

alra Academy of Live & Recorded Arts

Self Assessment Report

2018-2019

Glossary of acronyms and abbreviations

ALRA	Academy of Live and Recorded Arts
SAR	Self-Assessment Report
ASPER	Annual Statement of Programme Evaluation & Review
CDET	Council for Dance and Education Training
DLHE	Destination of Leavers of Higher Education
FHEQ	Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
HEAP	Higher Education Awareness Programme
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HQ&AS	Head of Quality and Academic standards
LAMDA	London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art
NSS	National Student Survey
QAO	Quality Assurance Officer
QCF	Qualifications and Credit Framework
SMU	St Mary's University
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
TLC	Teaching & Learning Committee
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
VP (C)	Vice Principal (Curriculum)
VP (O)	Vice Principal (Operations)
YSWD	You Said We Did
SLC	Senior Leadership Committee

Preface

In order to ensure this report is a true and accurate reflection of ALRA, it has involved all relevant stakeholders throughout its development. The initial drafting of the report was completed by the Vice Principal (Curriculum) and the Academic Registrar on behalf of the Academic Board.

This first draft of this report with the entire staff team at ALRA for input and discussion and to ensure ALRA's staff believed it to be a fair and accurate reflection of ALRA. This first draft was also shared with the entire student body for their input as well, direct interaction was also facilitated with small groups of student representatives and staff. Feedback from these meetings guided the direction and tone of the report.

Finally, in order for this report to be completed it was also required to be approved by Trustees and both ALRA's Academic Board and Student Council, which both approved the report on 16th October 2019.

1. Context

1.1 Our Mission

1.1.1 The Academy of Live and Recorded Arts (ALRA) aims to equip actors and theatre makers of all backgrounds and ages with the skills fundamental to a productive and creative life in the performance industries, through the provision of a specialist vocational drama education for students whose primary goal is to work within this industry.

1.2 Our history

1.2.1 ALRA was founded in 1979, by Sorrel Carson and Caryl Ziegler. It was the first drama school to offer a training which encompassed all media: Live Theatre, TV and Film and Radio. It was the first and remains the only Drama School to offer London and Regional training across two sites.

1.2.2 ALRA moved into the Royal Victoria Patriotic Building, originally a Victorian orphanage built on Wandsworth Common, in 1981 where it has 10 rehearsal studios, workshops and a theatre.

1.2.3 In 2005, Philip Hedley was appointed Chair of Trustees. Philip Hedley was Artistic Director of Theatre Royal Stratford East for twenty-five years from 1979 to 2004. Upon his departure, the Theatre Royal named him Director Emeritus. He was a founding student of E15 Acting School and later in his career taught and staged productions there and at LAMDA, RADA, Rose Bruford and Drama Centre in the UK, the Vancouver Playhouse Drama School and the National Institute for Drama in Sydney. Prior to his time at Stratford he ran Lincoln Theatre Royal for three years from 1968 to 1971, during which time he directed and/or produced over fifty productions. He went on to be director of the Midlands Arts Theatre Company, followed by two years as Assistant Director to Joan Littlewood and Assistant Administrator to her partner, Gerry Raffles, at Theatre Royal Stratford East. It was the drive for diversity and engagement that Philip brought to ALRA that has sustained this aspect of our work ever since.

1.2.4 The Principal, Professor Adrian Hall, worked with Philip at Stratford East on local diversity school engagement projects and that ethos was maintained when Philip appointed Adrian in 2009 at ALRA. The widening participation agenda is inculcated throughout our audition process and into our work.

1.2.5 In 2000 ALRA received Dance and Drama Award funding and awarded the National Diploma in Industry Level Acting and the Certificate in Industry Level Acting for its three-year and one-year course respectively through Trinity College London. From 2011 these became the Diploma in Industry Level Acting Level 6 (three-year undergraduate programme) and Diploma in Industry Level Acting Level 5 (postgraduate).

- 1.2.6** In 2006 ALRA became a partner college with the University of Greenwich who awarded a Foundation Degree in Creative Studies to the Stage Management and Technical Theatre programme and validated the three-year programme as BA (Hons) Acting. In 2008 the University of Greenwich validated the postgraduate programme as MA Professional Acting. This programme was extended from twelve to fifteen months in 2010. The part-time Acting Foundation programme began in 2008 and was joined by a full-time foundation programme delivered in collaboration with Winstanley College in 2013 for a period of four years, which we have now absorbed into the ALRA North campus.
- 1.2.7** In September 2010, ALRA North opened at the Elim Centre, Turner Street in Wigan. Placed in the heart of the Northwest, the aim of ALRA North is to provide industry level actors for the many regional and touring theatres, TV, Film and Radio companies which are centred there, whilst allowing students to train at regional costs.
- 1.2.8** In October 2012, a unique collaboration with Wigan Borough Council saw ALRA take up residence in The Mill at the Pier at Trencherfield Mill. Built in 1907, Trencherfield Mill is probably the most iconic building in Wigan. With more than 1500 square metres, The Mill at the Pier, the theatre at ALRA in Wigan, opened with its inaugural production Three Birds Alighting on a Field.
- 1.2.9.** In 2013 ALRA won the prestigious Drama School of the year award from 'The Stage'. ALRA North, the school in Wigan founded as the northern arm of Wandsworth-based ALRA South, was the Stage 100 Awards 2013 School of the Year.
- 1.2.10** ALRA became a collaborative provision partner of St Mary's University in 2014, who currently validate their BA (hons) in Acting, MA in Professional Acting and MA Directing.
- 1.2.11** ALRA submitted their intention to apply for Degree Awarding Powers to SMU in September 2019 indicating a transition period of five years. Our reasons for this are located within a desire for autonomy in the curriculum that we create and a belief that the student body will prefer the quality assurance of being awarded an ALRA degree.

2. Effectiveness of Leadership and Management

2.1 Structures and Governance

- 2.1.1** ALRA is governed by a Board of Trustees, which has overall responsibility for the affairs of ALRA, including strategic direction. The Board delegates responsibility for the day to day running of the Academy to the Principal as the members of ALRA's Strategic Leadership team.
- 2.1.2** The Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible for the development and delivery of all taught courses and for ensuring the maintenance of academic standards. The Academic Board is the Senior Academic Authority at ALRA in terms of academic standards which is chaired by the Principal. The Vice Principal (Curriculum) chairs both the Teaching and Learning Committee and Exam Board which recommend the overall vision of the Academy to the Academic Board.
- 2.1.3** Within the Governance structure two new Dean roles have been appointed allowing for increased oversight of learning and teaching at each campus. The Deans have taken over a portion of the Vice Principal (Curriculum's) duties around monitoring academic standards and oversight of teaching and learning.
- 2.1.4** In order to enhance the Academy's clarity in maintaining excellence in the teaching and learning on all courses an additional committee called Academic Board, has been added. This committee allows ALRA to separate the management elements of our governance, which will be capture in the Strategic Leadership Committee, and allow for a focused discussion on the artistic experience of the learners being even further incorporated into the leadership of the Academy.
- 2.1.5** Full details of ALRA's Governance can be found in ALRA's Governance Handbook¹, which is supported by ALRA's General Principles of Committee Governance Document²

¹ Governance Handbook

² General Principles of Committee Governance Document

- 2.1.6** Given our ambition for Degree Awarding Powers the Academy has further enhanced the role and remit of Director of Academic Services, to become ALRA's Academic Registrar which encompasses all of ALRA's Strategic Direction on Quality, Governance and Policy as well as overseeing ALRA's Registry.
- 2.1.7** We have developed the role of the industry experts and external expertise within our Governance adding two new professional & academic roles to the Teaching and Learning Committee and Academic Board allowing us to maintain currency in both the training and industry sectors.
- 2.1.8** New trustees are currently being elected from HOME Theatre, Self-Employed Comedian with Mental Health experience and a Theatre Professor from University of the Arts Bournemouth, bringing a diversification of focus to our board.

2.2. Understanding our Effectiveness

- 2.2.1** Student academic performance data is analysed at Exam Board and currently indicates a strong level of academic attainment across the board. Due to the specialist and oversubscribed nature of the course, the students attain well over 50% of marks within the 2.1 and 1st categories at every level of study. Graduates are attaining between 80 and 95 % employment and our current engagement in the DLHE and NSS outlines this progression more accurately into sub-components. Data now embedded into SLC meetings receiving reports on feedback from student Evaluations, NSS, DLHE and HESA, as well as student outcomes, attrition and retention data.
- 2.2.2.** Trustees receive termly reports from the Vice Principals evaluating the current effectiveness of the operational and artistic life of the academy. The Principal is line managed and questioned by the Trustees including sub committees that take responsibility for Finance, Employment and Academic Oversight. The Board of Trustees comprises educationalists, industry experts and ALRA graduates representing protected characteristics within our learning cohorts. We believe that this negates the fact that trustees and senior managers do not evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment sufficiently during the academic year in order to bring about further improvements.
- 2.2.3** ALRA collects quantitative and qualitative information from students on the themes of Module Feedback and campus experience. This quantitative and qualitative data is analysed by the Vice Principal (O) and student Liaison Officer initially through desk-based analysis. The Principal then approves a proposed action list and the VP (O) creates a You Said We Did (YSWD) letter³ that is circulated via email to Student Reps. Impact of any changes are monitored in an interim meeting in the second half of term to consolidate the actions taken by the Senior Leadership Team, confidential matters relating to the action plan are overseen by the VP (O) until final sign off.

³ YSWD North & South 2019

2.2.5. Student feedback in 2017 – 18 noted the need for clarity in assessment feedback and information around learning outcomes. Therefore, strategic interventions were introduced by Course Leaders to train learners in the various modalities of our atypical assessment resulting in the following statistical increases to student satisfaction in our most recent National Student Survey:

- 25 % increase – ASSESSMENT & FEEDBACK
- 20 % increase - THE CRITERIA USED IN MARKING HAVE BEEN CLEAR IN ADVANCE.
- 46% increase - MARKING AND ASSESSMENT HAS BEEN FAIR.
- 18 % increase - FEEDBACK ON MY WORK HAS BEEN TIMELY.
- 13 % increase - I HAVE RECEIVED HELPFUL COMMENTS ON MY WORK.

2.2.6 This outstanding increase in satisfaction validates the improved engagement, working directly with students in addressing the level of comprehension they experience whilst training on our courses.

2.2.7 **A strategic investment** in learning resources has been developed in response to Student Feedback through the following investments as part of the Strategic Leadership’s Committee response to feedback:

- A new film studio has been built in the south, investment £70K
- A new partnership has been made with Wigan Borough Library to open the North West Performing Arts Library with 24-hour access in the near future for ALRA North Students.
- Increased Wifi hubs across North and South, investment £15K
- Increased Heating in the Mill (ALRA North) £10K
- 24 hour online access to learning resources

2.2.8 Whilst we recognise there is still more to do, over the next academic year we will be investing in a review of our Estates provision and drawing up an action plan with short, medium, and long-term goals to address the aesthetic experience of the studio and communal areas of both campuses.

2.3 Students Working with Leadership

2.3.1 ALRA has an excellent relationship with its student body. ALRA is determined to ensure that students feel like genuine partners in their education, this is highlighted in our approach to ensuring formalised student representation throughout our committee structures, including having student council which is now co-chaired by a Lead Student Representative and focuses on all matters relating to the student experience.

2.3.2 ALRA is committed to enhancing this work, in Autumn 2019 ALRA will launch the new Student Charter and Partnership Strategy to summarise how the institution and students can work together in partnership to deliver a high standard experience, as well as outlining the commitment each partner makes to the other.

2.3.3 To Further Ensure Students are working with Leadership, ALRA has created a Taught Degree Awarding Powers working group with students, to ensure that this significant strategic directional shift involves students throughout, ensuring students have are recognised as stakeholders in all significant decisions ALRA makes.

2.4 Representational structures to aid collaboration of leadership and student voice

2.4.1 The student voice is heard at all levels of the organisation. It is in ALRA's interest to have a strong student representation system. In recognition of the challenge to student representation as we seek to involve students in ever increasing areas of ALRA's core business. Student representatives sit on all of ALRA's Committees with the exception of Strategic Leadership team and Operations (as these groups discuss sensitive HR and student matters).

2.4.2 Lead Student Representatives (LSRs) are embedded in the governance of the school ALRA's student staff ratios allow for students to engage directly with all teaching and support staff directly, but ALRA also understand the importance of collective student representation. Currently ALRA has adopted two types of formal student representatives. All courses elect Student Representatives, with 3rd year BA students electing Lead Student Representatives. During induction, ALRA now provides information to students on the representative structure and how they might wish to engage, this is supported by the Student Handbook⁴.

2.4.3 The LSR is elected via anonymous ballot of their cohort. Lead Student Representatives and Student Representatives are trained at both campuses on how to best engage with their roles at student council meetings and Teaching and Learning Committee. Training is offered to all LSRs and Student Reps with the Vice Principal (O) and Student Liaison Officer (supported by existing representatives) outlining deeper knowledge of the Quality Code and leadership skills that will equip them for the role.

2.4.4 LSRs are required to meet with student representatives twice per term. Once prior to their meeting with the principal and once after the publication of the 'You Said We Did' report to confirm their acceptance of the document.

2.4.5 The student representatives for foundation and level 4, 5 and 7 are students who are similarly elected through anonymous voting and supported with regular updates from Year Tutors and Director of Academic Standards around opportunities to engage in student partnership. Their main role is to feedback issues from their year group to the LSRs who can then communicate with the Principal.

2.4.6 In addition to committee structures and informal meetings, data on the student experience is gathered via survey once per term at each level of each programme. This information is analysed by the VPO through thematically co-ordinating the data in tabular form and highlighting concerns.

⁴ ALRA's Student Handbook

2.4.7 As well as year group meetings once per week and whole school briefing once per week, the students have access to a permanent student liaison officer who can act as a non-teaching practitioner access point for students to make decisions and have an informed value system

2.4.8 Additionally in 2019/2020 the Dean will lead an Equality and Diversity Student Representation group that will be formed of learners with Protected Characteristics. This committee will meet termly and report to Teaching and Learning, Quality Assurance Committee to inform decisions made procedurally and pedagogically throughout the institution.

2.5 Embedded Employers Contacts

2.5.1 Trustees are selected for their skills and experience and currently approximately 50% of the Board has a specific relationship with employment and our industry in particular through casting and directing networks.

2.5.2 Learners frequently engage with the local community and capitalise on the relationships that can be formed through the attraction of the performing arts. In 2018 students on the BA Acting in the south worked with the local Wandsworth Older population to create a theatrical event called Spread the Warmth using both entrepreneurial skills and their performance knowledge to entertain through an organised event. Professionally students benefit from working with local theatres such as Old Courts in Wigan and Theatre 503 in London to experience professional work placements in alignment with their training.

2.5.4 The curriculum is designed to incorporate constant entrepreneurial skills allowing learners to interface with technological platforms that develop their ability to navigate the commercial worlds of acting and directing. Every programme has a module focusing on entrepreneurship which requires learners to engage with tasks that represent authentic work-based experiences.

2.5.5 At level 6 and 7 learners are given the opportunity to interact with panels of casting directors and agents, take part in public productions with professional directors and develop their own performance research tailored around professional employment settings. In 2020, the MA Directors will take part in professional placements which will include visiting Chicago to work with Trapdoor Theatre company for seven weeks, working at Stephen Joseph theatre Scarborough, Box of Tricks Theatre company and Oldham Coliseum Theatre.

2.5.6 We actively encourage students to enrich their experience at ALRA by engaging in enhanced activities with industry links, examples of this in 2018-19 include:

2.5.7 A current MA Directing student recently attained the New Creatives Bursary from the BBC with Tyneside Cinema to create an audio drama. This year ALRA North BA Acting student won the Spotlight Live Theatre award, prestigiously judged against all Federation for Drama School members.

2.6 Oversight of Student Mental Health & Wellbeing

2.6.1 Our Mindfulness and Wellbeing Practitioners are monitored through Strategic Leadership receiving bi monthly verbal reports on their activity from Dean. The Vice Principal (Operations) receives reports on the number of students that have been referred to Psychotherapeutic Services, which are paid for by ALRA through prior approval from the Operations and Finance committee. Any major concerns are reported to Year Heads and this is raised to Operations or Finance Committee if learners are deemed at risk in terms of their student experience. If a student exits a programme for mental health reasons this is also recorded at the Exam Board. Alra North are also now in partnership with Chrysalis who provide trainee counsellors on placement so that access to this service is prompt and on a weekly basis even outside term time.

2.6.2 There is a pastoral care/mentor available directly in the South and remotely to the North for learners that come from disenfranchised backgrounds, offering them non-staff-based support that is tailored to their particular cultural background. This position is line managed by the Principal and reports into Strategic Leadership Committee.

2.7 Supporting staff to feel included and equipped

2.7.1 Previously our HR processes were outsourced but to increase the level of staff inclusion and professional resilience ALRA have employed a part time Human Resources Manager who is available to all faculty and professional services staff. This represents our commitment to equity and transparency throughout the Academy.

2.7.2 To develop a culture of pedagogic support the Vice Principal (Curriculum) engages staff in one to one sessions each term (Curriculum Evaluation Meeting) exploring areas of challenge or interest artistically and educationally with each Lead Tutor and Course Leader. This allows for Strategic Leadership Committee to remain connected to the working practice of the Academy whilst responsibility for the operational and artistic management of each campus remains with the Dean.

2.7.3 The Academic Registrar has recently finished 2 years working on the Teaching Excellence Framework Pilot's Main Panel and more recently he has been appointed to QAA's Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers and the Vice Principal (Curriculum) works as an External Expert for QAA advising on QSR and DAP reviews both of which demonstrate ALRA's senior standing as a conservatoire within the HE landscape. Annual in-house training in Quality and Curriculum procedures for all full-time staff throughout both campuses takes place on a termly basis. Staff have all been financially and developmentally supported to achieve their Advance HEA Fellowships and Mental Health First Aider training.

2.8 Overview of Quality Improvement Processes

- 2.8.1** ALRA's Quality Assurance Committee is charged with the Strategic management of ALRA's Quality Improvement processes and reports to both Academic Board and Strategic Leadership team. It managed ALRA's Quality improvement plan; a combination of actions and recommendations from external bodies and validations, including but not limited to Ofsted, QAA, St Marys University, Trinity College London, in addition to these there are also strategic aims, which may stem from the Board of Trustees or SLT. These are broader targets expected over a larger period of time and in line with our strategic aims, these may include 5 years plans on student recruitment or on financial projections. The committee is responsible and accountable for completion of these actions but may assign elements to other committees as it deems appropriate.
- 2.8.2** *Action plans*⁵: Each Committee holds its own Action plan which is a standing agenda item on each meeting. These are operational actions assigned to individuals or even the committee itself. They can be created within the meeting or brought to the committee from elsewhere (QAC may Action Operations committee after feedback on resources from the NSS, for example). In each meeting every individual action is discussed and progress (or completion) is approved.
- 2.8.3** *Discussion of Graduate Destinations*: Graduate destinations are evaluated at QAC, specifically the DLHE data (soon to become Graduate Outcomes) with reference to the qualitative data collected by Marketing on the agency representation and profile of graduates. ALRA's Annual Monitoring includes a section on Graduate destinations, explicitly outlining the DLHE and agency representation. This process is overseen by TLC, who use the results from Annual Monitoring to explore curriculum developments for the next Academic year, implementing appropriate changes designed to improve the destinations of graduates from ALRA.
- 2.9 Prevent & safeguarding**
- 2.9.1** We annually report on the years activities in respect of prevent and safeguarding issues. This report is submitted to the prevent team at the Office for Students and is subject to their quality and compliance checks.
- 2.9.2** Learners and staff engage in Safeguarding training through various means such as an online module, during induction weeks, at whole campus meetings and within their Year Group meetings.
- 2.9.3** We have a rigorous complaints policy⁶ which is discussed in depth at Induction Week and given to staff as part of their contract. Faculty received training in conducting an academic or programme rule-based inspection during September 2018. These principles are supported by the framework developed by the Office for Independent Adjudicators. Our 2019 inspection noted that ALRA must 'ensure that students are

⁵ ALRA's Action Plans (sample)

⁶ ALRA Student Complaints Policy

more aware of the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation.’ In order to address this we have additionally added Prevent to the induction process and a document explaining the student positioning around this issue is included on the VLE.

- 2.9.4** Our Safeguarding policy⁷ is held on our website under the policy section with signposting from both staff and student handbooks.
- 2.9.5** Safeguarding and Prevent work is overseen by the Principal who is responsible for co-ordinating training and maintains oversight of student and staff experience in this area. The nature of our setting requires that the people entering into the setting need constant scrutiny and this is also undertaken informally through observation and class feedback samples.
- 2.9.6** In line with our teaching and learning strategy we feel that responding to Ofsted’s immediate concerns around Prevent is now embedded into the curriculum by a commitment to pick texts that represent the political landscape of the country and indeed the world. Our hope is that the students leave ALRA as politically astute members of society with strong awareness of Prevent themes and related matters.

2.10 Self-Assessment Judgement and Scoring:

- 2.10.1** The Academy continues to strive for clear and rigorous communication between staff, students and leadership. The Governance structure we have put in place over the last two years has established a comparable level of efficiency to any Higher Education Institution in the county. Inclusion of freelance tutor representatives in the CTMs and full staff meetings at the start of the year is now standard practice. There is a constant engagement in managing the information we collect about the various types of learner attending our Academy through the various committees now in place. It was pointed out in the inspection that our documentation of the teaching and learning process was slightly sparse and we hope that the addition of Academic Board allows for Teaching and Learning Committee and Curriculum Team Meetings to offer a fuller picture of our pedagogic discussions.
- 2.10.2** Our staff are supported with continuous CPD relating to the demands of Higher Education and over the last 12 month we have worked together to establish a Teaching and Learning Strategy and Assessment Policy that is representative of our academic vision. This is a particular development since the Ofsted visit where we were encouraged to add specificity to our engagement with learners and therefore we hope that these thoughtful documents will enable us to all speak from the same view point.
- 2.10.3** The quality of career guidance is reflected in the way in which the curriculum is designed and delivered to bring learners into face to face contact with Casting Directors and Agents, allied professionals of acting and directing as well as building

⁷ Safeguarding policy

entrepreneurial skills that will segue way their transition to the industry. Equally the work we do is centred in the communities we inhabit and widens our remit of connection with the industry.

2.10.4 We believe the dynamic action of our board and committees combine to serve the staff and students with complete efficiency. One area that we continue to improve on is the communication of partnership development to potential partners both internally and externally. The rising profile of our graduates and the increased presence they hold in the industry, underlines the rapid improvement of engagement across the board.

2.10.5 We are keen to address our identified area of weakness in the learner's awareness of Prevent and therefore hope that the additional information presented to them in term 1 and permanently on the Virtual Learning Environment will help to clarify this area of weak performance on our part.

Judgement: Grade 1/Outstanding

3. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Feedback

3.1 Academic Vision, our staff and our learners

3.1.1 The currency of the Academic Vision of ALRA is overseen by the Teaching and Learning Committee which reports to Academic Board. Our vision is to blend the paradigms of education and training, meeting the thresholds outlined by the FHEQ whilst also preparing learners to enter the fields of professional acting and directing.

3.2 Monitoring Learning

3.2.1 Through our validating relationship with St. Marys, oversight is two-fold as the Moderator from the School of Drama together with our External Examiner, provide oversight of our staff's competencies through observations and sampling.

3.2.2 The Vice Principal (Curriculum) acts as moderator for all internal marking processes and Dean hold oversight of the academic schedule and quality of marking in their various programmes and campuses.

3.2.3 Teaching & Learning standards and effectiveness are reported to the Board of Trustees through a report by Academic Board via the Vice Principal (Curriculum). Accountability is therefore maintained by the Board's questioning of the Principal on trends and patterns emerging from these reports and will assign action as appropriate

3.2.4 In addition to the monitoring report at Academic Board oversight is maintained in the Departmental and Curriculum Team meetings across both campuses which report into the Teaching and Learning Committees. These reports address specific individual concerns about learners, statistical reports on teaching observations and curriculum currency. The T&LC also maintains an external expert with significant industry links allowing for professional benchmarking.

3.2.5 We believe that these actions appropriately address notes from our previous inspection which noted: Trustees and senior managers do not evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment sufficiently during the academic year in order to bring about further improvements.

3.3 CPD, Research and Scholarly Activity

3.3.1 Developing the existing excellent practice outlined in the most recent Ofsted inspection we have moved our research, Scholarship and CPD into a new level of

development forming a board to oversee the institutional development. ALRA have outlined a total of £20000 in their annual budget to contribute to this activity and employed an external expert to offer unbiased advice on applications. We have made sure that applications are simple and suit practitioner learning rather than encouraging an academic focus. This monitoring will help us to assess how the research, scholarship and CPD impacts upon ALRA either institutionally or specifically within the student experience.

- 3.3.2** Staff activity around Research, Scholarly & CPD is assessed at appraisal allowing them to achieve increased salary or position within the organisation based on their level of commitment to the area. Importantly we have consulted with staff and freelancers around this and as our focus is on training and teaching, the enrichment of the faculty who engage in this work is student centred and our aim is not to manifest an academic culture colonised by the University sector.
- 3.3.3** CPD focuses on staff maintaining their professional experience and skills to keep the delivery of the curriculum current, relevant and engaging. CPD can be accessed by freelance practitioners as well as in house faculty. CPD activity may be delivered by organisations outside of ALRA as well as bringing practitioners into the campuses to deliver full staff trainings.
- 3.3.4** Faculty have developed the The Northern Centre for Voice and Movement, a new collective of practitioners, that draws together world leading pedagogues to offer bespoke training packages. This was launched in September 2018 by Kristin Linklater and the International Centre for Voice at ALRA North, chaired by staff member Gary Horner who noted the following in his report to Trustees:

'The NCVM grew out of a space in the market for skills-based training workshops in the North of England and our aim became to co-create the future of the centre from an ethnographic approach. Building upon our Northern Community to make a non-specialist centre that is open to anyone who teaches and works in the creative arts. This is about skilling up everyone who feeds our Foundation, BA and MA programs across the UK in any capacity. We have a desire to give a space to underrepresented voice in the arts and that is why each of our events in 2018/19 were led by female practitioners.'

Firstly, the engagement with international and highly recognised practitioners has supported cementing the Centre as creative force in the North of England. The workshop leaders were Kristin Linklater, Sue Mythen, Barbara Houseman, Jackie Snow Joerg Andrees and Sarah Purcell from Michael Chekhov International Academy.'

- 3.3.5** Significant Professional Experience within the faculty that has occurred in the last three years includes
- Movement Director for Fjords Opera Company (Oslo)

- Voice Direction for headlong Theatre company.
- Assistant Directing post to Kristin Linklater in a community theatre play staged in Scotland.
- Revival Movement Directing post for Figaro for Michael Grandage at Glyndebourne Opera.
- Revival Director post for Abigail's Party directed by Sarah Esdaile
- Actor in Poldark Television Series.

3.3.6 The professional activity undertaken by staff is encouraged through a generous holiday allowance of 50 days as well as flexible timetabling to develop the possibility of small artistic projects for faculty in the teaching term.

3.3.7 Currently the following courses are funded by ALRA for faculty to develop in their own time:

- Educational Doctorate x2
- MA Leadership in Higher Education x 1

3.3.8 All of ALRA's tutors now have Fellowships with the Higher Education Academy.

3.4 Graduate initiatives

3.4.1 ALRA supports graduates in a number of ways to achieve their goals within the industry and beyond. Largely this is located within our growing Research and Scholarship board which allows learners to access space, time and money from the school in order to support them in their careers. As mentioned earlier in the SAR the board allows us to track our activity very clearly and recognises the importance of auditing the amount of space that we offer to graduates in supporting the development of new work. By offering graduates space to engage in these activities we have created a culture within the school that is aspirational encouraging an entrepreneurial attitude in the current learners and a sense of inheritance in the graduates that steers them towards the testing of new work within a critical but friendly audience. Recent graduate productions include:

Sorcha McCaffery - Lady Bones
Coral Sinclair and Tilly Sutcliffe - Pram Kicker

3.4.2 These productions received extensively positive press, Sorcha has been commissioned by The Royal Court Theatre and both actresses in Pram Kicker were nominated for Manchester theatre Awards. We also bring graduates back into the academy to work as writers on third year productions, assistant directors and tutors.

3.5 Effective Assessment

3.5.1 Marking and moderation processes are outlined in the Student Handbook which is communicated to students at induction and stored on the VLE. Moderation between campuses is undertaken by the Principal and Vice Principal (Curriculum) who track

one student per level per campus. There are also regularly scheduled opportunities for faculty to work together to standardise their marking across campus the timing of which is overseen by the Dean.

- 3.5.2** All staff have been receiving additional training into ALRA's audition marking processes and on the assessment process for digital and non-written assessment that have been specifically created in line with our arts-based curriculum.
- 3.5.3** Students and staff engage in the internal and formal revalidation processes and take part in numerous internal meetings designed to ensure that there is shared understanding of how academic judgements and choices are made.

3.6 Developing Assessment Literacy

- 3.6.1** Students have undertaken a series of study skills classes designed to embed appropriate academic practice in their learning. The maintenance of personal physical and vocal support is overseen by the Lead Skills Tutors who enable one to one and group body and voice tutorials that enhance learner's approach to assessment using targeted coaching that will enable them to synthesise between modules more appropriately.
- 3.6.2** Learning Support continues to be offered to all eligible students by contracted service providers, this is overseen by the Dean.

3.7 Designing and conducting assessment

- 3.7.1.** The inculcation of a single, ethos led principle has strengthened and consolidated our understanding of assessment and the subjective nature of assessment outcomes. The first assessment we make is at audition and the simple principle of an 'impulse' mark being applied by individual tutors allows us to embrace subjectivity and avoid mid-range bunching of marks/outcomes. Underlying course assessments, this same principle again allows us to include instinctive marking through the 'impulse' mark and avoid bunching of marks as an outcome of group discussion. We believe the issue of bunching of marks is now addressed thoroughly through this adopted ethos. All assessments at level 4,5,6 and 7 are second marked except for v-log, blog and pod cast submission at level 4. Peer marking is used in the formative assessment of the independent project, building assessment for learning into the content of this self-led module, this authentic assessment was commended as part of our validation procedure for the BA Acting. The use of the written word is blended always with technology and artistic response to develop a particular assessment language pertinent to the training of an actor and unique to the development of ALRA. This is the approach we continue to build moving forward.
- 3.7.2** Due to the arts-based methodology (ABM) we use to assess the learners on all courses at ALRA we have termly curriculum training to debate and co-create the rubric and ideology surrounding our varied and complex processes. This is a potent aspect of our teaching and learning culture which has embraced the diverse characteristics of our staff and their relationships to arts based and digital methods

of assessment, drawing on their professional knowledge as well as an emerging appreciation for the quality assurance systems imbedded within Further and Higher Education.

- 3.7.3** These arts-based submissions allow our learners to be assessed on how they understand certain principles in potent, sentient methods, and as Mienczakowski (2009) states '*arts-based works can generate emotional as well as intellectual engagement with the issues presented*'⁸. This is an important distinction in our assessment strategy that spans both the reflexive and summative data gathered in the arts-based submissions. Stock notes the complexity of analyzing material forms, that '*live within the bodies of artist researchers, where the nature of the practice itself is live, ephemeral and constantly changing*' (2013:p298). At every assessment point our strategy seeks to understand the many texts that can intersect and make meaning in complex ways that access the assessor's embodied response to the materials submitted. In light of this the faculty regularly engage in assessment trainings, focusing on reflective practice, the modalities of assessment and the ways in which we are responding, with our own specialist sentient knowledges, to the artefacts that are submitted.
- 3.7.4** The use of ABM and audio-visual submission allows our learners to contextualise their physical and vocally driven performance texts through a methodology that stays within the field of Acting. The flexible format of the assessment supports neuro-diverse learners as their process for interpreting character and developing professional skills can be represented in a student led manner. It also allows for learners who struggle with the traditional essay submission to excel in their reasoning skills.
- 3.7.5** We believe that our overhaul of assessment literacy has addressed comments in our last inspection which noted that '*Students in the second and third year of study lack a sufficiently detailed critical language to evaluate and develop their work fully*'.

3.8. Marking and moderation

- 3.8.1** As a further mechanism to ensure bias is overcome in assessment the Principal and Vice Principal track the marks of one student per group offering where needed, a third mark to their portfolio and identifying any trends that fall out of the portfolio of marks for the student.
- 3.8.2** Assessment criteria are presented in several ways to staff and students. The learning outcomes of each module are described as the targets for each assessment within the module descriptions there is a rationale for each assessment also displayed in the module outlines. Within the Student Handbook there is an outline of the assessment modalities, methods used to mark the students and feedback processes. There is a defined assessment rubric for each modality of assessment at each level, also available in the student handbook.

⁸ Mienczakowski J (2009) Pretending to know: ethnography, artistry and audience. *Ethnography and Education* 4(3): 321–333.

3.9. Feedback

- 3.9.1** Group Feedback is given verbally immediately after group Studio Performance assessment. Individual feedback can be requested at the end of term from any Lead Tutor. Our Student Portal System is an online resource that captures the progress of each student across every strand of each module that is studied. There is a useful feature on the portal that allows learners to respond directly to comments and interact with the Lead Tutors responsible for the modules.
- 3.9.2** Written feedback on each strand of each module is given at the end of each term on process, professionalism and performance. This is sometimes supported with an overall comment from the Lead Tutor summarising progress on the modules. A general programme overview is given to Level 4 and 5 students at the end of each academic year through verbal tutorial. Written/Digital submissions are fed back on within three weeks of submission on the Student Portal System.
- 3.9.3** Written Digital Submissions are submitted via drop box, google drive and/or One Drive, with links sent to the ALRA submission email. Students are given a time and date for all written/digital submissions.
- 3.9.4** Formal Tutorials take place at the end of Term 2, 3,5 and 6 with Lead Tutors, Course Leaders and Vice Principals. These allow for both detailed and general overviews to be shared with the learner in relation to their portfolio of learning within the Academy.

3.10 Oversight from professional bodies

- 3.10.1** The Academy retains professional oversight in a number of ways including through its accreditation visits from CDMT and Trinity who employ professional theatre artists to assess work.
- 3.10.2** The Trinity assessors review a selection of work across the programmes by attending live performances and observing recorded assessment on Vimeo. They are then able to access marks and reports via the Student Portal System and provide reports confirming that the assessments are of a comparable standard to other institutions. Our recent changes in curriculum have been supported by Trinity who have noted the worth of our personal research project addition to the BA programme allowing learners to develop skills that are connected to a wider skill set than performance⁹.
- 3.10.3** Our engagement of freelance staff members to deliver and develop curriculum is always connected to the most current and experienced professionals working in the acting field.
- 3.10.4** Our alignment with professional venues and agencies occurs through the Showcases that we offer at level 6 and 7 of our professional acting training. We are able to regularly engage with over 50 agents per showcase who sign now up to 75% of our

⁹ Trinity Year Review 2017/18

students. We regularly gather informal feedback from these professionals on the quality of our performance work.

3.10.5 At level 4 and 5 learners receive industry lectures from international, national and local professionals associated with the field of acting.

3.11 Differentiation and support

3.11.1 Our learning support officer, year tutors and DSA funded Learning Support tutor work with neuro diverse learners, those experiencing academic challenge and those new to further/higher education. Issues are reported to Head of Year and Dean who co-ordinate the services around each student's academic need depending on the severity of their need. This reporting process varies as to who the stakeholder is that is contacting them but is often through the Year Head. We have an open-door tutorial policy which allows for constant one on one support with learners from an academic perspective if required.

3.11.2 Our Non-Academic Admissions policy allows us to meet with learners who have passed our audition admission process but failed to attain the required UCAS points to align with our validating university. Through a series of workshops on reflection, reflexivity, analysis and thinking skills we are able to develop work plans for learners which are agreed with them at tutorial. These are shared with Year Heads and support the navigation of their contextual development throughout their study.¹⁰

3.12 Self-Assessment of Teaching and Learning

3.12.1 There is outstanding evidence of innovative curriculum design that attracts diverse learners to the Academy who may face barriers to entering higher education. The faculty are all professionally qualified lecturers with industry experience relevant to their role. Learners are supported with a diverse framework of assessment modalities that encourage a passion for learning amongst the cohort, developing high level thinking skills. The attention to differentiation is well defined with opportunities to engage in one on one coaching and learning support enhances the student success. There is a strong and vibrant curriculum on all programmes establishing the key concepts of each discipline. Feedback is offered in written and verbal formats and organised in connection to the appropriate Modules of study.

3.12.2 During our last inspection it was noted that an area for improvement was:

Teachers should ensure that they always provide specific learning targets for each student, and provide sufficiently challenging activities to maximise the progress of all students.

We believe that we have addressed this in a number of ways:

- *The creation of a Feedback Handout for staff in term 2 (2019) circulated prior to the major feedback period.*

¹⁰ Non Academic Student Work Plan example

- *The development of Dean roles to include oversight of feedback training throughout the year.*
- *The whole campus training with Dean in early September 2019, delivered to full time faculty and freelance staff.*

3.12.3 Whilst we can see that the NSS score indicates a great increase in the student body's understanding of their targets, more work can be done on bridging the gap between the educational value of our programmes and the artistic environment often set up in conservatoire trainings. As staff continue to reflect on the barriers facing students entering into actor training many solutions to the psychological and cultural boundaries that exist the more they are aligned with the feedback from Ofsted to add transparency into the way in which we train students. We have recognised that there is an unconscious bias in the traditions of white British middle class training systems, a result the new teaching and learning strategy is committed to reviewing our texts, and embodied methodologies to systematically evaluate how we can commit to bringing the student into the centre of the pedagogic experiences at ALRA.

Judgement: Grade 1/Outstanding

4. Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare

4.1 Programme Rules

4.1.2 Professionalism is fed back on within the Student Portal Reports at the end of each term. The assessments contain various levels of process grading, which relate to the behaviour, time keeping and commitment of the learners within their Rehearsal modules.

4.2 Wellbeing and Mindfulness Department

4.2.1 Two staff members are trained as Mental Health and Wellbeing practitioners, both on recognised practitioner training courses that establish concrete skills that are brought back to the academy. Two members of staff are also trained counsellors and this initiative is in direct response to industry concerns around mental health and well-being in the profession.

4.2.3 In 2018 we launched the mindfulness and wellbeing department on both sites as a response to the ongoing signs of mental health issues emerging in our student body. It was agreed that the students would benefit from learning mindfulness and wellbeing techniques as part of their regular curriculum activity to give them key skills that allow them to cope with the day to life of the academy and therefore we have devised a bespoke training that requires three lessons per term in their year groups (third years are invited to attend when they are available).

4.2.4 To support the tutors delivering this the academy has invested in training them in mindfulness and wellbeing techniques including professional counselling and hypnotherapy skills. These tutors also have hours allocated to support learners that are experiencing anxiety or low-level emotional distress with one to one tutorial offering them tools to cope with these symptoms. Our Mindfulness and Wellbeing Policy¹¹ indicates that when disclosure reaches a critical stage they then have to refer the learners to a professional counsellor/therapist for up to 3 sessions at ALRA's expense. There follows a review with the practitioner before next steps are agreed.

4.2.5 Learners are supported with Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction sessions three times per term that follow a simple curriculum based on the Bangor University model of mindfulness. These sessions are in addition to whole campus meditation once per week and free drop in mindful counselling sessions.

¹¹ Mindfulness and wellbeing policy

4.2.7 The majority of staff have been trained in the nationally recognised Mental Health First Aid qualification allowing for an increased awareness throughout the academy of the issues facing our students.

4.3 Widening participation and inclusivity

4.3.1 The Academy has been undertaking a significant level of growth in partnership formations we have been making in order to cultivate graduates that are versatile in their connectivity's and interactive abilities. Our relationship with Atlantic Theatre Network sees an annual visit to Lisbon which involves participation in cultural activities and local acting lessons. Equally the MA Directors will go to Japan in 2019 to develop a cultural exchange with the Kani Public Arts Centre, experiencing local rehearsals and participating in a networking event for young directors. Students frequently visit national and local theatre venues supported by the academy in pastoral and financial assistance, developing their understanding of the field and ability to interface within it. In 2019 we have additionally acquired partnership three US based universities and alternative providers growing our stateside representation.

4.3.2 ALRA has partnered with a number of organisations that engage directly with communities of diverse students. Of particular note is our relationship with Leicester College who run a BA (Hons) Acting (Creative Performance Practice), co-designed with ALRA and only the second ever accelerated degree in acting. By working with Colleges that serve high deprivation postcode areas, we hope to support the development of professional artists who would not normally access actor training and give them a supported pathway into our postgraduate conservatoire training.

4.3.3 Our Outreach Auditions access areas with historically low levels of engagement in education supporting some of them with free, one day auditions which could allow these learners to access drama school training. In addition to this we have a long term relationship with Leicester College where we have co-designed an accelerated degree that allows the students to audition for ALRA and progress onto one of our postgraduate courses. The Academy have made this link due to the high areas of deprivation seen in the borough and in an effort to provide opportunities for this particular group.

4.3.4 ALRA provides free auditions for low income, looked after and previously looked after children and young people.

4.3.5 The student experience lies at the heart of Widening Participation activity at ALRA and it places the needs of potential, current and graduated students at the centre throughout the student journey.

4.3.6 Students lead on the delivery of certain activities and projects relating to WP, including:

- Volunteering and/or performing in local communities
- Providing mentoring and support functions
- Working with community groups through curriculum activity in Contextual Studies Modules on BA and Acting and Entrepreneurship on MA PA

4.3.6 Students are also integral to the delivery of aspects of the WP agenda – as Student Ambassadors, mentors and peer advocacy, gaining valuable enterprise experience.

4.4 Self Evaluation of Personal Development, behaviour and Welfare

The provision for development of awareness of issues around diversity and ethics is captured in the mental health resource of the wellbeing and mindfulness department. This is an outstanding provision that culturally shifts the entire activity of the organisation. There is a strong emphasis on professional skills which is embedded in the curriculum feedback and therefore acts as another key feature of the student's deeper learning. There is an excellent connection for the school as described in part 1 with venues, agents and casting directors making sure that the students are continually focused on their personal entry point to the industry.

Judgement: Grade 1/Outstanding

5. Outcomes for Learners

5.1 Supporting Previously Disenfranchised Learners at ALRA

- 5.1.1** We acknowledge our responsibility having worked hard to accept learners from diverse backgrounds and in response to this, ALRA has developed several unique strategies to support these learners once they are enrolled on the undergraduate or postgraduate programmes. Our faculty on both campuses provide learners with a close network of supportive tutors who sustain in depth knowledge of their cross curricular performance, each student has a Head of Year who will maintain oversight and report to the Dean should there be any pastoral or academic decline. This would then be referred up to the Strategic Leadership Committee should there be any urgent decision making needed.
- 5.1.2** In 2018 ALRA made the decision to employ a mentor for learners from criminal and care backgrounds offering them one to one mentorship from a professional specialising in this area. This decision came out of data analysis around retention rates of students from care or criminal backgrounds and their ability to sustain the demanding contact time and training featured on the programme. This cultural barrier is being addressed through the mentorship of this group of learners providing representation within the faculty that allows for difference to be visibly addressed and promoted.
- 5.1.3.** There are gender neutral Toilets and pronoun training takes place in induction and is embedded into Year Group briefings, reflecting our engagement with Transgender and non-binary students.

5.2 Case studies of developing access, participation and confidence in acting and studying

- 5.2.1** GA delivers high quality, fully funded, accredited and non-accredited acting and theatre-making projects for young people in the margins in London. They specialise in working with young people NEET and who may be at risk or have experienced a range of social exclusion risk factors including long-term unemployment, leaving care, offending, gang-affiliation and homelessness. Working with GA, ALRA provides access, bursaries and support for entry to training and help to develop young people in every way to prepare them for drama school, higher education and the world of work within the performing arts.
- 5.2.2 Newcastle College:** ALRA regularly attend regional auditions so that auditionees do not have to travel to a campus, cutting costs. The North East has always been one of these. Recently ALRA found through the Polar4 research that Newcastle College is a

target ward with a Polar4 Quintile of 1. ALRA developed a relationship which is still in fruition with the college so that we offer the colleges' students a free audition on their own campus. Because many of the surrounding areas in the North East are also target wards the audition day is also opened up to non-Newcastle College students at a reduced rate.

- 5.2.3 Yellow Earth/Yellow Academy:** ALRA works with the British East Asian community through 'Yellow Earth' and 'Yellow Academy'. This partnership demonstrates significant commitment to teaching, learning, research, administration, management, cultural diversity and widening participation. The collaboration between Yellow Earth and ALRA has been maintained since 2009. ALRA host fully funded summer courses for two weeks each summer.
- 5.2.4 Yellow Earth Theatre was formed in 1995 by five British East Asian (BEA) actors; Kwong Loke, Kumiko Mendl, Veronica Needa, David KS Tse and Tom Wu. The company seek to develop work that widens the choice and type of roles being offered to BEA actors. Over its 21-year history Yellow Earth has created a wide range of award-winning work from new writing to bold adaptations of classics; from family friendly shows to participatory and site responsive work and also provides professional development opportunities for BEA artists.
- 5.2.5 Dark Horse Theatre Company:** Dark Horse is a national touring theatre company which premieres new work. An ensemble of learning disabled actors feature in all productions. Exceptional non-learning, disabled actors from the broader industry are also cast in the touring productions. Dark Horse is also a leading vocational trainer of actors with learning disabilities and develops skills in preparation for work in the industry at the highest level. A unique acting methodology offers all Dark Horse actors the opportunity to train viably for work in all performance media. Since being based at Trencherfield Mill, ALRA have hosted an annual week's residency for Dark Horse when members of the current company receive workshops from ALRA faculty.
- 5.2.6 John Godber Company & Archbishop Sentamu Academy Scholarships:** From September 2018 ALRA have offered a new scholarship opportunity that developed from a relationship between the John Godber Company and Archbishop Sentamu Academy (a mixed Church of England secondary school and sixth form located in the Preston Road Estate of Kingston upon Hull).
- 5.2.7 The John Godber Company staged a production of Ocho, performed by the Spotlight Ensemble from Archbishop Sentamu Academy as a community theatre production in the year of City of Culture in 2017. A collaboration between ALRA and the John Godber Company followed that offers subsidised auditions and scholarships and bursaries to members of the Spotlight Ensemble help cover the training fees.
- 5.2.8 Arts Emergency & Generation Arts:** We are working with the Arts Emergency charity organisation which provides mentors for young people who would not generally have access to careers in the Arts or Arts based training. We have one recently

trained mentor within that organisation and currently encourage access to Drama school with free places North and South on our Foundation course.

5.3 Industry Networks

- 5.3.1** The most recent CDMT report noted that *‘Work done recently by the school to improve students’ professional destinations has been imaginative, diverse and effective: stronger links with professional venues, companies and projects (such as the recent ensemble work with Bolton Octagon and Oldham Coliseum, and a project with the John Godber company), networking trips abroad, better use of showcases in key venues, the recruitment of an influential casting director to the Board of Trustees, and more emphasis within the course on preparation for audition and work have all borne employment for graduating students.’*
- 5.3.2** The school now assists the students to accrue a higher level of theatrical agency representation with up to 85% of students attaining representation.
- 5.3.3** The ways in which we work to support students to transition into the industry are varied as CDMT described. The key initiatives include hosting a Gala in the Summer term where industry experts and agents are offered transport from central London to our premises to watch a performance. The North have a similar process that involves students touring to different venues to perform with other theatre companies/at other venues that increase their exposure to the very different theatrical climate. We are confident that this addresses the comment from our last review around the lack of employers being networked in the acting industry and demonstrates a strong effort to improve on this comment.
- 5.3.4** There are regular meetings with the Outreach and Marketing Board, these informal meeting consisting of Course Leaders and Vice Principal (O) as well as the Marketing Manager, developing strategies around outward facing PR in association with our students. This meeting reports up to QAC where strategy is monitored and approved.
- 5.3.5** After graduation learners are given access to free rehearsal space for the first three years after graduating and ongoing support in terms of having an open-door policy. There is a strong emphasis on the support we offer to graduates with regular newsletters circulated to our graduates as well as the earlier described initiatives.

5.4 Appropriate Resources

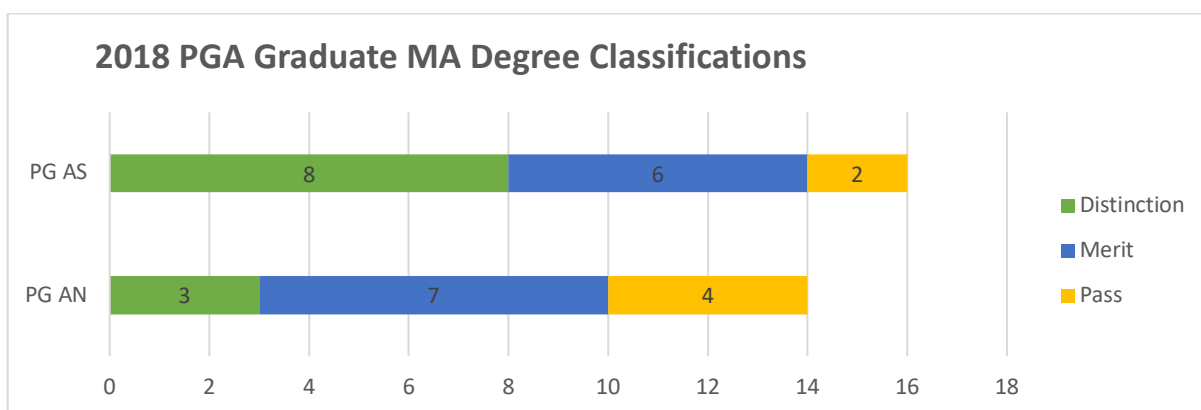
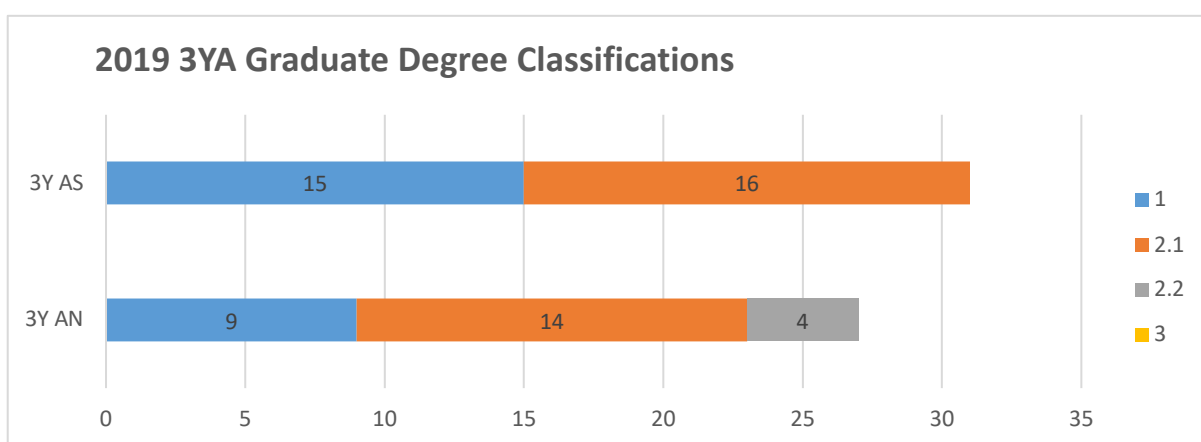
- 5.4.1** It was mentioned in the previous review that teachers “do not always ensure that the choice of scripts for performance in the second year match the skills and training needs of all students”. Oversight of these choices has been enhanced through the separation of Course Leader and Lead Acting Tutor (LAT) role, allowing the LAT to make sure texts are appropriate.
- 5.4.2** We have a number of online learning resources that are growing each year featuring access to academic journals, online depository/VLE and streaming networks focusing

on the performance arts. We recently increased our stock by 20,000 titles within our subject area. An area that we are continuing to improve on is the amount of resources online in wider fields than acting and directing which our students can now access.

5.4.3 The faculty includes Heads of Production and Stage Management and Technical Theatre practitioners who help deliver the level 6 and 7 programmes from a resource perspective enhancing the professional standards of the module.

5.5 Achievement, Attrition and retention

5.5.1 In 2019 our graduate received the following outstanding degree results. Huge increase in classification levels across both campuses and courses compared to 2017/18 Graduates.:



5.5.2 The MA Professional Acting graduate at end of this calendar year therefore this information is not yet available, though their grade portfolio is consistent with the BA. These grades demonstrate high level of attainment and we aim to maintain this high quality of marks as ALRA progresses. As a conservatoire we believe it is natural for learners to achieve such a high proportion of marks due to the rigorous admission process and high quality of training received whilst on the programme. We are confident these grades reflect the intensity of the training and the ability of our students.

Retention: Academic Year 2018-19

Retention has dropped in ALRA North figures compared to 2017-2018. Remained consistent in ALRA South.

3YAN	Y1	Y2	Y3
<i>Enrolled</i>	32	30	28
<i>Completed</i>	28	26	27
<i>Retention Percentage</i>	87.5%	86.7%	96.4%

3YAS	Y1	Y2	Y3
<i>Enrolled</i>	33	36	31
<i>Completed</i>	30	35	31
<i>Retention Percentage</i>	90.9%	97.2%	100%

PGAN	Y1	Y2
<i>Enrolled</i>	16	14
<i>Completed</i>	14	14
<i>Retention Percentage</i>	87.5%	100%

PGAS	Y1	Y2
<i>Enrolled</i>	18	18
<i>Completed</i>	16	17
<i>Retention Percentage</i>	88.9%	94.4%

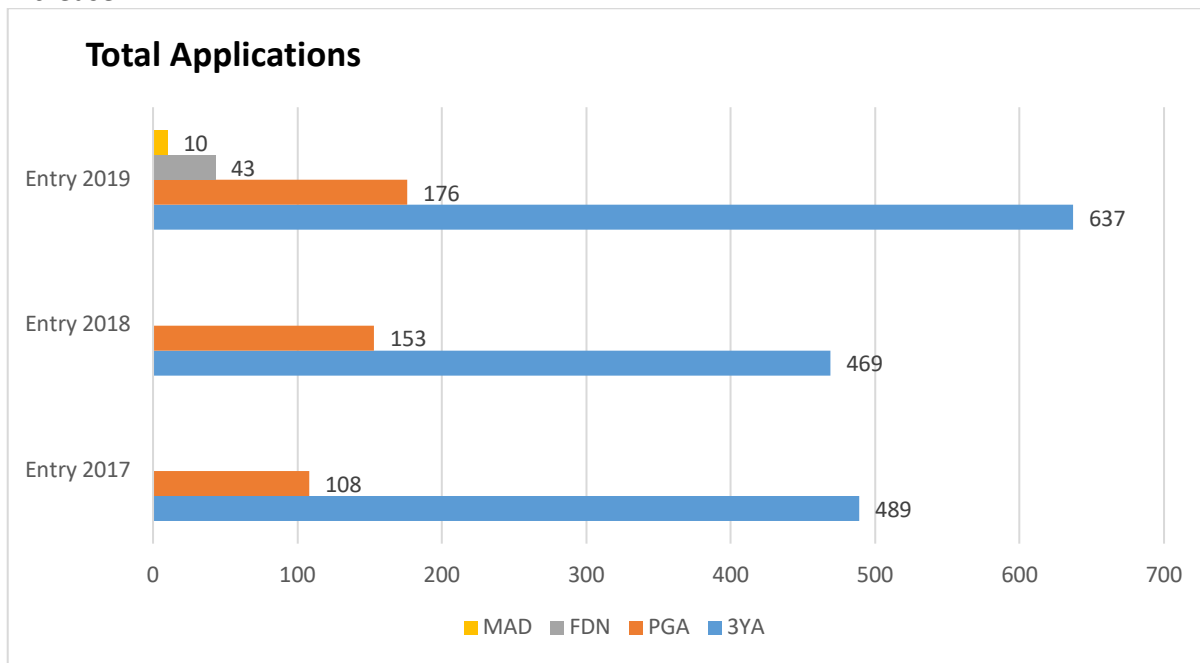
Directing	Y1	Y2
<i>Enrolled</i>	5	
<i>Completed</i>	4	
<i>Retention Percentage</i>	80%	

5.5.3 We can see low attrition rates across both programmes in 18/19 suggesting a strong student experience. The narrative around these students exiting the programme was

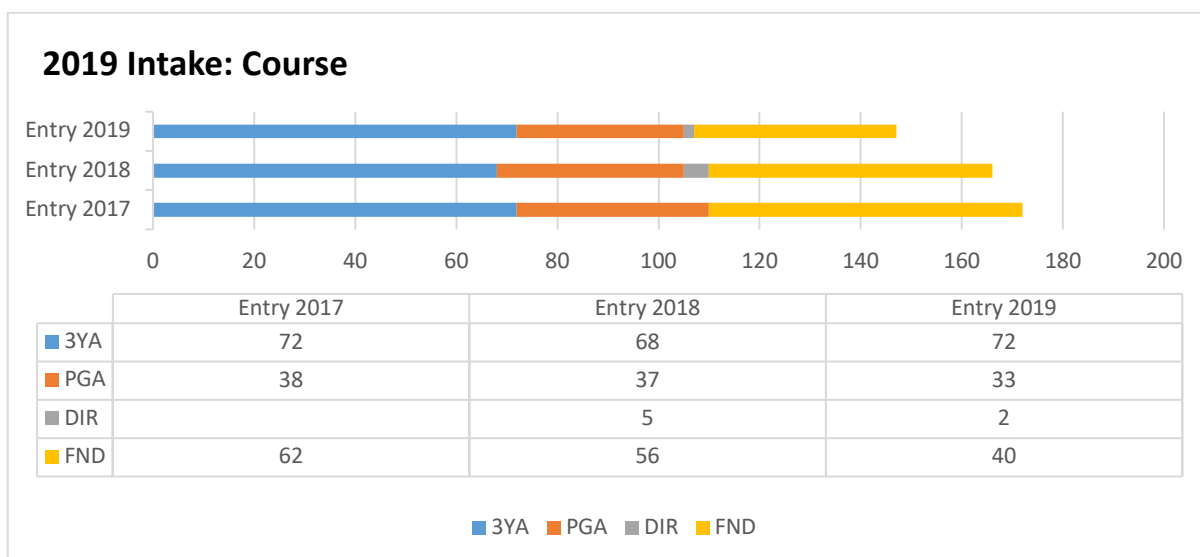
predominantly academic and therefore they were not progressed at level 4 or 5 accordingly. The MA Directing student deferred and will return in 2020.

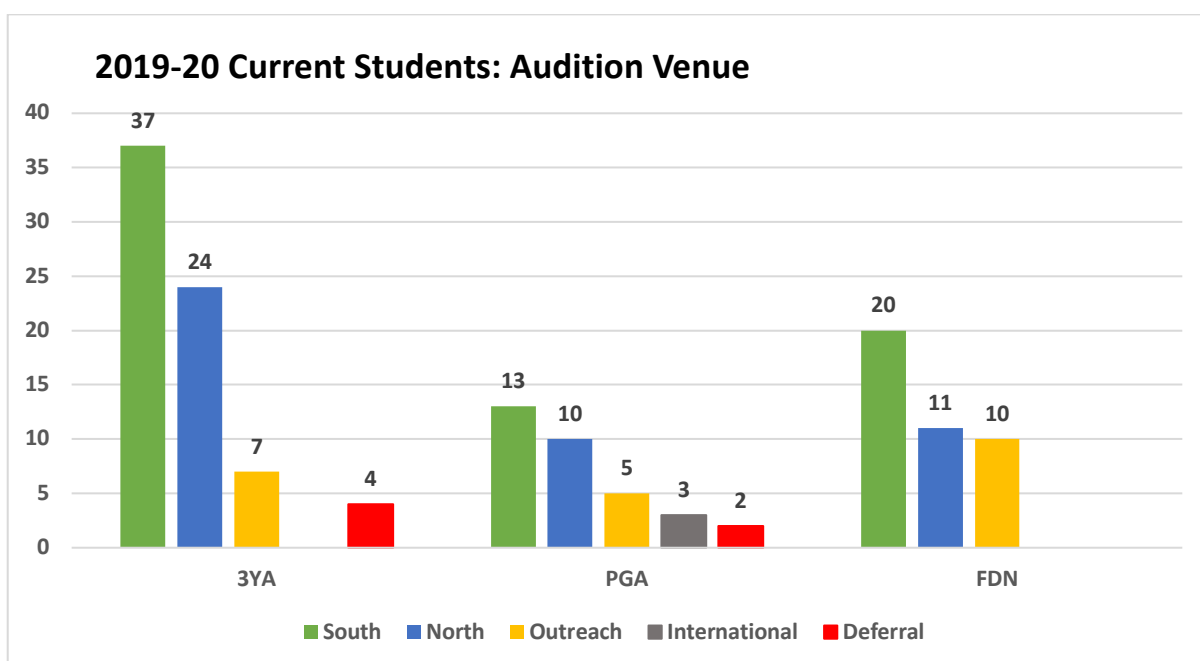
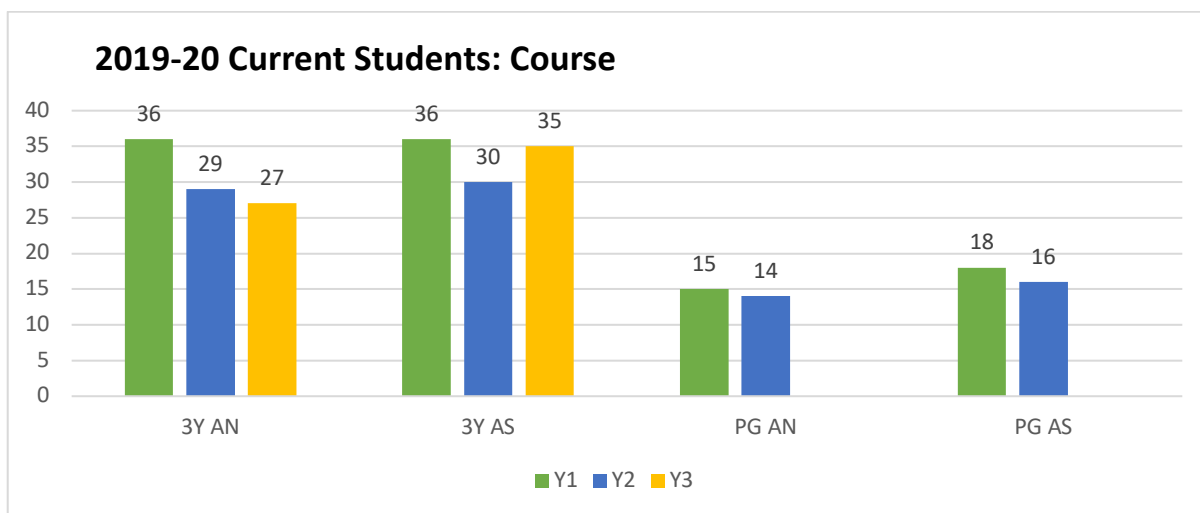
5.5.4 Contextual Statistics:

The statistics indicate that we have 250 more students than last year , indicating a 53% increase.



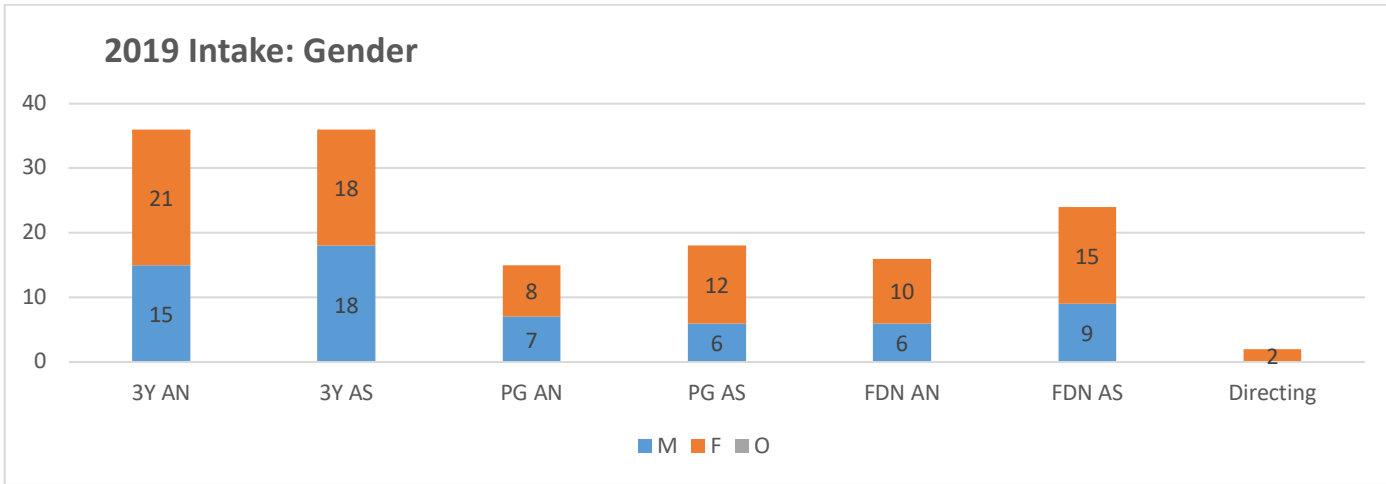
MA Professional Acting, MA Directing and FDN Acting intake numbers have dropped this year. 2017 did include Part-Time FDN Acting. Subsequent years have not. 3YA has risen and is a full cohort.



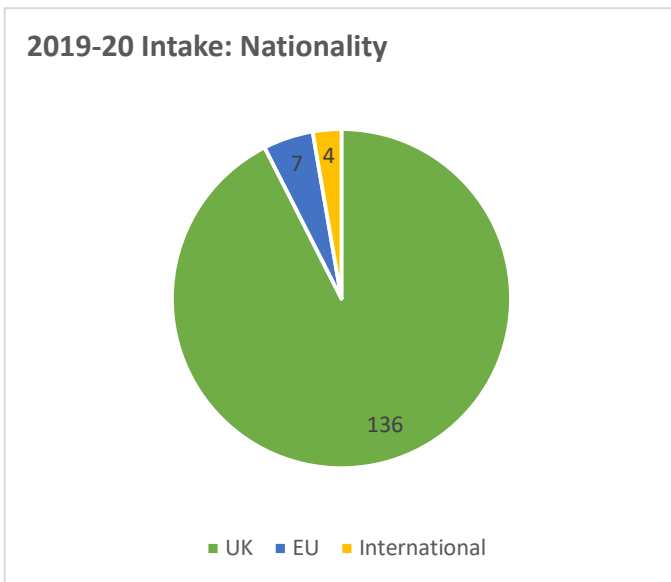


Characteristics: 2019 Intake

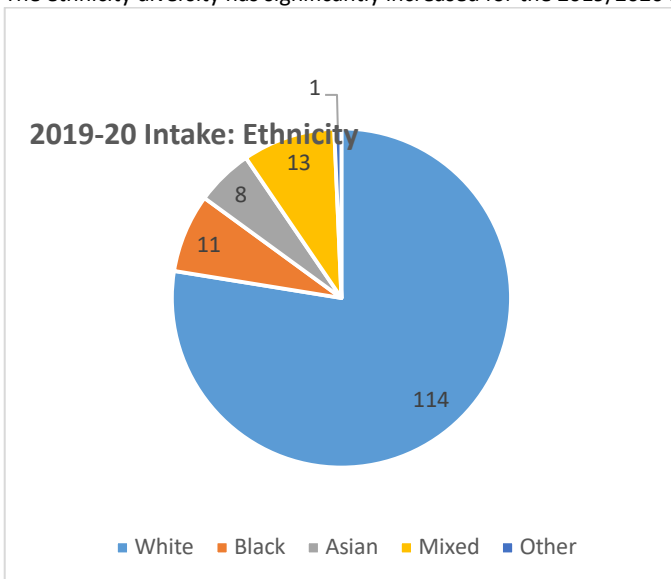
Gender split equalising more compared to 2018 intake. Intake of Other has dropped from 1 to 0.



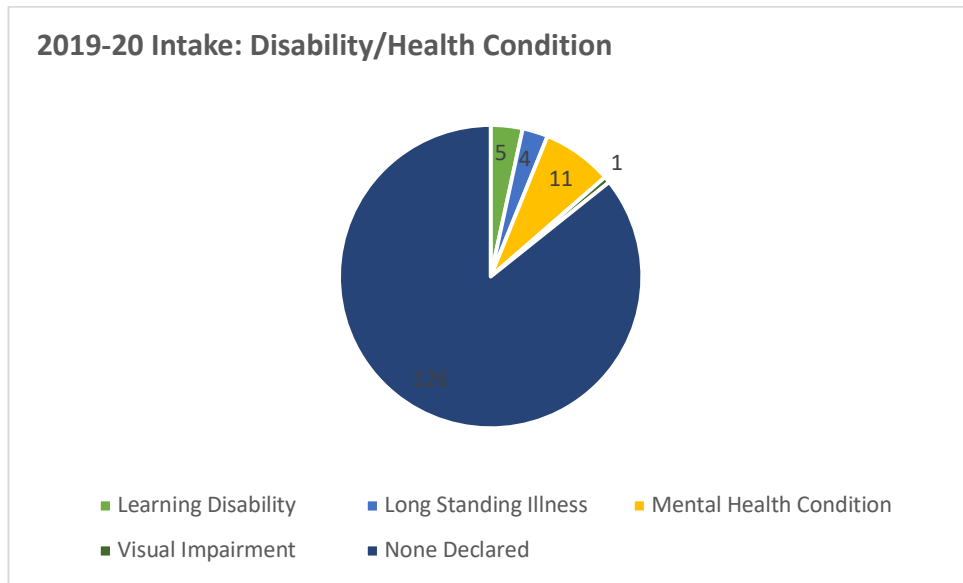
Statistics indicate that intake nationality has remained consistent with no evident backlash from external factors such as Brexit.



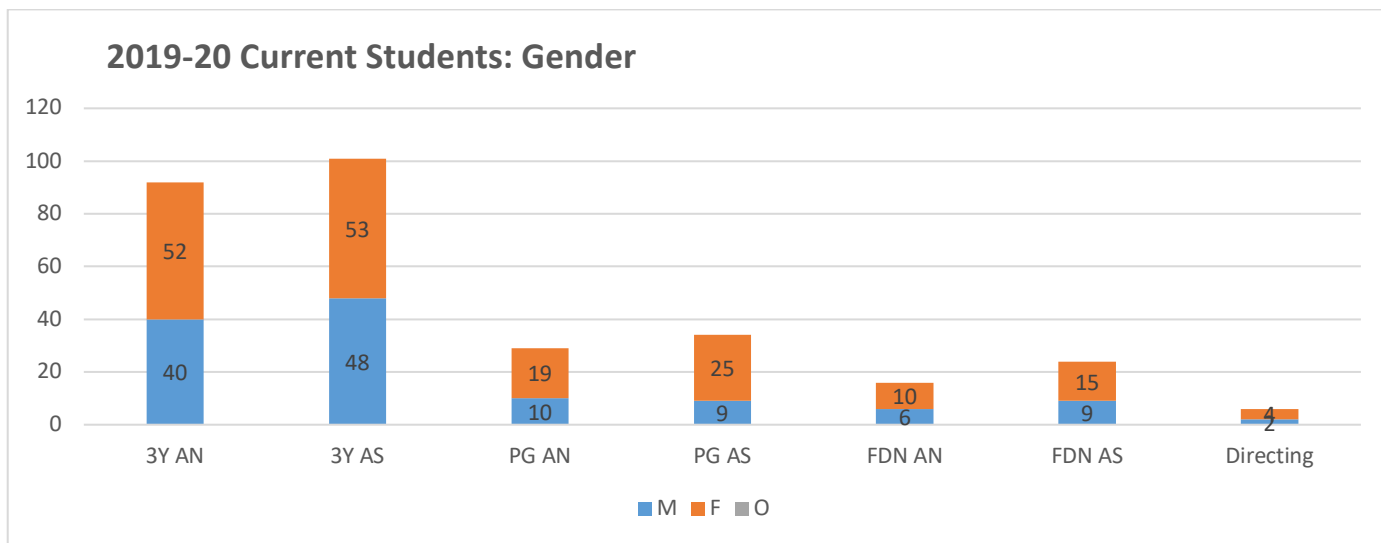
The ethnicity diversity has significantly increased for the 2019/2020 intake.



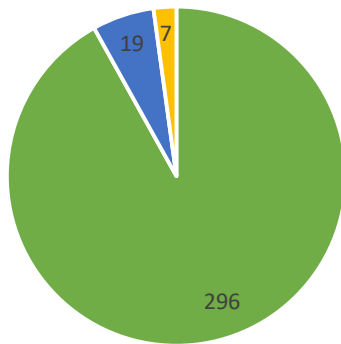
This statistic evidences a large spike in students disclosing of mental health conditions pre-enrolment.



Characteristics: Whole School

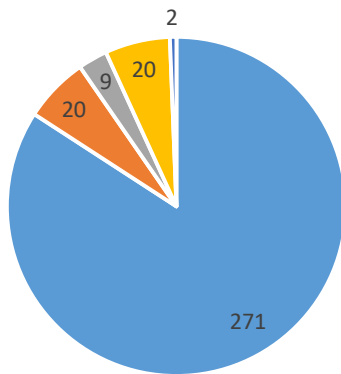


2019-20 All Students: Nationality



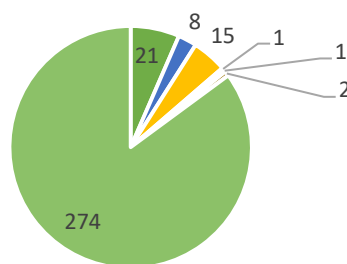
■ UK ■ EU ■ International

2019-20 All Students: Ethnicity



■ White ■ Black ■ Asian ■ Mixed ■ Other

2019-20 All Students: Disability/Health Condition



■ Learning Disability ■ Long Standing Illness ■ Mental Health Condition
 ■ Hearing Impairment ■ Visual Impairment ■ Other
 ■ None Declared

5.6 Registry Report for 2019

5.6.1 Application

Applications are up by around 250, compared to previous years.

It appears that the work put into outreach events attended by Marketing and Admissions team may show here.

It could also be a reflection of the graduating work from actors which has gone from strength to strength.

Intake

Numbers are good for 3YA as well as PG.

Foundation Courses are down this year, though not to a critical level.

The PG North group should have been larger but saw a fall in numbers at the latest stage due to financial barriers.

The Directing course has also fallen from 5 to 2 for its year 1 intake. There is potential that we advertised a lot in 2018 with it being a new course and then not so much the following year. It is also not uncommon for the 'sophomore' year of a course dropping intake levels.

Ethnicity

The ethnicity diversity has highly increased for the 2019/2020 intake. On reflection of the audition forms and marks, as well as our OfS Transparency figures, this doesn't appear to be positive action/ bias on our behalf.

The rise in BME students appears to be from application point which suggests the work done by the outreach and marketing teams (targeting specific areas/groups) has reflected upon application.

Disability/Health Conditions

Large spike in students disclosing of mental health conditions upon enrolment. This can be seen and reflected sector and nationwide due to the current climate and talk around Mental Health.

Retention

Retention rates are again a lot higher in the South compared to the North. From looking at the initial marking at auditions (North students receiving lower marks and offers to study) this could be a reflection to why they are lower.

5.7 Self- Assessment of Outcomes for Learners

5.7.1 There is a detailed and increased effort to network within the acting industry improving the connections available to students at the Academy. The latest statistics indicate that there is a good standard of employment and professional representation across the cohorts and undergraduate programmes are thriving.

5.7.2 We expect that programmes such as the Leicester BA will act as a pathway into the MA Professional Acting, developing a higher calibre of student for the future, therefore also increasing agency interaction with this programme. There is a high retention rate, often 100% at certain levels, and we are working towards addressing any issues to increase this further.

5.7.3 The Academy is further developing their creative initiatives towards widening participation through the formation of a sub-committee which include this foci in their remit. The demanding nature of the course requires learners to work to industry standard within their final phases of learning be that on directing placements, or in public studio productions, as the tutors continue to develop their skills, so too the learners are being exposed to more industry success.

Judgement: Grade 1/Outstanding

