow on its staff. The application process has enabled these individuals to reflect on their experience of teaching, supporting learning and leading in higher education and in doing so, to engage with good practice through the lens of the UK Professional Standards Framework. Over the past few months we have renewed our efforts to support staff with their applications, including through workshops and mentoring. A number of staff intend to submit by the end of the academic year and we will continue to support them towards this target by providing opportunities to reflect on professional practice.

Our staff development programme is targeted on key areas that align with RADA's strategic priorities. We offer in-house training in EDI, inclusive practice, British Sign Language, working with neurodiverse students, mental health first aid and mediation skills in addition to specific events organised within teaching departments [15]. In previous years we have held a one day staff conference with a programme of sessions delivered by RADA staff and external facilitators, ranging from mindfulness, to accessibility, to singing, movement and drawing workshops [16]. Staff also have access to courses run by RADA Business, our subsidiary company offering training on leadership, presentation skills and personal impact.

Teaching staff share good practice through full team meetings each term, at which they discuss any current research or recent training experiences, and through initiatives such as 'Teachers Teaching Teachers'. Staff are encouraged to observe classes and rehearsals to enhance their understanding of colleagues' practice and have opportunities for team teaching, for example within musical theatre duologues, which enable staff from different disciplines to work with students to integrate their practice.

### Academic and pastoral support

Our students show very high levels of satisfaction with the support they receive as illustrated by our overall indicator for academic support which is materially above benchmark at 85.4%. RADA's high staff-student ratio, high contact hours and small size means that students benefit from extensive support from teaching staff, technical staff and course leaders. Students receive regular one-to-one and small group tutorials with course leaders and heads of department and are also allocated personal tutors with whom they can discuss their academic and pastoral needs.

*"Through the training and pastoral support, I have been able to become the very best version of myself. I have undergone huge personal and professional development. The course is life changing, and I feel equipped for my professional life as an actor. The contact hours are remarkable. And the institution has done everything it can to support me, even during the pandemic. Many of the staff have a profound expertise and are geniuses. The learning often feels like a dojo, passing on knowledge and wisdom in ways that traditional learning cannot do. I wish everyone could have training at RADA - it is truly the greatest gift of my life."* [NSS 2021 Student Comment] [8]

However, in 2022 we did experience a significantly lower level of student satisfaction than in previous years. The 2022 NSS survey period coincided with the unexpected absence of key members of academic staff, circumstances which have since been resolved.

Our Student and Academic Services team provides outstanding academic and pastoral care that underpins teaching provision and creates an environment of care and well-being in which excellent outcomes can be achieved. This team, which includes the Student Wellbeing service, has provided vital support for students in navigating the pandemic and for the rising number of students presenting with mental health difficulties. During the height of the pandemic in 2020, the External Examiner for BA Acting noted:

*"The staff support, both pedagogical and pastoral, is of the highest quality, and at a level which exceeds that of many other institutions, in my experience of the sector."* [5]

We provide support through an experienced counselling team and a Disability Coordinator who works with students and staff to identify reasonable adjustments and learning strategies for disabled students. In the 2021-22 academic year our Student Wellbeing service engaged with 154 students (over three quarters of our student body), delivering 346 pastoral care sessions and 681 counselling sessions. [17]

In 2022-23 we have recruited to a number of Non-medical Helper roles, which will provide further study skills support and mentoring for students with autism, specific learning difficulties and mental health difficulties. We have also trained 30 members of staff as mental health first aiders in order to provide additional triage for students in crisis.

The intense and often challenging nature of the training at RADA requires emotional resilience and we build wellbeing support into the curriculum to support students in this area. Members of the Student Wellbeing team deliver a wellbeing session to all students involved with each production, based on the particular emotional challenges that might arise in response to the material or the production process. Students also receive a number of timetabled extracurricular sessions that support their emotional and academic development, including resilience sessions with a psychotherapist and workshops on neurodiversity with a learning support specialist. This work is further explored within regular reflective practice sessions through which it is integrated with other aspects of the student learning experience.

### Physical and virtual learning resources

RADA's teaching and performance facilities mirror industry standards [17]. We provide students with wide-ranging experience in a variety of spaces, from small black box theatres to large-scale stages, through to film sets and recording studios. We have four fully equipped theatres in which students work throughout their time with us on public productions and other projects.

Our flagship performance spaces are supplemented with 31 studios and classrooms, and eight specialist workshop spaces across two sites on Gower Street and Chenies Street in central London. We provide just over 18m<sup>2</sup> of teaching space per student. Comparative data provided by AUDE (Association for University Directors of Estates) indicates that the average for small teaching institutions is approximately 10m<sup>2</sup> per student [14]. Acting students work in specially designed studios for dance and fight training and a fully equipped sound studio for microphone technique and screen acting.

In addition to working in our theatre spaces, our technical theatre and stage management students train in specialist workshops for metalwork, carpentry, scenic art (including paint frame), video, props and costume-making, where students practice skills and create elements for our public productions. We also have a CAD (computer-assisted design) suite and extensive props and costume stores with over 27,000 costumes.

We have built relationships with corporate and industry partners to provide students with access to current industry-standard equipment, including:

- The latest in microphone technology (Shure Axient Digital) incorporating belt-pack technology via wireless for use in our musicals.
- Working with King's College London Department of Informatics on developments in immersive sound and 5G.
- Using DANTE (Digital Audio Network Through Ethernet) for audio transmissions in order to achieve high quality recordings suitable for sharing with agents and audiences.
- Work with both SOAS and industry colleagues who are experienced radio mic runners for theatre production to advise students on correct microphone placement for performers with afro hairstyles.

Our library houses over 40,000 items, including one of the largest collections of rare and out-of-print plays in the English language as well as recent releases. There are also books on many other aspects of the performing arts and wider culture, including theatre history, poetry, drama training techniques, social history, photography, film, and technical theatre disciplines. Digital resources include subscriptions that allow students to watch productions online such as Digital Theatre Plus and Drama Online, and a library of several thousand films from classic Hollywood to international and contemporary cinema and documentaries.

Students are generally highly satisfied with the quality of learning resources at RADA as illustrated by our overall indicator for 'learning resources', which is in line with benchmark. Our time series splits show that we were materially above benchmark in year 1 but that student satisfaction in this area declined sharply in year 2, which coincides with the pivot to online learning and lack of accessibility of on-site facilities due to the pandemic. In 2021 we invested £150K in new digital and video equipment to allow us to stream and record student productions and maintain high levels of industry exposure. This investment, in combination with clear COVID policies and the gradual removal of restrictions has brought us back towards our pre-pandemic position, with performance materially above benchmark in the most recent year.

Our splits show a substantial difference in satisfaction levels between first degree (BA Acting) students and other undergraduate (FdA Technical Training and Stage Management students). In recent years we have consistently seen a large discrepancy between satisfaction scores for library resources for these courses (100% satisfaction for BA versus 55% for FdA in 2022) and our own analysis of library use shows that there are far fewer active users within the Technical Theatre and Stage Management course. The extensive range of books that some technical departments keep within their own training environment is likely to be a factor in this and 36% of FdA respondents answered neither agree nor disagree to the NSS library question in 2022, indicating that they may not be using this resource. The library team is currently considering how books held within departments might be catalogued and issued in future.

Split metrics also show significantly lower satisfaction for students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2 for this indicator. We have been unable to complete any meaningful analysis in this area due to low numbers and suppressed data. RADA offers generous bursaries to students from high deprivation areas with household incomes below £43,000 and generous hardship funds to support students' needs. We have made upgrades to our PCs and other IT resources in the past few months and will monitor student feedback to determine the impact of this in addition to further priorities.

### Student engagement

Student engagement is fully embedded within RADA's programmes. Due to our small size and high staff-student ratio, students have many informal opportunities to discuss their views with staff, which are complemented by formal opportunities such as committee membership. We engage students at all levels of our governance and through regular discussions with our Senior Leadership Team. The Council, our governing body, includes two student governors, one elected by acting students and one by technical theatre arts students [19]. Governors receive a full induction, including a briefing on their legal duties as trustees and are supported by the Chair and the Secretary to play a full role in the RADA's governance. Student governors are also members of the Academic Board.

Each course year group also elects two student representatives per year. Student reps sit on Course Committees and are supported by the institution through an induction process, handbook and the arrangement of timetabled full year group meetings twice per term. A Student Experience



Forum, held once per term, is chaired by a Student Governor and attended by all student reps in addition to managers of all of RADA's operational areas. The resultant action plan is used to track progress between meetings and to ensure that feedback loops are closed [20].

Students also benefit from regular year group tutorials with their Programme Director, during which they are able to share feedback on specific course-related issues. Town hall meetings provide a forum for the whole student body to meet with the Senior Leadership Team to receive updates and discuss pertinent issues. Our most recent town hall meeting focused on the difficulties experienced by students in relation to increased living costs and led to specific actions including streamlining the hardship fund application process and providing free dry food and goods supplies for students. [21]

Our students are passionate about social change as illustrated by student action following the death of George Floyd in May 2020. In July 2020 we set out our approach to creating change, with the Student Body Anti-Racism Action Plan at the centre of our work [22]. We formed a dedicated Anti-Racism Steering group (of students, staff, and Council) which created a rationalised anti-racism action plan. Through this group students, trustees, the Senior Leadership team, and other members of staff from across the Academy worked together to set out our intention to become an anti-racist institution. In 2021 we appointed our first Director of Equity, who now oversees an institutional anti-racism strategy and action plan in addition to facilitating regular meetings with departmental anti-racism leads. Through these mechanisms, teams across RADA are working actively to embed anti-racism in their approach to learning, teaching and student support.

In November 2020 we appointed colleagues from Leeds Beckett University's Centre for Race, Education and Decoloniality (CRED) as RADA's anti-racism consultants. CRED is at the forefront of developing anti-racist practices across all types of educational settings, and has worked with RADA to develop our knowledge and understanding of race and racism within our own particular context. In her June 2022 report the consultant, stated:

*"RADA has come a long way in its ambition to make "root and branch change" with respect to racism... The Academy feels like a different institution for the better with respect to anti-racism and the commitment and hard work of colleagues is to be acknowledged and commended. There is, of course, a long way to go. The anti-racism journey the Academy has embarked on is a long and arduous one and success can only be achieved through hard work and endurance in order to sustain the transformation that RADA aspires to with respect to becoming an anti-racist organisation which is a leader in this field within the industry."* [23]

This progress could only have been made through the sustained engagement of our students and has already led to changes in curriculum, process and awareness that enhance the experience of all members of RADA's community.

Our overall indicator for 'student voice' is materially below benchmark. Performance was in line with benchmark for years 1 and 2 and slightly below for year 3, however we saw a substantial drop in this area in year 4. This drop coincides with particular issues in the spring and summer terms of 2021-22 during which time a number of leadership positions were filled on an interim basis, there were several instances of staff absence and key personnel changes. This particularly impacted Technical Theatre and Stage Management courses and is also reflected in our academic support indicators (see p.11). Feedback has improved considerably in the early part of 2022-23 with a new Programme Director for Technical Theatre and Stage Management and a new Principal in place. In the autumn term of 2022-23, student representatives shared positive comments at committee

meetings, directly with members of staff and with the Council through the Student Governor [24]. As indicated by their TEF student submission, our students now feel heard and we are working with them to continuously improve their experience at RADA.

### **3. Student Outcomes**

#### ***3a. Positive Outcomes***

##### **Ensuring student success**

RADA's vocational, student-centred and industry-relevant training in acting and technical theatre arts provides our students with the tools and support required to succeed in and progress beyond their studies. Our final year acting students are provided with numerous opportunities to be seen by agents and casting directors and to gain agent representation before graduating. Our second and third year technical theatre and stage management students consistently gain placements with high profile theatres and companies (see pp.18-19) and all students are exposed to a range of industry professionals through RADA's intensive schedule of in-house productions and other projects. Not only do we prepare students for professional life during their course, we continue to provide our new graduates with a range of support services and opportunities including productions, workshops, mentoring and professional representation, which together provide a framework that supports students' transition out of higher education and into the industry.

Acting students do not take part in public productions until the end of their second year of training, giving them the opportunity to hone their skills and develop their creative process within a safe environment. This approach is at the core of RADA's learning and teaching strategy for actor training. As students progress into the third and final year of the BA Acting programme, they have high levels of public exposure, taking part in a contemporary duologue showcase in the autumn term and a monologue showcase at the end of the spring term. In addition, each student performs in five public productions (four stage productions and one short film) over the course of the year. Each final year student and graduate is promoted on RADA's website, through a detailed profile including a headshot, voice reels and resume.

RADA employs a dedicated Industry Liaison Manager to maximise industry engagement. The ILM also represents graduates without agents in their first year out by submitting them for jobs and negotiating contracts, a level of service that exceeds the support provided by industry liaison staff in other drama schools [25]. We also employ a dedicated Graduate Coordinator who keeps alumni updated about casting calls and other opportunities. We offer a unique professional development programme for alumni which is free for the first year following graduation and low cost thereafter. This programme includes sessions on Alexander Technique, Black British theatre, devising, singing, understanding lighting design, directing, stage management, scene study and movement. It also covers professional and personal development topics such as tax, managing stage fright and starting a company. Graduates from as far back as the 1970s have attended recent sessions, creating opportunities for networking and reengagement with the industry.

We have devoted significant resource to increasing our capacity for producing digital and online work over the past two years to as the importance of enabling our students to engage with audiences remotely has been heightened by COVID restrictions. Nevertheless, the impact of the pandemic on the theatre industry has presented challenges for us in relation to graduate employment. 100% of actors (25/25) had gained representation at the point of graduation in 2019, declining over the subsequent years to 50% (13/26) in 2022 [26]. However, take-up increased within six months of graduation

This illustrates the impact of the exceptional levels of support we have provided to our COVID affected graduates over the past two years. In addition to our already extensive package of graduate support, we have invited new alumni to complete a public production in one of RADA's theatres in the term after graduating and have provided additional financial support to ensure accessibility for those previously accessing bursaries and maintenance loans. Eighteen graduates returned to act in three productions in September 2021

Opportunities for our students to work internationally brings an additional level of experience to the training, exposes them to a wider range of audiences and enables them to have an impact on the experience of their international peers:

"The Utah Shakespeare Festival and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art formed a strategic partnership beginning in 2020. This partnership is a rare and exciting opportunity for the Festival to engage with what we consider the finest theatre training institution in the world...The creativity, talent, skill, discipline and rigour they bring to our stages not only delights our audiences, but inspires other artists in our company. Additionally, we bring their second year students to perform their touring production of a Shakespeare play for a week each season, which is an exciting and rare opportunity for our audiences to see these extremely talented young artists in action."

Executive Director, Utah Shakespeare Festival [14]

Second and third year Technical Theatre and Stage Management student placements often lead to direct offers of employment for graduates and cement their skills in a range of working environments. In the current 2022-23 academic year, our students have already undertaken placements in the following leading locations: Donmar Warehouse, the Barbican Centre, Rambert, Rose on Stage, The National Theatre, English National Opera, Chickenshed, Young Vic and Picturehouse Theatre [27]. Feedback from placement hosts [28] indicates that our students consistently demonstrate excellent core skills such as timekeeping, teamwork, communication and technical skills:

*"Excellent interpersonal skills and communicated well with others, adapting to varying environments and demonstrating the crucially required emotional intelligence required to work in production management."* [TTSM placement host 2021]

*"A superb team player and helped the cast feel comfortable from the outset"* [TTSM placement host 2022]

Our technical students work collaboratively with acting students on productions and films and are also provided with opportunities to showcase their work explicitly through an annual exhibition in one of RADA's theatre spaces, to which we invite industry guests in addition to members of the public. For the past two years our technical students have also designed and produced escape rooms, an immersive live entertainment medium where teams of players work together to solve problems and move through a narrative. They are a growing trend that can be found in many towns across the UK and therefore provide an employment opportunity for our students (some of our recent graduates have already gone to work on escape room

projects). These projects provide a valuable training opportunity because they are technically challenging and innovative across a range of disciplines including scenic construction, prop making, sound, lighting, and video. RADA has now expanded the curriculum to incorporate escape rooms and has an ongoing research and development relationship with Clockwork Dog, the software developer for Cogs, which is one of the first programmes to apply storytelling to Escape Rooms and is in use across the UK and internationally.

Continued engagement of RADA's graduates with the core training is fundamental to maintaining its currency and enables us to take an informed, enhancement-led approach to developing undergraduate provision that promotes student success.

#### The Training

Committee, a sub-committee of the Council, is made up of around 30 RADA graduates working in theatre, film and related industries who are strongly engaged with current activity within the Academy and as professional practitioners provide advice to RADA's senior leaders on the currency of our programmes and insight into key skills demanded by employers. [29]. This supports us to embed engagement with industry and employers within our curriculum (as described on pp.8-10).

#### Continuation and completion

Students achieve outstanding rates of continuation and completion across all of our courses due to RADA's high staff-student ratio and high contact hours. Our overall TEF indicators for continuation and completion are 97.6% and 97.4% respectively, which places RADA materially above benchmark for these measures.

Attendance is closely monitored with students expected to meet with their Programme Director to discuss any unexplained absences or poor punctuality. We have a supportive [Fitness to Train](#) process, which we use regularly to create and monitor action plans and identify additional support needs in partnership with students. Where students need to interrupt studies for a period of time they are given interim access to support services, free access to short courses and are encouraged to attend classes in the weeks prior to their return point at no additional cost in order to reintegrate and recover their skills levels [30].

Academic support is complemented by individual support from our dedicated Student Wellbeing Team, which provides pastoral care, a range of counselling support including disordered eating and drug and alcohol counselling.

From 2022, specialist support for disabled students comprising a Disability Coordinator and in-house specialist study skills tutors and specialist mentors (see p.11). This enhancement to the service has been made to provide a more tailored approach to supporting our diverse student body to get the most from their training.

For technical training, a high degree of

flexibility in the mode of assessment, incorporating production roles, self-directed projects and work placements enables us to flex the curriculum around individual students' needs.

### Progression into professional employment

In terms of progression into professional employment or further study, there is no doubt that the pandemic has had an impact on the progression of our graduates into employment (see p.15). At the time of the previous TEF submission in 2019 [RADA's metrics](#) showed performance above benchmark for highly skilled employment or further study. In year 1 of the current TEF dataset (2018-19 graduates) we continue to perform above benchmark but for the subsequent two years Graduate Outcomes data drops substantially below benchmark.

There are some contextual factors that have a particular impact on RADA's data. Our student body typically includes between 150 and 170 undergraduates, which is a smaller number than many other small specialist providers and therefore individual students carry a very high statistical significance. This is particularly the case for our split metrics where much of our data is suppressed due to low numbers. The data shows a significant gap in progression rates between disabled and non-disabled students, however this does not tally with our previous experience and is based on a small denominator of 40 and a response rate of 62.5% (or 25 students in total). We have made substantial progress in enhancing our support services for disabled students in the past year, engaging a Teacher of the Deaf, recruiting an experienced Disability Coordinator and increasing levels of support for students making Disabled Students' Allowance applications (as outlined on p.11).

We have seen our overall Graduate Outcomes response rate fall from 66.1% in year 1 (earliest) to 58.2% in year 2 and 56.6% in year 3 (most recent) [31]. Given our small numbers this drop is likely to have had a significant impact on our data and we are now refocussing our efforts post-pandemic on promoting the survey to our graduates.

Another factor that negatively affects our data for technical theatre and stage management students is the structure of our courses, which comprise a two-year foundation degree followed by a one year BA top-up. This means that students are surveyed 15 months after the completion of the FdA rather than 15 months after the completion of the BA. Between 2019 and 2022 78% (93/118) of our FdA students continued into a third year of study. This means that the majority are only three months out of undergraduate study by the time they complete Graduate Outcomes.

We maintain close links with our graduates and know that many take casual work in service roles in between professional jobs so that they can be available to take an acting or production job at short notice. This is a common feature of the profession, with many actors and theatre professionals continuing this pattern of employment throughout their careers. Depending on their activities during the survey census week, they may therefore be classified as working in non-professional or managerial roles.

We have gathered data on the activities of those graduating in the past four years from our Industry Liaison Manager, Academy Dramaturg and through an online survey sent to all graduates, that gives us a fuller picture of their employment activities [32]. The table below illustrates the numbers of acting graduates who currently have representation and for whom we have details of their professional acting work since graduation.

### **3.b. Educational Gains**

In establishing our approach to measuring educational gains, we have considered research undertaken by the sector, particularly the [pilot projects](#) funded by HEFCE and undertaken by 70 UK higher education providers between 2015 and 2018. The [final report](#) on these projects defines learning gain as ‘the change in knowledge, skills, work-readiness and personal development, as well as enhancement of specific practices and outcomes in defined disciplinary and institutional contexts.’ We have used this definition to identify measures of educational gain related to academic (knowledge and skills) development, work readiness and professional development, within our specific context as an academy for training individuals in the dramatic arts.

#### **Intended educational gains**

The aims and outcomes of RADA’s undergraduate programmes are clearly outlined in detailed course documents, provided to students at the point of enrolment and used in teaching contexts to underpin the training journey that our students undergo. [11,12] The FdA Technical Theatre and Stage Management and BA Acting courses take students from diverse backgrounds and levels of experience based on their talent and potential (see pages 1-2). We introduce them to working practices and standards in their first year and systematically build their knowledge, skills and competencies term by term and year by year.



### *Academic Development*

The first year of the Technical Theatre and Stage Management programme exemplifies the breadth of the course, embracing as many disciplines as possible in order to give students a solid platform from which to specialise and follow a clear vocational pathway towards their first destination employment. Those who choose to continue to a third BA year (78% of FdA students in 2022) continue their study in an area of specialisation, preparing them to work professionally at a high or complex level. Students are stretched and challenged within this progression year to achieve higher levels of skill, technique and understanding that help them develop a strong and distinctive professional persona in preparation for employment in graduate roles.

The analogy of the spine within the BA Acting programme (see p. 3) describes the way in which creative skills and processes are developed and integrated to enable students to continually build on their learning. This learning culminates in final year productions, which employ all of the core knowledge and skills the students acquire as they progress through the programme.

Embodied learning is at the core of our disciplines and develops throughout the courses as physical and technical skills are honed and reflected upon in a number of projects, productions and other contexts. Reflective practice is fully integrated into our undergraduate courses (as outlined on page 6). Through these processes, students take responsibility for their own development and become aware of their own educational gains. One recent student, now working successfully as an actor, commented in their reflective journal:

*“When I first started the course I wanted to be broken and changed, I wanted the chance to restart. However, the course doesn’t do that, instead it breaks down the facade, the layers and the wall that has been constructed over time as defence mechanism to conceal the true, raw, organic self, so instead of becoming a completely different person, you are compelled to become and embrace your organic self.” [34]*

### *Work readiness*

Professional development strands are embedded within our curricula, which provide students with practical knowledge and skills to support their transition into employment and in some cases provide opportunities for additional certifications. Professional development sessions in recent years have included:

- Legal training (e.g., contracts and company law)
- Industry training from professional bodies, unions and support services
- Finance training on tax, pay rates, budgeting and funding applications
- CV writing, online presence, mock interviews and mock auditions
- Singing masterclasses led by professional practitioners
- Meetings with casting directors
- Self-taping workshops
- Resilience training
- Q&As with graduates
- First Aid and Mental Health First Aid certification courses
- BASSC certification (British Assoc of Stage and Screen Combat)

Each student is given career advice and tutorial guidance throughout the year by their Programme Directors and members of the faculty. Students also benefit from the RADA Buddy mentoring scheme, which supports their transition from student to professional. Two graduate ‘buddies’ are

allocated to each student, one recently graduated and one more experienced, to provide professional advice, feedback and networking opportunities. As they move through their training, students also have increasing numbers of opportunities to engage with industry professionals, agents and casting directors, building their networks and visibility as they move towards graduation.

### *Personal Development*

All of our students receive dedicated training aimed at developing their personal and transferable skills throughout the course of their studies. In recent years we have increased our training provision in relation to anti-racism and inclusion with the aim of creating informed and self-aware practitioners capable of influencing and leading change within the creative industries. Over the past two years our students have engaged in; sessions on equality and diversity

Advance HE, workshops on inclusive dialogue  
Allyship from Stonewall, training on sexual harassment and healthy relationships from Tender, Deaf awareness and BSL training [13]. Other sessions led by RADA's Student Wellbeing team have focused on resilience and working under pressure in the context of a production environment, nutrition, budgeting and drug and alcohol awareness.

EDI induction sessions led by  
an Introduction to LGBT+

### **Supporting students towards educational gains**

As outlined above, RADA has developed approaches to supporting students to achieve intended educational gains over many years of dialogue with staff, students, graduates and industry professionals. The programmes are structured in a way that levels the playing field for students from a variety of backgrounds and uses tailored small group and one-to-one teaching to support each individual student to reach their full potential. Our induction programme begins with one-to-one tutorials, enabling us to identify students' individual needs from day one. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training begins in induction weeks and builds throughout, underpinning our approach to accessibility and equity.

High levels of alumni and industry engagement enable us to closely follow the experience of our graduates and to learn from their experiences. We are in the process of formalising the capture of information from our graduates and launched a new graduate survey in December 2022. We have only received 30 responses to date, however we have already gained some insight into what it is about our courses that is unique and has helped our graduates to progress in their careers and lives. One 2016 graduate commented, 'I was very impressed with how personal everything was. If you needed help or support, you would usually speak to the same people each time, and be remembered if you needed anything further.' [32].

We are also beginning to make use of Graduate Outcomes data to monitor our performance. Amongst 2019-20 graduates, 84% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 'I am utilising what I learnt during my studies in my current activity', indicating that we are providing the majority of our students with the skills and knowledge that they need to progress [31].

Over the past four years around 25% of our student body had a declared disability [2]. We currently have 51 students with individual learning agreements (38% of our student body), which detail any reasonable adjustments of special arrangements that have been put in place to remove barriers to engagement or provide additional support. We have worked closely with disability advocates and advisers over the past few years to design tailored training programmes for individual students, including extended four-year programmes for those who would be disadvantaged by the normal

three-year intensive model (see p.17).

We have recently created a Tutor of the Deaf role, which supports our Deaf and hearing-impaired students whilst also raising awareness of Deaf culture and British Sign Language throughout our community. Based on feedback from our neurodiverse students, we have implemented neurodiversity awareness training for our staff and have recruited in-house Study Skills Tutors and Specialist Mentors for SpLDs and autism spectrum conditions, who will begin working with our students in January 2023.

RADA's students come from a wide range of backgrounds. Over the past four years almost a quarter of our student body was made up of students from IMD quintiles 1 and 2 (see p.2). Our dedicated Access and Participation team runs Acting and Theatre Production Youth Companies for young people aged 16-21 from low-income households and supports them to access higher education. acting students from the Youth Company and other WP activities funded by RADA have enrolled on RADA's undergraduate programmes in the past four years. In 2020 when we took a reduced number of students due to the pandemic, These students continue to be mentored by the A&P team throughout their time with us.

### Evaluating educational gains

In preparation for our TEF submission we established a working group including the Director of Actor Training, Programme Director for Technical Training and Stage Management, Director of Equity, Registrar and Deputy Registrar. We have identified a set of measures that we intend to use to evaluate the educational gains made by our students and will feed this data into our annual and periodic review processes.

Beginning in 2022-23, we have implemented a reflective questionnaire for all undergraduate students, which we intend to use termly to support existing reflective practice and enable us to quantify learning gain in key areas. This questionnaire will allow us to track how students rate their confidence at the beginning and end of term. Students from all years of each undergraduate programme were surveyed and we received responses from 47/73 Technical Theatre and Stage Management and 40/72 Acting students. The responses indicate that the skills in which students gain the most confidence vary over the course. [35].

New, incoming BA Acting students feel that they have gained most in reflective/critical thinking and independent learning, whereas second year students who are building on these skills through project work, continue to gain heavily in these areas whilst also reporting substantial gains in creativity and problem-solving, presentation and performance skills, time management, working in large teams and managing relationships with peers. In the final BA year, the majority of students report gains in almost all skills surveyed, indicating that this year is effective in its aim to integrate all previous learning within a production context.

For FdA TTSM students, who are involved with production work from the outset, confidence in project/production work and independent working feature most prominently amongst first year students. For second year students who are starting to specialize and take on more responsibility within production teams, creativity/problem solving and managing working relationships with professionals feature more highly. For the BA year, most respondents reported feeling more confident in all of the skills surveyed, which aligns with the aim to build on the FdA and hone students' skills to a high level across the board.

We will continue to use the survey and to monitor responses at Course Committees and through our Academic Standards and Quality Committee, alongside several other measures of educational gain. These will include:

- monitoring agent signing rates for acting students
- monitoring feedback from TTSM placement providers
- reporting on responses to the Graduate Outcomes question 'I am utilising what I learnt during my studies in my current activity'
- monitoring graduate employment through an annual graduate survey and the work of our Industry Liaison Manager
- rates of students in professional or managerial employment or further study
- gathering feedback from members of our Training Committee

By the end of the next TEF cycle we hope to have a rich set of data that will enable us to further evaluate the success of our students in achieving the intended educational gains set out in our course documents.

#### 4. References

1. RADA Annual Report 2021-22, December 2022, available at [https://www.rada.ac.uk/documents/831/RADA\\_annual\\_report\\_2021\\_22.pdf](https://www.rada.ac.uk/documents/831/RADA_annual_report_2021_22.pdf)
2. Size and Shape of Provision Data Dashboard, <https://officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/size-and-shape-of-provision-data-dashboard/data-dashboard/>
3. Scholarship records, 2019-20 to 2021-22. Unpublished. Held in Student and Academic Services files.
4. Graduate testimonials, available at <https://www.rada.ac.uk/student-life/meet-our-students-and-graduates/>
5. External Examiner reports, 2019-2022. Unpublished. Held in Student and Academic Services files.
6. Analysis of admissions statistics. Unpublished. Held in Student and Academic Services files.
7. 2018-19 to 2022-22 Student Feedback Survey responses. Unpublished. Held in Student and Academic Services files.
8. NSS Student Comments, 2019 to 2022. Unpublished. Held in Student and Academic Services files.
9. HESA Student numbers, 2020-21, available at <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/whos-in-he/numbers>
10. HESA Staff data, 2020-21, available at <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/staff/working-in-he>
11. BA Acting Course Documents, published internally on RADA student SharePoint.
12. FdA and BA Technical Theatre and Stage Management Course Documents, published internally on RADA student SharePoint.

14. *Submission for assessment as a world-leading specialist provider – RADA*, 2022. Unpublished. Held in Student and Academic Services files.
15. Staff development schedule. Unpublished. Held internally in HR files.
16. RADA Staff Conference Details, 2019. Published internally on RADA staff SharePoint.
18. Facilities information available from <https://www.rada.ac.uk/student-life/facilities/>
20. Student Experience Forum papers, 2019-20 to 2021-22. Unpublished. Held internally in SAS files.
21. Student town all notes 2022. Unpublished. Held internally in SAS files.
22. Student anti-racism action plan 2020. Unpublished. Held internally in SAS files.
23. *Anti-racism project interim report*, 2022. Unpublished. Held internally in Council papers.
24. RADA Council minutes 2022. Unpublished. Held internally in Council papers.
25. ILM meeting report 2022. Unpublished. Held internally in Industry Liaison Manager files.
26. Agent analysis 2019-2022. Unpublished. Held internally in SAS files.
27. TTSM Placement spreadsheet, 2019-20 to 2022-23. Unpublished. Held internally in SAS files.
28. Placement host feedback, 2019-20 to 2022-23. Unpublished. Held internally in SAS files.
29. Training Committee Minutes, 2019-20 to 2022-23. Unpublished. Held internally by the Principal's Office.
30. RADA Regulations and Policies, available from <https://www.rada.ac.uk/regulations-and-policies/>
31. Graduate outcomes data 2018-19 and 2019-20, available from <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/graduates/releases>
32. Graduate Survey data 2022. Unpublished. Held internally in SAS files.
33. TTSM Graduate destinations 2018-2022. Unpublished. Held internally in SAS files.
34. Extracts from student reflective journals. Unpublished. Held internally by Director of Actor Training.
35. Reflective questionnaire results, 2022. Unpublished. Held internally in SAS files.