

Office for
Students



Assessment for quality and standards initial conditions B7 and B8

Collective Acting Studio Ltd

Provider legal name: Collective Acting Studio Ltd

Provider trading name: Collective Acting Studio Ltd

UKPRN: 10091065

Assessment conducted: 14 September to 21 December 2023

Reference: OfS 2024.52

Enquiries to: regulation@officeforstudents.org.uk

Publication date: 25 September 2024

Contents

Executive summary	2
Introduction and background	5
Assessment process	7
Initial condition B7: Quality	7
Initial condition B8: Standards	7
Part 1: Assessment of condition B7: Quality	9
Condition B1: Academic experience	9
Condition B2: Resources, support, and student engagement	22
Condition B4: Assessment and awards	30
Part 2: Assessment of condition B8: Standards	38
Annex A: Approach to sampling of evidence	41
Conditions B7 and B8	41

Executive summary

Type of assessment	Initial conditions B7 (quality) and B8 (standards)
For	Collective Acting Studio
Advice to the OfS on B7	The provider has credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with conditions B1, B2 and B4 from the date of registration
Advice to the OfS on B8	The standards set for the courses the provider intends to provide, appropriately reflect sector-recognised standards

For providers seeking registration with the Office for Students (OfS), the OfS will assess a provider's application and relevant evidence to determine whether the provider satisfies the initial conditions of registration. For providers that applied for registration on or after 1 May 2022, this includes an assessment of whether the provider satisfies initial conditions B7 (quality) and B8 (standards) as set out in the regulatory framework (November 2022). As part of the registration process the OfS also carries out a risk assessment in relation to the related revised ongoing conditions of registration, to include B1, B2, B4 and B5.

As part of its assessment of initial conditions of registration B7 and B8, the OfS appoints an assessment team, including external academic experts, to undertake an assessment of quality and standards. The assessment includes a visit to the provider by the assessment team, after which it produces a report. The report does not take into account matters which may have occurred after that period.

1. This report is an independent assessment of Collective Acting Studio ('Collective') about its compliance with the Office for Students' (OfS) initial conditions of registration for quality (condition B7) and standards (condition B8).
2. The report shows the findings of an independent assessment team. **It does not represent a decision by the OfS about the provider's compliance with these conditions of registration.**
3. The OfS's regulatory framework sets out that a provider wishing to access the benefits of registration must register with the OfS.¹
4. As part of the registration process, the OfS must assess whether a provider satisfies the initial conditions of registration, including initial conditions B7 (quality) and B8 (standards).
5. Collective intends to deliver a single course: Bachelor of Arts in Acting. This will be delivered through a validation arrangement with Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh. The

¹ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/.

arrangement means that Queen Margaret University will be the awarding body for the course that Collective delivers.²

6. In accordance with the guidance on registering with the OfS (Regulatory advice 3)³, the OfS decided that it was necessary to undertake an assessment visit to Collective to gather evidence and provide advice to inform the OfS's decision about whether the initial conditions B7 and B8 are satisfied. The OfS decided that this assessment should be undertaken by assessors able to provide expert academic judgement.
7. The purpose of the assessment is to provide advice to the OfS to enable the OfS to decide whether initial conditions B7 and B8 are satisfied and whether there is any regulatory risk
8. The evidence from the assessment informs the OfS's decisions about whether to register Collective and, if registered, whether any mitigation is necessary.
9. The OfS appointed an assessment team that consisted of two academic expert assessors and a member of OfS staff. The team was asked to give its advice and judgement about Collective's compliance with initial conditions B7 and B8.
10. The assessment team considered a range of information submitted by Collective as part of its application for registration.
11. The team visited Collective in November 2023 and toured the premises. During the visit it met with all but one of the board members, the leadership team, permanent and freelance teaching staff, students on the current part-time course, and technical staff. Collective procures some equipment and technical support for students from an external partner. The team met this partner during the visit.
12. In respect of initial condition B7, based on the information it considered, the assessment team's view is that Collective:
 - a. has credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with condition B1 from the date of registration,
 - b. has credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with condition B2 from the date of registration, and
 - c. has credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with condition B4 from the date of registration.
13. In respect of initial condition B8, based on the information it considered, the assessment team's view is that:

² Validation enables a provider to deliver higher education when it might not otherwise have the expertise and resources to create new courses itself, or have the powers to make the award.

³ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-3-registration-of-english-higher-education-providers-with-the-ofs/.

- a. the standards set in respect of any relevant awards granted to students who complete a higher education course that Collective intends to provide, if it is registered, appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards.

Introduction and background

14. Collective Acting Studio Ltd applied to register with the OfS with the intention of achieving registration in the 2023-24 academic year. It began trading in February 2022 by offering short courses to aspiring and professional actors. It launched a part-time actor training programme in September 2022, followed by a Youth Academy in January 2023. Collective has plans to launch a three-year, full-time higher education course from January 2024. This will be a Bachelor of Arts Acting degree which will receive its first students in January 2024. The degree is to be delivered in partnership with Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, following a validation event formalising the agreement on 24 March 2023. Students will be directly registered with, and taught by, Collective.
15. Collective intends to launch the Bachelor of Arts Acting degree with 16 students, increasing to an annual intake of 30 students with a projected retention rate of 92 per cent, year-on-year, for each cohort. The first students will start their study in January 2024, with the teaching year running from January to August. An academic calendar for this compressed delivery was provided to the assessment team. This compressed calendar contains the same number of teaching weeks with a one week inter-semester break and a reduced summer break. The cohort will then follow the standard academic year from year two. Subsequent intakes will start in September each year.
16. Collective is housed in purpose-refurbished premises in North London near Finsbury Park. The premises are leased from the local authority on a peppercorn rent. It shares the building with other entities, some of which pay Collective for accommodation or use.
17. Collective has a mission to increase access for students from groups who have traditionally been underrepresented within the performing arts industry, specifically in terms of ethnicity, disability and socioeconomic background. It 'aspire[s] to play a key role in rebalancing society, by training the actors, storytellers and artistic leaders of the future who – through the stories they will go on to tell – can help reshape our cultural and social consciousness'. Collective's values are founded on the principles of diversity, accessibility, inclusion, community, and autonomy. The senior leadership team have sought input and support from a varied group of organisations and networks to inform the development of their strategy to meet these aspirations.
18. Collective sets minimum criteria for entry to the programme. In addition, it plans a two-phase audition process with all applicants submitting a recorded audition tape with some invited to progress to a further audition stage prior to final selection.
19. Collective is governed by a six-person board of directors, all of whom have experience in the acting industry or in business. Some of the directors are shareholders, but the majority of shares are owned by the chief executive officer who is the proposed accountable officer.⁴ The senior leadership team consists of the chief executive officer, the disability consultant, the heads of movement and voice, the youth academy manager and the industry liaison lead.
20. There is a small cohort of permanent teaching staff and of professional service staff with plans to grow teaching and support staff numbers in line with the expansion of the student

⁴ The accountable officer is a person, normally the head of the provider, who reports to the OfS on behalf of the provider.

cohort. Much of the teaching will be provided by freelance staff, all of whom are experienced actors and actor trainers. Three heads of movement, voice, and film and television lead the academic delivery, all of whom will also teach as well as manage the institution.

Assessment process

Initial condition B7: Quality

21. Collective submitted a Quality Plan and supporting evidence, as required by the OfS's guidance for provider's seeking registration (Regulatory advice 3).⁵
22. The assessment team sought further written evidence from Collective on 13, 17 and 30 October and 21 December 2023 and undertook an assessment visit on 7 and 8 November 2023. The assessment team met with the governing body, senior leadership team, teaching staff, staff from a partner providing technical resources and a range of students studying on the current vocational part-time professional acting course. It assessed physical and digital resources. Collective provided access to the virtual learning environment (VLE) from 7 November 2023 for the duration of the assessment visit.
23. The assessment team used this evidence to provide advice about whether Collective satisfied condition B7. The assessment team considered whether Collective had credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with conditions of registration B1, B2 and B4.
24. At the point of assessment Collective was not running any higher education courses and the assessment team was therefore unable to assess any student work to inform its advice on Collective's ability to comply with the relevant conditions.

Initial condition B8: Standards

25. Collective submitted information relevant to the course it intends to provide if registered, including course documentation, programme specifications and module outlines.⁶
26. It did not submit evidence of student achievement in relation to the course as it had not yet started delivering the course to students.
27. The 'sector-recognised standards' are set out in a document published by the OfS.⁷ These set out the standards that all registered providers are required to meet and were used by the assessment team for its assessment.
28. Collective intends to deliver a single Level 6 course, a Bachelor of Arts (BA) Acting. In providing advice to the OfS in respect of condition B8, the assessment team considered all relevant information regarding the course. All other provision delivered by Collective was not in scope for this assessment.

⁵ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-3-registration-of-english-higher-education-providers-with-the-ofs/.

⁶ See Annex I, 'Guidance for providers on the assessment of initial condition B8 (standards)' at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-3-registration-of-english-higher-education-providers-with-the-ofs/.

⁷ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/sector-recognised-standards/.

29. The subset of the sector-recognised standards the OfS has identified as applicable for this assessment are:
- A.1: Qualifications at each level
 - A.2: Volumes of credit
 - A.3: Qualification descriptors, specifically:
 - A.3.1 Descriptor for a qualification at Level 4
 - A.3.2 Descriptor for a qualification at Level 5
 - A.3.3 Descriptor for a qualification at Level 6
 - B: Classification descriptors for Level 6 bachelors' degrees.
30. The assessment team considered the evidence available to provide advice on whether CAS complied with the following requirements set out in condition of registration B8: that CAS demonstrates, in a credible manner, that any standards to be set and/or applied in respect of any relevant awards granted to students who complete a higher education course provided by, or on behalf of, CAS (if registered), whether or not CAS is the awarding body, appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards.

Part 1: Assessment of condition B7: Quality

31. This section sets out advice on whether the provider has credible plans that would enable the provider, if registered, to comply with conditions B1, B2 and B4 from the date of registration.

Condition B1: Academic experience

Does Collective have credible plans to ensure that the students registered on each higher education course receive a high quality academic experience (B1.2)?

32. The assessment team considered Collective's plans to ensure that students registered on each higher education course will receive a high quality academic experience. In doing so, the assessment team first considered the requirements set out below at B1.3 alongside any other information relevant to ensuring a high quality academic experience.

Does Collective have credible plans to ensure that each higher education course is up to date (B1.3.a)?

Advice to the OfS

33. The assessment team's view is that Collective had credible plans to ensure that each course is up-to-date. It articulated reasonable and timely steps to monitor and review, to ensure the course content remains up-to-date.

Reasoning

34. The course development process included discussions, reflected in Collective's Business Plan analyses and in the Validation Document (which describes Collective's arrangement with its validating partner), with a wide range of industry figures which gave confidence that it was appropriately informed by current industrial and professional developments. These figures represent a range of organisations across stage and screen and included:

- The Royal Court Theatre
- Netflix
- Theatre Deli
- Company Three
- Theatre Royal Stratford East
- The Boury Academy
- Numerous leading casting directors, including Amy Jackson, Des Hamilton, Isabella Odoffin, Tara Ahmed
- Access All Areas

- Dark Horse Theatre Company
35. For a vocationally focused course these consultation activities are particularly important.
36. The Quality Plan, in which the provider is required to describe its plans for ongoing compliance with the ongoing conditions B1, B2 and B4 related to quality, also outlined the June 2023 market-research focused engagement that took place with experienced academics at other institutions. This consultation gave confidence that the course was up-to-date with respect to both subject matter developments and developments in teaching and learning, including learning resources. Collective articulated clearly the impact of these consultations in the course, including in the proportion of the course dedicated to screen and digital performance. Aspects of performance in this area covered:
- motion capture and voicing for animation
 - the inclusion of showreels
 - voice reels and self-tapes for audition
 - a breadth of skills, including editing, screen writing, and producing social media content.
37. The course design, as described in the BA Acting Validation Document, had been led by the senior leadership team (SLT) which had a track record of developing and delivering higher education acting courses, as demonstrated in the curriculum vitae (CVs) of team members and explored further in meetings with the assessment team during the site visit. The SLT will retain oversight of course development though; the Teaching Committee (which is chaired by the CEO and reports to the SLT), the regular SLT meetings and through the SLT members' own teaching practice. Members of the SLT were appropriately qualified, as demonstrated by their CVs. Collective had measures in place to ensure they maintained an understanding of the currency of the provision as detailed in the action points and timelines in the Teaching and Learning Strategy.
38. Members of the SLT are appointed on part-time employment contracts with the express intent that they retain professional practice to inform their teaching and course development. Members of the SLT plan to work with industry partners, according to the Validation Document and the business plan, to ensure course content remains up-to-date. There were also structures in place to keep the course current, including oversight by Collective's board of directors, which contained current academics and practitioners. Collective will work with its validating partner in developing and reviewing course content as determined in the Validation Document and in the Teaching and Learning Strategy.
39. Collective's stated mission is to address the underrepresentation of certain groups within the acting profession. This mission informed how it planned to ensure that its course meets the OfS's requirements that course content is appropriately informed by industrial and professional developments. The course, as set out in the module descriptors and Validation Document, aligned with current debates about representation and inclusivity within the acting profession. Course modules included contemporary content focussing on acting for screen and digital performance and relevant current industry practices, such as pitching and marketing. The course gave students the opportunity to use current technologies, such as studio theatre space, cameras and audio-visual recording equipment.

40. Collective had some recent experience of running short professional courses, which had met target recruitment rates and demonstrated contemporary content. The professional courses and part-time courses directly responded to industry and the experience gained by Collective in delivering these had informed the development of the Acting bachelor's degree. These short courses, with the teaching staff's continuing professional acting experiences, enabled staff to retain connections with industry professionals. They also provided a feedback route that helped to ensure the course content was up-to-date through informal interaction and representation on the Student Senate.
41. Its professional short courses, and youth and professional actor training courses, allied to the experiences of staff in leading and managing higher education courses in other institutions and their professional acting experience, enabled Collective to understand the needs of aspiring actors and to position its course as meeting the requirements of up-to-date provision. The development of the new course drew on a review of other providers' offerings and the experiences of the board and SLT, meaning that developments in teaching and learning and contemporary resources were embedded in the course.
42. Focus group minutes and a student survey demonstrated Collective has taken steps to understand prospective student views on degree-level acting provision. There was also evidence of a thorough examination of competitors' provision with an analysis of competitors' offerings and of its own provision.
43. Collective had policies for feedback processes, for modules and for the course, as demonstrated in the Feedback Guidance for Staff and in the Example Feedback Template, as well as oversight by the validating partner. Both of these documents set out an opportunity for two way feedback which should support course updating. The validating partner runs similar courses so will be cognisant of the environment and the success of its own provision and processes for monitoring as a yardstick by which to evaluate Collective's performance.
44. The BA Acting course is new, and so is not based upon legacy course provision. However, it is aligned to the professional training that Collective provides which had allowed it to test its approach. The BA course had many examples of inclusion of contemporary issues, such as digital content and social media, which gave it currency for the contemporary acting context, as demonstrated by the Collective's mission and its enactment via its Teaching and Learning Strategy.
45. The course pedagogy was representative of current thinking and practice. It used authentic assessment and focused on developing students as independent self-reflective practitioners. To achieve this, small-group practical workshops were the main mode of teaching, with students encouraged to reflect frequently on how to apply their knowledge and understanding within the creative process. There was a plan for how the course would be reviewed and updated, with the chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee responsible for this. The Teaching and Learning Strategy was articulated around six 'pillars' each of which contained action points, the staff responsible, and a timeline for delivery. The plan stated:

'The implementation of this strategy will be reviewed by the Teaching and Learning Committee no later than August 2024, after which, the assessments made on the success of the strategy will be used to inform a longer three-year plan for 2024-25 to 2027-28.'

46. This plan involved students, including the Student Senate that would include members from Collective's professional short courses, and youth and professional actor training. The ongoing involvement of students in the review of courses will enable Collective to monitor how changes to programme are experienced by students. Prospective students will choose to apply to a course, and then attend the course, if they perceive that it has suitable contemporary content.
47. While most staff did not have formal teaching qualifications, many had extensive experience of teaching in higher education. The validating partner had offered to immediately support Collective staff to obtain higher education teaching qualifications. The assessment team's view was that, assuming the plans for staff development with the validating partner come to fruition, the ratio of staff with and without formal teaching qualifications would improve and this concern could be mitigated. If it is not mitigated, this may impact on teaching quality, including the ability to access up-to-date pedagogic approaches, in the degree programme. At the point of assessment the validating partner had recently made this offer to Collective and therefore it did not have detailed plans for how the training would be implemented. However, Collective had identified the SMT mentee member as the priority candidate for receiving the training. Further consideration is given to the appropriateness of staff qualifications in the assessment of B2.
48. The business plan and the Teaching and Learning Plan demonstrated the extent of use of appropriate contemporary resources in terms of technical equipment and pedagogic methods. The resource plans aligned with the course expansion plans. However, the move from 16 students to 81 over three years will stretch the current teaching and technical resources. Collective had plans in place – identified in the List of Resources - Current and Planned, and the Collaboration Agreement – to increase its resources. Collective's validation agreement provided access to the university's library resources and its VLE along with a commitment to acquire texts added to the Collective reading list that it did not already hold. This augmented Collective's own library and internal resources. Access to up-to-date resources support up-to-date provision. Further consideration of Collective's resources is provided in more detail in the assessment of condition B2.
49. There was a revalidation process in the agreement with the validating partner which will prompt reflection on course content and outcomes. The Validation Document set out that the partner would also provide external examiners for the course, who would be independent of Collective, and a process of annual programme review which would be subject to committee scrutiny by the validating partner. This included the provision of an action plan and updates on progress against the previous year's plan. This was intended to support oversight of quality and sharing of best practice which would enable the validating partner to comment on the quality and currency of the course and set expectations for actions in response.
50. The process for peer observation of teaching staff was robust. The observers will be senior Collective employees who have substantial relevant experience, and the process involves discussion and reflection by the teaching staff. Peer observation will ensure that there is observation, comments and assessment from a senior staff member and reflection from the teaching staff together with a development plan. The reliance on the small group of senior staff to undertake peer observations will create a significant draw on their capacity. Peer observation will be time-consuming given the length of the teaching sessions. However, as

more staff gain teaching qualifications there will be a larger pool of peer assessors which will allow this workload to be more widely shared.

Does Collective have credible plans to ensure that each higher education course provides educational challenge (B1.3.b)

Advice to the OfS

51. The assessment team's view is that Collective had credible plans to ensure that courses provide appropriate educational challenge. The documentation available demonstrated the rigour and difficulty reasonably expected of higher education courses, in the context of their subject matter and level.

Reasoning

52. The course, in the view of the assessment team, provided a challenge that was no less than the minimum level of rigour and difficulty reasonably expected of the higher education course, in the context of the subject matter and level of the course. The course was aligned with a range of external reference points and had been developed with appropriate industry input and engagement. The level of rigour was displayed through both the level of challenge and workload. The course, in terms of teaching load and assessment load and challenge, was in line with what might have been reasonably expected in the experience of the assessment team.

53. Educational challenge was demonstrated in the rigour and difficulty of the course that Collective intended to provide, with the currently validated course aligned with the sector-recognised standards qualification descriptors for Level 6. For example, the sector-recognised standards have a requirement for students to demonstrate 'qualities needed for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility, and decision-making in complex and unpredictable circumstances'. This aligned closely with the educational aims of the course, which were to:

'develop the practical skills needed to become a professional actor; foster their ability to devise, perform and produce original work; become a self-reflective practitioner: someone who can think, who can write, and who can develop their own work; and have the option of exploring the skills necessary for employment in related areas of the creative industries'.

54. The quality assurance processes described by Collective were credible in ensuring that the courses would provide educational challenge. There were extensive and detailed processes for module development, observation of ongoing delivery, end-of-module reports, annual monitoring, reporting to the validator, as well as a set of Collective committees which will review teaching.
55. Collective's leadership team had long experience of higher education teaching and management allied with practical acting experience. The teaching staff were experienced professionals, and all had teaching (many in higher education) or training experience, though some lacked formal teaching qualifications. Supported by its validator, Collective intended for more staff to gain recognised higher education teaching qualifications. Participation in gaining formal educational qualifications would allow staff to reflect on their own teaching

practice, to learn from others and to become part of higher education teaching networks. Collective had well-articulated plans in the Quality Plan for course development, including oversight by the SLT and board. Collective's validating partner ran a successful portfolio of similar courses and the extent of educational challenge in Collective's course was also tested during the validation process.

56. The Validation Document detailed the programme learning outcomes in terms of knowledge and understanding, intellectual skills, professional and practical skills and transferrable skills at each level aligned to the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Dance, Drama and Performance. Each module had a number of module learning outcomes attached to it. Some of the assessment criteria in the draft module specifications for the BA Acting were vague. For example, the draft module specification Assessment Brief - Oral Assessment – Movement lacked specific assessment criteria. Reflection had not been specifically included in the assessment criteria in nine of the 12 modules, particularly those that were practice-focused. However the practice-based approach embedded a process of continuous feedback and self-reflection. The lack of clarity in some assessment criteria made it more difficult to judge the educational challenge of some aspects of the course.
57. The focus of staff, by virtue of their prior experience on professional practice rather than pedagogy, may have limited the breadth of educational challenge in some parts of the course. There appeared to be a lack of support for research, essay writing and similar skills, which may exacerbate the challenge of some modules. Genre in Film and Recording had 50 per cent of the assessment as a critical reflection, Realism for Stage and Screen was 20 per cent critical reflection and Public Production assessment was 30 per cent critical reflection. The course focused on the practice of acting, and the course content contained critical reflection through practice, but placed relatively less emphasis on critical thinking, analysis or reflection through writing, as demonstrated by the module specifications. This may limit the educational challenge of some modules and the course overall. There was limited evidence of teaching research and study skills in preparation for writing long essays. However, Collective's validating partner was providing access to study skills support. Overall, the course represented sufficient educational challenge. It was designed for aspiring professional actors and had been developed based on a rigorous analysis of the needs of the cohort.
58. Many assessments featured group work. Collective was clear that there were no group marks and that individual contributions were assessed. The process for ensuring transparent allocation of individual marks within a group process were not explicitly articulated, and a clear description of the process would have helped to give greater confidence that all students will achieve the minimum level of rigour and difficulty. Group work will always entail differing educational challenge for individual group members. This is acceptable as long as staff ensure that within and between modules, students are all equally challenged, and as overseen by the Teaching and Learning Committee.
59. There was conflicting information about the permitted number of reassessment attempts available to students. The validating partner's regulations seemed to imply there was one reassessment opportunity and the Collective Student Handbook stated there would be three attempts. Collective acknowledged the discrepancy and planned to ensure that information consistent with the validating partner's on regulations was provided to students.

Does Collective have credible plans to ensure that each higher education course is coherent (B1.3.c)?

Advice to the OfS

60. The assessment team's view was that Collective had credible plans to ensure that courses will be coherent because it articulated specific and realistic plans.

Reasoning

61. The BA Acting course consisted of a set of core modules, with no optional modules, that formed a three-year ordinary degree. The programme specification identified that the modules were grouped by year and theme, and built on each other in a coherent way. This was demonstrated in the Quality Plan through the provision of an appropriate breadth of course content consistent with the requirements of aspiring professional actors with a focus on digital and screen, as outlined in the course mission. Collective is a small provider delivering a single higher education course that is new, which was its rationale for not offering optional modules. It has planned to deliver a course structure where all elements would be compulsory and where it could ensure each module, semester or year would build on the next rather than trying to include diversity of provision and not being able to support this sufficiently. The Quality Plan and the module descriptors demonstrated that course content follows a developmental path. Students establish foundational skills at the start of the course and build on them as they progress. The course encompasses practical and academic elements that are taught in an appropriate order.
62. The pathway through the modules was appropriate. The Teaching and Learning Plan pointed to ways in which optionality was to be provided within modules rather than by module through the allowance for student directed content and deliverables in practice-based learning to meet learning outcomes. In addition, the course content will be made available to prospective students, including the optionality within modules and the opportunity for students to develop specific interests as part of their study. There was a clear development path through the three years of study, and modules were grouped by year and theme. They also build on each other in a coherent way.
63. The staff complement, as outlined in the Staff Recruitment Plan, was small and few of the permanent staff or the freelance staff had teaching qualifications. The staff had extensive experience in providing professional acting training as evidenced by their CVs, so the practical elements of the course were likely to be well-delivered. Some staff had higher education tutoring, teaching and course leadership experience, while others described themselves as actors or actor trainers. Collective recognised that assisting its staff to obtain higher education teaching qualifications was beneficial to give them the opportunity to learn about higher education practices, reflect on their own teaching and to become part of higher education teaching networks. The validating partner had made its teaching training available to Collective's staff. Staff who were trained in higher education teaching and learning will be better able to devise, revise and deliver a coherent higher education course.
64. The small cohort of teaching staff may find it difficult to ensure that modules are sufficiently different, in content but also in teaching style. Some modules, for example Creative

Ensemble, covered many topics, some of which were substantial in their own right. The topic 'pitching for funds', for instance, could only be covered superficially given the amount of other material to be studied. There will always be judgements to be made around depth and breadth for topics included in modules to ensure the course is coherent.

Does Collective have credible plans to ensure that each higher education course is effectively delivered (B1.3.d)?

Advice to the OfS

65. The assessment team's view is that Collective had credible plans to ensure that courses will be effectively delivered because it demonstrated adequate plans for delivery, teaching and assessment, and the resources to support that. There was an appropriate balance between delivery methods as the modules involved lectures, group work, and performance. There was an appropriate balance of directed and independent study. These resources will need to grow as student numbers increase but the provider had credible plans for this.

Reasoning

66. Collective's course will be delivered largely in person, supported by a VLE interface provided by the validating partner, as outlined in the Student Handbook and Validation Document. Collective staff had populated, and will maintain, the VLE content. The course consisted of a series of modules each of which was assessed. The course was constructed to contain academic and practical aspects and included a variety of teaching approaches and a mix of assessments both as a cohort and taught in smaller groups. The Quality Plan outlined a variety of teaching approaches, including:

'small-group practical workshops, industry-focused lectures, seminars, peer feedback and analysis of in-class performances, research tasks, theatre trips, structured group discussions, reflective assignments, masterclasses and a range of formative assessments'.

67. This variety aligned well with the course mission, as described in the Quality Plan, of developing students' potential to become professional actors. There was an appropriate balance of independent study as well as guided practical development for the students. Students will have access to the validating partner's library and digital resources and to its VLE.
68. The assessment team explored the ways in which the course would be delivered and the effectiveness of this. Some modules in the course had multiple practical assessments which would require significant private study and rehearsal time to prepare and deliver performances. Given the practice-based nature of Collective's provision, some elements of educational challenge, and hence the effective delivery of the course, would derive from the private study aspects and the research and skills developed for rehearsals. There was a risk that students would find the time-management required to meet the practical elements of the course challenging. However, in the assessment team's view the credit levels were appropriate to the amount of time a student would require to complete the modules.
69. The required teaching hours for most modules were typical of undergraduate acting courses while the hours for some modules were lower than expected for a course in this discipline.

The requirements for students to rehearse and perform multiple productions were substantial. In the 'Public Productions' module, for example, students were required to rehearse and perform two full-length plays as part of their three assessments. This appeared to be challenging from a workload perspective, but less so from an educational perspective. Collective planned to provide extensive student support, as set out in the integrated student services section of the Teaching and Learning Strategy which may assist students in managing their time and the balance of academic and practical activities. The Teaching and Learning Strategy included, time management, study skills, and research techniques. The practice-based elements of the course were integrated with academic elements, demonstrating effective delivery.

70. Assessments clustered around weeks 11 to 14 of the modules though this was largely unavoidable but it may exacerbate the time-management challenges for students, and at the expense of educational challenge. However, assessments needed to be scheduled at the appropriate place within the module structure and inevitably this would be more towards the conclusion of the module, once teaching has taken place.
71. There was an intention to allow for blended delivery of some modules in the future. This aligned with the Collective mission of supporting disadvantaged students to enrol on the course, as discussed in the assessment visit during the meeting with the SLT. Some elements of the course were less suited to virtual engagement, as acting is generally a collective activity and many of the modules were assessed by live performances. This would be problematic to present in a mixed-mode fashion and therefore Collective will need to consider the impact for both individual students and the wider student body in offering this to mitigate the impact on the effectiveness of delivery. When discussed in the site visit meeting with the SLT, it was not clear that Collective had completed its consideration of how a blended approach might be implemented, if this were identified as the best way to support a student to access part of the course.
72. The course will be delivered by a small team of permanent staff and a set of freelance, sessional lecturers. Students may not have easy access to freelance staff who have other commitments. There was a risk that modules do not appear distinctive as the same staff may be involved in more than one. Having staff from different backgrounds would better support competing perspectives and reflect the market and support challenge. Of the 12 modules five were co-ordinated by the programme leader and two each by a disability consultant and industry liaison. Three others co-ordinated one each. The module descriptors did not identify any teaching staff for the modules, only the module coordinator, so it was not possible to identify how teaching staff were allocated to modules. This concern was somewhat mitigated by the course structure which had only three 40 credit modules in years one and three.
73. The number of teaching staff was small and the rapid expansion of student numbers from 16 to 81 would challenge the delivery model. Most staff were on fractional contracts and engaged in non-teaching activities, such as student support or administration, in addition to their teaching. This, coupled with the small cohort of professional service staff, will make delivery challenging. There will potentially be multiple single points of failure which creates a risk for the quality of the course delivery due to the over-reliance on a small number of individuals. Some senior staff were still to be appointed and may not be in post much before the start of the course, if even then. There was a risk to effective delivery if insufficient staff are in post when required. The plans were discussed in the assessment visit meetings with

the SMT. They were outlined in the List of Resources Current and Planned and in the Staff Recruitment Plan. They are also part of the Business Plan. The plans were credible but will need to be delivered.

74. There was little reflection and critical thinking explicit in some of the module and assessment description. Three module descriptors, in the course out of twelve, identified critical reflection as part of the written assessment. Much of the assessment was via performance, though cognitive and metacognitive skills, such as critical reflection, could be integral to practice. This heavy weighting towards the assessment of practical and performance skills reflected the mission and professional focus of the course. However, any new modules or assessment changes will need to ensure that this practical weighting does not become more pronounced. If this were to happen, the course would then over-emphasise the practical at the expense of the critical and reflective elements. This would mean the course would not meet sector-recognised standards around cognitive skills and therefore impact on the effectiveness of the course delivery.
75. The students will be generally divided into two groups of up to 15 students. Each group will need sufficient resources, simultaneously, to rehearse and perform for delivery to be effective. The provision of technical resources will need to increase as student numbers increase. There are plans for this to happen but this will become more acute as students enter the second year and six 20 credit modules are running in addition to the first year. Effective delivery relies on an effective infrastructure and effective resources.

Does Collective have credible plans to ensure that each higher education course, as appropriate to the subject matter of the course, requires students to develop relevant skills (B1.3.e)?

Advice to the OfS

76. The assessment team's view is that Collective had credible plans to ensure that courses will require students to develop relevant skills. The courses encompassed and assessed a variety of skills, including practical, cognitive, and transferable, as well as professional competences, as expected by the acting industry. These skills are discussed under classification descriptors in part 2, section B.

Reasoning

77. Collective's plans detailing the modules and support for students to develop relevant skills were credible. Collective had substantial background experience in training professional actors and was running youth, part-time and short acting courses which were operating successfully, as identified in the Business Plan and the Quality Plan. Collective had a cohort of permanent staff who were experienced and knowledgeable in acting and acting training. It used freelance, sessional staff who were also actors and trainers.
78. The modules comprising the course were contemporary, well thought out and the delivery sequence was appropriate. The Quality Plan identified that 'each semester has an overarching theme that unites the content studied during that period'. The modules, as detailed in the module descriptors, covered all the areas that might have been seen in

offerings by other established providers with more emphasis on screen, digital and social media than in many, including the Digital Creator module and the Independent Filmmaker module. The content that the focus group with prospective students surfaced as desired seemed to be reflected in the course content and relevant skills will be developed.

79. A key module of 40 credits at level three was entitled 'Entering the Industry'. This provided an excellent basis for aspiring actors. However, this may have been less useful for those who decide to follow alternative career paths given its focus, as discussed in the assessment of plans for compliance with condition B2.
80. Two issues emerged from the Business and Teaching plans and the staff CVs provided. First was the lack of higher education teaching qualifications in the staff cohort. There were plans to address this which would allow staff to gain relevant higher education teaching qualifications and understand better the skills that are relevant to higher education students.
81. Second, was the lack of acknowledgement that while many students aspired to work as actors, opportunities are few. The course as planned may not provide students with the skills they may need to navigate an alternative career or to manage a portfolio of activities while developing their acting careers. Clearly, most of the staff had portfolios of work that included acting, teaching and other activities, so they should have the insights to assist students in developing relevant skills in these areas. The teaching of wider skills was covered in modules such as Creative Ensemble, which covered pitching for funds, but this was one small part of the module. The content of the course will, however, develop relevant skills for a degree in acting. Pillar 4 of the Teaching and Learning Plan described the industry-focused teaching aspect of the course which would develop students' transferrable skills. This pillar included assessments that mimic real-world professional experiences, such as auditions, mentoring, partnerships with professional acting organisations and developing of networks.
82. The Teaching and Learning Strategy placed an emphasis on employability. However, this was focused on employability within the acting profession. It did not reflect that many actors manage a portfolio of activities during their acting careers, and that many will not remain as actors. The Quality Plan stated that students would be 'self-sufficient upon graduation' but this was contestable if Collective's graduates do not seek to become actors or cannot sustain themselves through acting work alone. Collective was seeking membership of a scheme which will benefit students in developing their professional networks and getting noticed. The assessment team understood that Collective needed to maintain students' focus on becoming successful actors, and that placing greater emphasis on non-acting employment might reduce the ability to prepare students to enter the acting profession. This may, however, disadvantage students who do not become professional actors. In time, student progression data and graduate destinations data will allow Collective to understand better the career progression of its students. The Validation Document detailed the 22 transferable skills students will learn across the three levels of the course. These were almost exclusively couched in terms of acting, although marketing and entrepreneurship featured. Skills such as leadership, problem solving, data analysis were not listed. However, the nature of the course will engender transferrable skills, such as communications, team working, time management and empathy.
83. As identified in other sections, there was little reflection and critical thinking in some of the earlier modules and assessment descriptions, which, allied with little research or essay-

writing skills, may mean that students complete the course with fewer transferable skills than they should. Three modules in the course identified critical reflection as part of the assessment. Genre in Film and Recording had 50 per cent of its assessment as critical reflection, Realism for Stage and Screen was assessed 20 per cent by critical reflection while Public Productions was 30 per cent assessed by critical reflection. There was some further assessment that involved writing – Realism for Stage and Screen was 20 per cent character biography, Entering the Industry involved a written personal development plan worth 50 per cent of the marks, while Shakespeare Reimagined required the presentation of an original script that had been developed. All other assessment was via performance, either solo or group-based aside from the investor deck required for the Independent Film Maker module. This heavy weighting towards performance and practice reflected the mission of the course. However, any new modules or assessment changes will need to ensure a balance is maintained that is appropriate to the vocational nature of the course.

84. It was unclear from the teaching and quality plans how students will be allocated tasks within their groups for group assignments. There was a risk, unless this is led by the module leader, that students may always select or be given roles at which they are best suited but then they neglect to hone their lesser proficiencies. This was discussed during the assessment visit with the teaching and learning staff. Collective said they relied on module leaders to ensure that there was an equitable distribution of roles and tasks among group participants. The course did support the development of professional skills and the Teaching and Learning Strategy document identified many ways in which students would be supported, such as assessments that mirror the real-world acting context, professional actor mentors, and industry showcases.
85. Collective had planned to acquire the minimum amount of technical resources required to deliver the course up front with the intention that it would expand the resources in line with demand, allowing it to access the most industry current equipment and software. This should allow the course to be delivered effectively and relevant skills to be taught. However, there was a risk in this approach that could result in insufficient access to resources, which may inhibit all students from having sufficient access and time to develop their technical skills. While there were plans for each group to have access to resources such as cameras, the availability of such technical resource for independent rehearsals may be limited. Collective had commitment from its technical support partnership for obtaining temporary access to additional technical resources. As long as the plans are delivered, then the assessment team's view is that there will be sufficient technical resources to enable students to develop relevant skills.
86. The student support function consisted of staff on fractional contracts and so may struggle to provide adequate support to all those who need it, especially given the Collective mission to recruit students from underrepresented groups who may require more support than other students. The integrated student support described in the Teaching and Learning Plan was impressive, but it is to be delivered by a freelance Learning Difference Coordinator, a 0.4 full-time equivalent (FTE) Student Welfare Officer, the 0.4 FTE industry liaison and the 0.4 FTE disability consultant. The fractional availability of key student support staff might limit their availability and accessibility to students. There is likely to be further demand on this support in relation to Collective's aims regarding the student demographics it will attract. The teaching staff will have a central role in providing student support, and it is part of their employment contracts, but the staff will have other priorities. Again, the current supply and

the plans for additional recruitment, if delivered, will enable Collective students to acquire sufficient relevant skills.

B1 conclusions

Does Collective have credible plans that would enable the provider, if registered, to comply with condition B1 from the date of registration?

87. The assessment team considered that, overall, Collective had credible plans to ensure, if registered, that students on each higher education course proposed would receive a high quality academic experience.
88. The assessment team noted that the requirement of condition B1 is expressed as a principle that can be satisfied in different ways. The assessment team was of the view that the evidence received was sufficient for it to make an overall view in respect of initial condition B1. Considering its observations at B1.3.a, B1.3b, B1.3c, B1.3d and B1.3e above, and the reasoning contained therein, the assessment team's view was that Collective had credible plans to ensure students will receive a high quality academic experience.
89. While the assessment team identified some risks, these did not detract from the credibility of Collective's plans to comply with condition B1.
90. This assessment is based on the evidence that the intended higher education provision is up-to-date and educationally challenging. Collective has experience of running short professional courses, youth and part-time professional actor training which allows it to understand the needs of aspiring actors. The course content and pedagogy was representative of current thinking and practice in the discipline, and there was a credible plan for how the course will be reviewed and updated with the involvement of students. The plans demonstrated the extent of use of appropriate contemporary resources for a high quality academic experience.
91. Collective has plans in place to ensure the courses delivered are coherent. It plans to offer a single higher education course, BA Acting. The course will consist of a set of modules, with no options, that form a validated three-year ordinary degree. The modules are grouped by year, and by theme, and build on each other in a coherent way. The assessment team considered that there was an appropriate balance between breadth and depth of content and the subjects and skills would be taught in an appropriate order and build on each other throughout the course; and key concepts would be introduced at the appropriate point in the course content. The pathway through the modules will be appropriate.
92. Collective had plans in place to ensure the courses are effectively delivered. The course will be delivered largely in person, supported by a VLE. The course consisted of a series of modules each of which was assessed. Students have access to the validating partner's library and digital resources and to its VLE. The physical, technical and staffing resources will need to grow as student numbers increase but the provider had credible plans for this. The Teaching and Learning Plan and the Quality Plan demonstrated that there was an appropriate balance between delivery methods, which involved lectures, seminars, group

work and practical study. There was an appropriate balance between directed and independent study or research, as relevant to the level of the course.

93. The course required students to develop relevant skills. The planned modules and support for students were credible. Collective had substantial background experience in training professional actors and was successfully running youth, part-time and short acting courses. A cohort of permanent and freelance staff were experienced and knowledgeable in acting and acting training, which will enable them to pass their skills and experience on to students.

Condition B2: Resources, support, and student engagement

Does Collective have credible plans for how each cohort of students would receive resources which are sufficient for the purposes of ensuring:

- i. A high quality academic experience for those students**
- ii. Those students succeed in and beyond higher education (B2.2.a)?**

Advice to the OfS

94. The assessment team noted some concerns in respect of Collective's staff, teaching space and technical resources given its plans to grow student numbers. However, the assessment team's view overall is that Collective had credible plans that set out steps to ensure that each cohort of students would receive resources sufficient to ensure a high quality academic experience and for those students to succeed in and beyond higher education.

Reasoning

95. The physical spaces, as identified in the Business Plan and List of Resources and assessed by the assessment team, available to the higher education students were appropriate and were of high quality. Students will typically have 22 core contact hours per week with substantial independent group work. Sufficient space for this is therefore a high priority. Collective leased these physical spaces and it ran other courses in addition to the degree course using the same spaces. The higher education students will be taught as a single cohort and will undertake much of their activities in two groups. These groups will need rehearsal space. As the plans for student numbers are realised, pressures on space will increase. Collective intended to hire appropriate space nearby to expand its rehearsal space and it had identified some potential nearby spaces. The type of space described by Collective would theoretically be appropriate to the activities to be held within it. The financial information submitted indicated planning for a further cash injection in year three which would support this.
96. Teaching for many modules required technical resources such as cameras and recording equipment as well as technical support staff, as identified in the List of Resources – Current and Planned. The assessment team viewed these resources in conjunction with the planned teaching timetables provided. These resources may be stretched given the two groups of the first year cohort will need access to them simultaneously. Technical staff support was provided by a third party, as set out in a collaboration agreement. This partnership will also provide some technical resources if required. The systems of an email exchange for booking

rooms and equipment works, but a more sophisticated system will be needed as student numbers increase, to allow students to plan their use of rooms in advance for rehearsals. This was acknowledged during the in a meeting during the assessment visit demonstrating that Collective recognised this need and it has considered commercial systems solutions, though nothing had been procured.

97. Students will have access to the validating partner's library and digital resources, including the VLE, as well as to the resources on site at Collective. These resources were adequate for the start of the course. Collective had, or plans to have, one hard copy of every book on the reading list in the library; students will also have access to the validating partner's online library, which has extended its collection to include set texts where it did not already have them. However, where students do not have their own digital resources, the limited physical library resources may mean these students still find these resources difficult to access. Such resources will need to expand as student numbers grow and there are plans to enable this through increasing of on-site PCs and laptops, which are accessible for short-term loan, in successive years.
98. Each cohort of students will be generally divided into two groups of up to 15 students. To receive a high quality student experience, each group will need sufficient resources, simultaneously, to rehearse and perform. For the initial cohort the resources in place were sufficient. The provision of technical resources will need to ramp up as student numbers increase. There were plans for the technical resources to increase. These were credible as they have identified appropriate partnerships and contractors. They will need to be delivered, however, to ensure resources are sufficient going forward. Resources may become more constrained as students enter the second year when an extra six 20 credit modules will run, as identified in the Academic Calendars for 2024 onwards. Collective will need to deliver on its plans to ensure there are sufficient resources going forward.
99. Collective planned to have an impressive range of activities which will allow students to engage effectively with their chosen profession. These included mentoring, networking and guest lectures, as well as wellbeing activities. As identified in earlier sections, plans suggest that students will be very well prepared for entry to the acting profession, but less well prepared for taking on other professional roles. There were useful activities such as financial literacy workshops, but careers guidance was largely focused on becoming a professional actor rather than other career opportunities. There was support for students as detailed in the assessment of Collective's plans for compliance with condition B2. The student support section of the Teaching and Learning Plan identified the 'access riders' (its term for the agreed package of support for individual students) that will support disabled students, while Pillar 1 was dedicated to disabled student support. This involved staff training, an inclusive curriculum, student surveys, partnering with disability advocacy organisations, and provision of assisted technologies.
100. All staff were engaged in teaching, including members of the SLT. This supports a strong relationship with individual students and the sharing of experiences throughout the teaching team will enable it to gauge a holistic view of students' support needs. Student experience was overseen by the Chair of the Teaching Committee.
101. Collective planned to initially have 5.4 FTE to deliver teaching and academic support to a total cohort of 16 students. These permanent staff will be complemented by freelance staff.

This volume of staffing is low as a basis for providing sufficient direct student support – particularly so as all the permanent staff had other leadership or managerial roles and all were fractional appointments. Collective planned to nearly double staffing to 10.6 FTE staff by 2026-27 as student numbers increase. The ‘heads of’ roles are 0.4 FTE which will include a teaching requirement and a managerial role, as detailed in the job descriptions of these roles. The job descriptions of staff in leadership roles who also have teaching responsibilities did not indicate the split between the different roles. Staff with joint teaching and SLT roles had considerable and broad responsibilities that might be difficult to deliver effectively in practice without support.

102. The plans, as described in the Business Plan, Quality Plan and Teaching and Learning Plan, were specific with responsibilities allocated to named individuals. In the Teaching and Learning Plan all the actions were accompanied by a timeline for action grouped into six themes which are termed ‘pillars’. The List of Resources – Current and Planned and the Staff Recruitment update detailed resources and the plans to increase these as student numbers arise. Monitoring the delivery of action points was the responsibility of the chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee who was a member of the SLT. Collective will develop three-year plans up to 2027-28 based on the current Teaching and Learning Plan. The plans were less specific on management of staffing risks such as absence. This was explored during the assessment visit, with risks being described as managed by existing staff stepping up their activity until sufficient resources are acquired.
103. The teaching staff were all practising professionals and many had current or previous higher education experience. They will be able to develop their connections to industry into their support for students. Collective’s mission was shared by all staff and will be instilled in freelance staff through the selection and onboarding process and by the peer review of teaching.
104. Most of the teaching was delivered by freelance sessional staff who were active within the acting profession and who provided training and education in other contexts. The permanent staff had recent industry and training experience, as demonstrated by their CVs. However, the extent of professional training, as opposed to formal higher education teaching experience, of some permanent and freelance staff sits less well in a degree context. The assessment team considered the CVs of all permanent and freelance staff and had some concerns about the high proportion of staff who did not have teaching qualifications or formal teaching training.
105. Collective informed the assessment team of an arrangement it had recently agreed with its validating partner to support teaching training for its staff. The arrangement was due to start immediately. The assessment team was not provided with sight of the agreement. This agreement would enable staff to reflect on their teaching practice and to join higher education teaching networks. There were detailed plans for staff onboarding processes which should enable new staff to be inducted into the institution and ensure that new staff deliver to the mission. Collective intended to deliver actor training to a cohort and in a way which is distinct from most actor training programmes, and so it is important that all staff teaching on the course understand this.
106. There was a risk that lean managerial resources will be strained as Collective develops. The assessment team’s view is that Collective had sufficient staff to deliver its higher education

plans at the point of registration. It may, however, have underestimated demands of management and strategic activities alongside increased teaching demands as the higher education student body grows alongside its short-course, youth and part-time activities. In particular, the strategic decision that staff maintain fractional contracts to continue professional practice will impact this as staff will have conflicting demands on their time. The Staff Recruitment Plan itemised the current and pending staff complement up to early 2024 and the Quality Plan identified staff FTE across permanent and freelance staff as rising from 5.6 to 10.4 by 2026-7. It was not clear how the staff resources will be balanced longer-term without an expansion of the senior team and of the permanent teaching staff, and how Collective will manage the potential changing availability of freelance staff given its high reliance on them.

107. Collective was not able during the assessment visit to articulate how it would mitigate for this beyond referencing its current successful performance balancing these challenges to date. Given Collective's target student demographics, which will likely have higher support needs, the assessment team was not confident that resource planning had accounted for the additional draw this will place on all staff time. The assessment team is not confident that this is a sustainable working model for staff in the longer term due to the multiple demands on core staff of teaching, student support and management responsibilities and the extensive use of freelance staff. As a result staff resources may become insufficient if Collective does not promptly identify routes to address this.
108. Collective had a mission to support less advantaged students into the acting profession, as outlined in the Business Plan and the Quality Plan. It aimed 'to become the leading provider of training in the UK for actors from underrepresented groups'. It also wanted to increase the flow of disabled students into the acting profession as part of its mission. Collective employed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor, a Disability Consultant, a Student Welfare Officer, and a Learning Difference Coordinator according to its Staff Recruitment Plan. These roles were all fractional FTEs. Pillar 2 of the Teaching and Learning Strategy identified 15 action points to support disabled students. These action points included:
 - staff training
 - an inclusive curriculum
 - reasonable adjustment policies
 - partnership with disability advocacy organisations
 - accessibility riders.
109. While these plans were comprehensive their delivery may be the issue because of the low total staff FTE to deliver them. Given Collective's mission, its students may have less developed study skills and need more specialist support which will put a further strain on its staffing resources. While the validating partner will provide study skills support, it does not cover specialist support for disabled students.
110. The SLT comprised four staff, one of whom was in the role as a mentee. As the student numbers grow there will be increased need for student support and as Collective's mission is to support disabled and disadvantaged students into the acting profession, the senior team

will need to understand fully how their provision is faring aside from the formal teaching in which the SLT were active. There is a risk that the SLT resource will be limited in its capacity to provide oversight, as SLT members have fractional appointments and teaching responsibilities in addition to their management ones. Collective depended on its validating partner for the provision of study skills support to students. There is a risk that such support is not tailored, dedicated to, nor under the control of Collective, if the validating partner decides to modify its provision, notwithstanding the current validation agreement.

111. Collective had an established track record of providing training in the acting domain but not at higher education level. Academic, support and technical staff planned, and in post, had the requisite skills and experience to deliver the higher education course. However, the number of staff, their fractional-status and the risks from the lack of contingency built into staffing plans presented a risk of insufficient staffing resource. Some staff lacked academic teaching qualifications and this reflected the limited amount of critical thinking, analysis and reflection in some module content. The technical resources appeared lean, but sufficient for the initial cohort of higher education students. The electronic resources and VLE were good. There were 22 core teaching hours per week and substantial independent study and a high assessment load, so students will develop a good work ethic that will enable them to succeed in higher education. The Teaching and Learning Strategy is impressive in its promise but will be costly to deliver.

Does Collective have credible plans for how each cohort of students would receive support which is sufficient for the purposes of ensuring:

i. A high quality academic experience for those students

ii. those students succeed in and beyond higher education (B2.2.a)?

Advice to the OfS

112. The assessment team's view is that Collective had credible plans that set out the steps the provider will take to ensure that each cohort of students will receive the support they need to receive a high quality academic experience and to succeed in and beyond higher education.

Reasoning

113. Collective intended to recruit up to 16 students in the first year and to increase the student cohort to 81 students in year three, by the time the first students graduate. It had experience of offering a variety of non-degree acting training and had premises and partnerships with technical resource providers. This existing provision meant that student support structures were already in place. The plans to keep initial student numbers low will also mean support needs are manageable.
114. Student support was detailed in Pillar 5 of the Teaching and Learning Strategy and was framed as an integrated service comprising academic advice, an alumni network, work study 'programs' (sic), wellbeing and financial literacy.
115. Collective planned to initially have 5.4 FTE to deliver teaching and academic support to a total cohort of 16 students. These permanent staff will be complemented by freelance staff.

This volume of staffing is low as a basis for providing sufficient direct student support – particularly so as all the permanent staff have other leadership/managerial roles and all are fractional appointments. Collective planned to nearly double staffing to 10.6 FTE staff by 2026-27 as student numbers increase. The ‘heads of’ roles were 0.4 FTE which will include a teaching requirement and a managerial role, as detailed in the job descriptions of these roles. The job descriptions of staff in leadership roles who also have teaching responsibilities did not indicate the split between the different roles. Staff with joint teaching and SLT roles had considerable and broad responsibilities that might be difficult to deliver effectively in practice without support. As planned student numbers increase, the student support pressures will impact on teaching staff resource as well as on student support staff.

116. There was little consideration of the additional teaching and management time required by the mission of Collective to recruit underrepresented students. This issue was discussed with the SLT during the assessment visit. SLT members acknowledged that their current student recruitment plans were ambitious in their support for applicants and that they will need to keep the resourcing to meet these support commitments under active consideration if application numbers become substantial.
117. Having a small permanent staff complement and a small freelance one is a risk as there will potentially be single points of failure, with little cover if staff are unavailable. It will also be more likely that absences will disrupt education delivery and other services. When asked about plans to manage this during the assessment visit SLT members considered that short-term absence could be covered within the team. This would not be a sufficient approach for longer-term absence and the SLT did not set out how they would manage this should they need to. Use of freelance staff may provide an opportunity to manage risk here, creating flexibility to back fill others, but the provider did not have plans in place to identify and address this appropriately. Staff who had portfolios of external activities in addition to their work at Collective may have conflicting calls on their time. This might also present a risk to course support and delivery, as does the fact that some staff remain to be appointed.
118. There was a low volume of support staff, with most staff having multiple roles and some unclear lines of reporting and responsibility in the job descriptions. For example, the Disability Consultant was accountable to three people and was responsible for the heads of subject (jointly with the SLT) and three others. While the staff were skilled and experienced actor trainers, there were few who had teaching qualifications. From the CVs provided the assessment team estimated this at 15 per cent.
119. The availability of sufficient study skills support was uncertain with much of this support outsourced to the validating partner, for instance in relation to preparing students for writing long essays and other academic skills. For example, students will have access to courses on the VLE and remote access to the validating partner’s subject librarian as part of Collective’s validation agreement. There were details in the Teaching and Learning Strategy of plans for regular academic check-ins through the personal tutor system led by the programme leaders. Academic skills workshops were embedded as part of the curriculum and delivered by the subject librarian at the validating partner. It was not clear how Collective will monitor the ongoing support delivered with the validating partner’s librarian.
120. The course described in the Teaching and Learning Strategy was well-designed and contemporary with more emphasis on digital skills than in some competitors. The pathways

to further study through an articulation agreement with the validating partner were not ratified. While many postgraduate institutions do consider students with non-honours degrees, it is unclear how they will view graduates from Collective with ordinary bachelors' degrees relative to those with honours from competing undergraduate courses. Further, taking account the nature of the acting industry, the relative lack of support and guidance for students to seek employment outside the acting profession was a concern which may impact students' progression into employment

121. The Student Handbook and the Teaching and Learning Strategy did not mention academic misconduct. Academic misconduct was identified in the Quality Plan, which pointed to the Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism Policy. This document used the validating partner's definition of academic dishonesty and plagiarism, detailed the support available to students to avoid it and Collective's procedures and penalties for dealing with it. The academic skills workshops will provide support for learning and the regular check-in with personal tutors will provide a space for personalised academic support. In the assessment team's judgement, this offers students with sufficient support to avoid academic misconduct.
122. The Student Handbook was designed to help students understand their course, how it is delivered and the academic support available. The handbook was short and lacked detail. It was 16 pages long with many photographs and large font displays, and lacked detail on many aspects of student life. For instance there were three sentences about extenuating circumstances and two about late submission. The two sentences on academic regulations simply pointed to those of the validating partner. The second page pointed to two other documents from the validating partner that were not student-friendly, as did other pages. While there were pointers to the validating partner's regulations, it was unhelpful for students not to have a single point of information on their course. They will need to interact with peers and staff to contextualise their understanding of what the course expects of them, especially as the students and the course will be new, so there will be no more advanced student cohorts to advise incoming ones nor an organisational memory. A more developed and detailed Student Handbook would provide a better centralised source of support for students more clearly setting expectations and directions to access other resources.
123. Collective's mission, to construct a diverse student body including support for disabled students, if delivered, will be beneficial in developing students' transferrable skills. In the Teaching and Learning Strategy, there were plans for student–industry networking but not for placements. Collective had plans, in the same document as Pillar 4, to deliver industry-focused teaching which will deliver careers support. This will include mentoring, industry partnership and showcases as well as assisting students in signing up with talent agents and finding paid employment opportunities with the on-site theatre. The assessment team judges that, given these plans, there was sufficient support for students to succeed beyond their course.

Does Collective have credible plans for how it would ensure effective engagement with each cohort of students which is sufficient for the purpose of ensuring:

i. a high quality academic experience for those students; and

ii. those students succeed in and beyond higher education (B2.2.b)?

Advice to the OfS

124. The assessment team's view is that Collective had credible plans to take steps to ensure effective engagement with each cohort of students. These plans are sufficient to ensure that these students receive a high quality academic experience, and that they succeed in and beyond higher education.

Reasoning

125. Given the small size of the institution and initial cohorts, all of whom had already studied with Collective since September 2023, it is likely that engagement with students will be very good initially on a personal or informal level because it will be built on existing interpersonal connections. This was borne out in the assessment visit meeting (3) with current students in which these close relationships were highlighted and praised. All the students who were joining the first higher education cohort were already training with Collective via membership of their short courses. This close relationship should provide useful feedback for reviewing course components. This should remain sufficient given the current growth ambitions, as long as staff recruitment plans are fulfilled.
126. The planned formal engagement processes were appropriate. Students will be supported by tutors and by a variety of student support services, identified in the Teaching and Learning Plan, Pillar 5, including: academic advice, access to an alumni network, work study programmes, and financial literacy and wellbeing workshops. Collective will encourage student participation in committees and a Student Senate exists which brings to together student representatives from the higher education course, the part-time course, Youth Academy and the short courses, along with staff representatives. The Student Senate was already in operation and the students the assessment team met during the visit praised its activities and responsiveness (meeting 3 with current students). This model of student engagement was proportionate to Collective's size and growth ambitions.
127. Collective planned to run student surveys with disabled students, collecting feedback on improvements to accessibility, inclusion and learning support. It will also undertake regular student surveys of modules and provision. Collective will ask for anonymous feedback from students at the end of each semester using evaluation forms that focus on teaching methods, communication, and feedback. This was set out in the Teaching and Learning Strategy. The Academic Regulations document pointed students to the academic appeals regulations while the Student Handbook identified programme leaders as the point of contact for other student complaints. Collective prided itself on continuous feedback as part of its teaching philosophy, which will enable staff to assess students' perceptions of their course frequently.

B2 conclusions

Does Collective have credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with condition B2 from the date of registration?

128. Collective had credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with condition B2 from the date of registration. It had sufficient resources, academic support and engagement

to ensure that students will receive a high quality academic experience to succeed in and beyond higher education.

129. Collective had credible plans for resources at the point of registration because it had such resources either in place or planned. These resources included staffing, study support material, and technical support and equipment. However, there were risks to the availability and quality of these resources as student numbers increase. Collective had minimal on-site resources, and the validating partner was providing substantial support in terms of library and digital services as well as study skills support and access to teacher training courses for staff. In combination, this created a risk of over-reliance on a resource that was not owned, managed in-house, nor within Collective's control. This could put at risk students' ability to access resources as they need them, impacting on the quality of the academic experience.
130. The assessment team considers that there was support sufficient to ensure a high quality academic experience and for those students to succeed in and beyond higher education. Collective had plans for extensive student support and engagement activities which may come under future pressure given its mission to recruit underrepresented groups to the course. There were plans to increase academic, and student support staffing as well as to grow resources as student numbers increase. In the short term, if such resources are not provided in a timely manner, then the mitigations of the current staff covering any gaps, described by the SLT in the assessment visit meeting will suffice in the short term. In the longer term, however, resources will need to grow proportionally.

Condition B4: Assessment and awards

Does Collective have credible plans to ensure that each higher education course is assessed effectively (B4.2.a)?

Advice to the OfS

131. The assessment team's view is that Collective has credible plans that would enable it to ensure, if registered, that students are assessed effectively because:
- the skills tested are relevant to the awards
 - the stretch and rigour is appropriate to the level of the courses and builds in challenge as students progress through the courses
 - assessments are designed in a way where students reflect on their own learning and minimise the potential for academic misconduct.

Reasoning

132. Collective had developed an assessment strategy with the intention of providing stretch and rigour, and to test relevant skills. The primary approach was to design assessments in an authentic assessment model, that mirrors the demands placed on the professional actor within the industry. The Quality Plan listed eight different assessment types including viva voces, portfolio submissions and mock auditions. In the final year module Public Productions

Season, the assessments comprised the performance of full-length plays thus modelling the professional world which the students plan to enter.

133. In assessing B4.2a the assessment team considered assessment briefs from the 12 modules at all levels of the course alongside the Quality Plan and programme specification and made several observations. It notes that, as students progress through the course, the volume of assessments increases. They move from a five minute solo performance in semester one of year one, through to a ten minute Portfolio of Self-Tapes in year two to the Performance of an Original Feature-Length Film in year three. These assessments show the progression from developing skills through to applying them in an industry-specific context. The assessment is specific to each level of the course and students are not assessed together while studying at different levels. The course assesses a wide range of skills, knowledge and subject matter relevant to acting. Collective's Quality Plan noted that:

'Subjects studied on the course include: acting for the camera and stage, voice, movement and accent skills, devising, pitching to producers and investors, presentational skills, critical reflection, audition technique and public performance.'

134. These skills are relevant skills for a range of roles within the creative industries, most directly as an actor but also in other roles including producer, writer, director, and as preparation for a range of technical roles.

135. Collective had carefully considered the use of formative assessment, and the timing of these in relation to summative assessments. For example, in the first semester the following assessments are used across the modules Realism for Stage and Screen, Developing Your Own Instrument: Voice, Speech and Movement and The Digital Creator:

- a. WK 9: Digital Performance Review (F)
- b. WK 11: Oral Assessment – Voice (F)
- c. WK 13: Oral Assessment – Movement (S)
- d. WK 14: British Television Scene (F)
- e. WK 14: Solo Digital Performance (S)
- f. WK 18: Critical Reflection: Realism (S).

136. Collective had considered assessment of individual student performance as part of group activity or productions. No group marks were awarded. Many assessments featured group work. Group work will always entail differing educational challenge for individual group members. This was acceptable as long as staff ensure that within, and between, modules, students are all equally challenged.

137. Collective had developed an Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism Policy, and a number of the assessments were designed to reduce the possibility of academic misconduct, such as:

- oral assessments (viva voces)
- solo, paired and group performances

- filmed performances (web series, short film, feature film)
- critical reflections
- live and filmed presentations
- portfolio submissions
- mock auditions and self-tapes
- personal development plans.

138. Some assessments required students to reflect on their own specific practice, and as such were likely to minimise the potential for academic misconduct. The onboarding process for freelance staff included material on preventing and detecting academic misconduct.
139. According to the validating partner's regulations, if students failed a module they had one attempt at reassessment. The timetable for reassessment looked unrealistic because it allowed twenty days from submission to feedback and the time required for exam and progression boards. This looked especially unrealistic given the first compressed year of delivery from January to August 2024. Students who are permitted to progress, while still working towards reassessment on a previous module, may find it challenging given timetabling conflicts and the volume of performance time associated with the modules. This is particularly the case for practical and performance assessments which have a public audience, as the timings of those assessments will have greater constraints on them than other forms of assessment.
140. Most modules had multiple assessments and the overall assessment load was quite large. There were 31 assessments across the course, with 10 assessments at Level 4, 12 at Level 5 and 9 at Level 6. Collective's policy was that summative feedback should be provided to students within 20 working days. If it were to tend towards the full-time allowed, this may inhibit the transfer of learning from one assessment to the next, especially given the bunching of assessments towards the end of semesters. However, in the assessment visit in the teaching and learning meeting, Collective staff explained that it intended to give students continuous feedback, individually in class time and often on a daily basis. The assessment team's view is that if delivered in practice, this would partially mitigate this concern. Longer-term, Collective may want to revisit the 20 day timescale.
141. Students completing the BA Acting course will be classified as either fail, pass and distinction, with the pass/distinction boundary at 65 per cent. Collective's student feedback forms, and the Marking and Moderation Policy, used the English degree classification – fail, 3rd, 2(ii), 2(i), 1st. There was a risk that the lack of alignment will confuse students and staff and that students might not get a classification in the terminology that they are expecting. Collective acknowledged this during the visit and committed to revising the assessment and feedback processes and forms, including the Feedback Guidance for Staff, appropriately. In parallel, prospective students will need to be fully aware of their exit award during the recruitment process. During the visit, Collective acknowledged this and said they would alter the information available to students. The BA Acting - Understanding Your Qualification document made the award clear.

Does Collective have credible plans to ensure that for each higher education course assessment is valid and reliable (B4.2.b)?

Advice to the OfS

142. The assessment team's view is that Collective has credible plans that would enable it to ensure, if registered, that courses are valid and reliable. The course had suitable assessment briefs across the levels and credible policies for marking and moderation, as well as credible external examiner arrangements in conjunction with the validating partner. Assessment took place in a way that was consistent between students and in a way which will result in students demonstrating knowledge and skills, as intended by design of the assessment. However, there were concerns about consistency between Collective's documentation and that of the validating partner. Collective will need to ensure that such inconsistencies are addressed and that processes for ensuring consistency in the future are put in place. There were some concerns about assessment processes and timescales. However, Collective had some mitigations in place for these.

Reasoning

143. Collective had submitted sample assessment briefs for modules across the three levels, and its Marking and Moderation Policy which referred to the validating partner's regulations that are designed to ensure that assessment should be fair, valid, reliable, useful and transparent. The validating partner's policies stated that assessment ensures that:

- academic standards are maintained
- it is integrated into the learning experience
- it motivates the learner.

144. Assessment briefs had been written to provide clear information to students across the wide range of assessment types used in the modules. Written work will be sampled, and practical work will normally be double-marked live or sampled in accordance with the validating partner's policy:

'The size of the sample to be moderated must be at least the square root of the total number of students (rounded to the nearest whole number) taking the assessment plus all borderline fails (those that are within two per cent below the pass mark). The sample should include a range of performance and the minimum size should be six pieces of assessed work'.

145. In effect this will mean at least six assignments will be moderated for all assessments. This practice supports reliable assessment. It helps to ensure that there is no difference in marks between students demonstrating the same level of achievement on the assessment.

146. Assessed work, marks and feedback in years two and three representative of the whole range of work (including work at borderlines between degree classes) will be presented to the external examiner appointed by the validating partner in line with the policy of the validating partner. This practice also supports valid and reliable assessment because it provides external verification of the maintenance of standards of assessment.

147. There were multiple assessments for most modules. Some of the module assessment criteria evaluated by the assessment team could be seen to be ambiguous. For example, in Assessment 1 Developing your own Instrument: Movement and Voice the assessment combined a practical and viva voce without indicating the individual weighting. This is appropriate to assess holistically, because the interplay between the practical demonstration and theoretical understanding is an important feature of this type of assessment. The stated time for return of feedback on summative assessments to students of up to 20 working days is longer than the general standard (which is typically 15 days or fewer), and Collective will need to ensure that students receive feedback in a way that allows them to reflect on it and incorporate it in their further assessments. However, Collective described continuous assessment activities as part of the standard teaching process which will partially mitigate this concern. Yet, lengthy feedback times may exacerbate the potential problem of assessment and progression where students are required to be reassessed or if students are progressing while still working towards reassessment. This will be particularly challenging in the first year where the course will be compressed into the January to August 2024 period, with only a very short window before the start of the second year in September 2024.
148. The assessments for each year bunched around semester weeks 11 to 14. The workload on students will be particularly high at certain times, and given the practical nature of the course, students may have insufficient time to excel. The potential risk is that the assessment then tests students' ability to cope with a time-restricted situation rather than the specific learning outcomes. This pressure does reflect conditions in the industry so with sufficient support it may be appropriate. However, Collective's lean resources have been noted earlier.
149. All modules at Level 4 and two thirds of modules at Levels 5 and 6 contained group assessments. This was unsurprising given the nature of the course. However, there was no identified mechanism whereby individual contributions could be assessed or challenged by the group members. Collective's practice of continuous feedback will enable students to give informal feedback to peers and staff. Reassessment will also need to be of a different form as the group cannot be reconvened to allow one member to be reassessed. Any mechanism for individual reassessment of group work needs to be stated in the Student Handbook. At the time of the team's assessment, the paragraph on reassessment in the Student Handbook simply directed the student to the relevant module leader and did not mention any issues of group work. Students who are reassessed will need appropriate support as they may undertake this reassessment alongside their new modules.
150. There was an inconsistency between the Student Handbook and the validating partner's assessment regulations (paragraph 14.2) regarding reassessment. The handbook implied that students have three attempts to pass an assessment while the validating partner's regulations identified only one reassessment opportunity. This concern was discussed at the assessor visit and the provider acknowledged the issue, committing to update its documents to align with the validating partner's regulations.

Does Collective have credible plans to ensure that for each higher education course the academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible (B4.2.c)?

Advice to the OfS

151. The assessment team's view is that Collective has credible plans that would enable it to ensure, if registered, that for each higher education course the academic regulations are designed to ensure that the relevant awards are credible. It was making use of academic regulations that had been demonstrated to be appropriate, and will be monitored to ensure that any changes do not produce undue changes to classification.

Reasoning

152. The assessment team considered whether the academic regulations employed by Collective were designed to ensure that awards made to students on the BA Acting course were credible so that awards reflect students' knowledge and skills. Collective submitted its Assessment Regulations and Academic Regulations, the governing documents describing assessment and academic policies, as part of the evidence provided. These explain that the academic regulations of the validating partner will apply to students. It is therefore essential that there are no conflicts between these, and that if relevant changes are made to the regulations of the validating partner they are communicated effectively to applicants and students. The classification of the Acting degree was distinction, pass or fail. Collective had not presented evidence of how it will review ongoing consistency with the validating partner. It will need to ensure that it implements any changes that the partner communicates. During the visit Collective suggested it would review its use of a grading scale that differs from the validating partner. The Validation Document identified a joint Board of Studies between the validating partner and Collective. This committee was the key forum for liaison and discussed all issues relating to the collaboration. There was exam board scrutiny by the validating partner and there are revalidation processes in the validation agreement. The Teaching and Learning Committee will need to oversee this aspect liaison with the validating partner and implementation of required changes.

153. The academic regulations that Collective plan to use set out a credit framework, levels, progression, assessment, resits, retakes, and classification. The application of the regulations should result in effective assessment and awards that are credible.

154. Collective also submitted an Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism Policy and academic appeals regulations of its validating partner. These documents set out a reasonable approach to ensuring the credibility of the award when there is concern about academic or assessment conduct, including support to avoid plagiarism, internal processes with a range of penalties and the option for students to appeal, and a route to refer through to the validating partner's procedure, with outcomes up to and including a student being expelled from the programme. Involving the validating partner staff in the latter procedure is helpful, as they are likely to have experience of implementing these processes, which will help ensure the credibility of the award.

Does Collective have credible plans to ensure that for each higher education course, the academic regulations are designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner which appropriately reflects the level and content of the applicable higher education course (B4.2.d)?

Advice to the OfS

155. The assessment team's view is that Collective has credible plans that would enable it to ensure, if registered, that for each higher education course the academic regulations are designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner which appropriately reflects the level and content of the applicable course.

Reasoning

156. Collective had an English Language and Support document, which set out the minimum English language qualification required for admission where students are not nationals of a majority English speaking country. Collective stated a requirement for 'all students to demonstrate sufficient academic English language proficiency to undertake and derive full benefit from their chosen programme of study.'

157. Collective acknowledged in this document the 'regulatory requirement to ensure that there is effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner that reflects the level expected in a Higher Education qualification.' The Quality Plan paragraph 32 clearly stated the expectation for the effective assessment of English language, and that this would take place in a range of assessments including viva voces, live and filmed presentations, critical reflections and personal development plans.

Does Collective have credible plans to ensure that relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously (B4.2.e)?

Advice to the OfS

158. The assessment team's view is that Collective had credible plans that would enable it to ensure, if registered, that relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and over time because of the processes in place to monitor this, primarily through the Teaching and Learning Committee.

Reasoning

159. Collective will ensure that relevant awards granted are credible through the implementation of the academic regulations and assessment design set out in the Quality Plan, Validation Document and other policies to which these referred. The assessment team was not able to test award credibility compared with awards granted previously as this was the first higher education course that Collective will deliver.

160. Collective will apply its Academic Regulations and Assessment Regulations to ensure that the awards granted are credible and reflect the knowledge and skills of students. The Quality Plan paragraph 95 articulated that a key duty of the Teaching and Learning Committee 'will be to ensure that the number of First Class and 2:1 degree awards remains consistent over time. We recognise that to do this, that individual module results must avoid unwarranted grade inflation. This will be a priority of the committee.' It should be noted that this should read that the number of 'distinctions' awarded will remain consistent over time, since this is the terminology Collective used elsewhere. Collective did not provide a copy of the Teaching and Learning Committee terms of reference so it was not clear if this issue was reflected in them.

B4 conclusions

Does Collective have credible plans that would enable the provider, if registered, to comply with condition B4 from the date of registration?

161. The assessment team considers that, overall, Collective had credible plans that would enable it, if registered, to comply with the requirements of condition B4 with reference to assessment and awards from the date of registration.
162. Considering its findings at B4.2.a, B4.2b, B4.2c, B4.2d and B4.2e above, and the reasoning contained therein, the assessment team's view was that Collective had credible plans to ensure students will receive a high quality academic experience.
163. The assessment team identified no broader concerns relevant to assessment and awards to report to the OfS.

Part 2: Assessment of condition B8: Standards

Requirement

Does Collective demonstrate in a credible manner that the standards set for the courses it intends to provide, if it is registered, appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards?'

Advice to the OfS

164. Based on the evidence provided, the assessment team judges that the standards set for the courses Collective intends to provide, if it is registered, appropriately reflect applicable sector-recognised standards.

Reasoning

A.1: Qualifications at each level

165. The assessment team's judgement is that Collective had demonstrated in a credible manner that if it is registered the course it plans to deliver will appropriately reflect the standards set out in part A.1 of the sector-recognised standards document.

166. The title Collective had adopted for the qualification conveys appropriate information about the level of the qualification, the volume, nature and field of study. The programme specification for Bachelor of Arts (BA) Acting set out four overarching programme aims, all of which clearly and directly related to developing skills and knowledge required as an actor, confirming the appropriateness of the title with regards to the nature and field of study. As the validating partner was a Scottish university, the course was aligned with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and the three-year degree programme resulted in a BA rather than a BA (Hons). Explanatory information was provided to applicants. The mode of delivery was three years full-time, and 120 credits were studied per year.

167. The qualifications awarded for Collective's courses were located at the correct level of study. The final exit award was a bachelor's degree and was at Level 6. Subsidiary exit awards of Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) and Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) were at Level 4 and Level 5 respectively, as can be seen in the programme specification. This appropriately reflects the levels at which these qualifications would be expected to be located in Table 1 of the sector-recognised standards.

168. The assessors' judgement is that the courses Collective intended to provide if it is registered appropriately reflected the standards as set out in part A.1 of the sector-recognised standards.

A.2: Typical volumes of credit for qualifications

169. The assessment team's judgement is that the provider had demonstrated in a credible manner that if it is registered, the courses it intended to provide appropriately reflected the standards set out in part A.2 of the sector-recognised standards.

170. Collective had adopted a credit system to define the volume of learning expected of students on its course which is described in relation to the credit volumes set out in Table 2 of the sector-recognised standards. This could be seen in the programme specification for the course and the module outline for each module. For example, students exiting with a CertHE will have completed 120 credits and students exiting with a DipHE will have completed 240 credits.
171. Students completing the BA degree will have completed 360 credits with 120 credits at level 6. This is 60 credits more than the typical credit value for the qualification in England, and Collective had developed information for applicants to explain the reason for this which related to the award being aligned with the SCQF. The latter expects 360 credits for a bachelor's degree without honours.
172. Collective had ensured that each credit equates to 10 learning hours. For example, its 40-credit module Public Production Season Module Descriptor identified the following learning hours '2 hours: Briefing Workshop, 360 hours: (35 hours per week of rehearsal x 5 weeks per production + 10 hours essay support), 38 hours: Guided and Independent Study'. This gives a total of 400 hours for a 40 credit module'.
173. The assessment team's judgement is that the courses Collective intended to provide if it is registered appropriately reflected the standards set out in part A.2 of the sector-recognised standards.

A.3: Qualification descriptors

174. The assessment team's judgement is that the provider had demonstrated in a credible manner that if it is registered, the courses it intended to provide appropriately reflected the standards set out in part A.3 of the sector-recognised standards.
175. The assessment team assessed Collective's alignment with qualification descriptors by mapping programme learning outcomes against them. The focus was on the alignment with the Level 6 standards as that is the target award, though the alignment at Levels 4 and 5 has been assessed as appropriate, and this was also demonstrated in progression across the course.
176. The Level 6 bachelors' degrees appropriately reflected the first part of the descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 6, set out in paragraph 25 of section A.3.3 of the sector-recognised standards. For example:
- a. The programme specification for the BA Acting met the requirement for 'a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline' in the following programme learning outcomes:
 - Articulate knowledge of some of the fundamental techniques of contemporary actor-training.
 - Articulate a clear understanding of the procedures and processes associated with gaining employability in the professional performing arts industry.
 - Acquire the knowledge, skills and understanding required for successful verse-speaking in Shakespearean text.

- b. The programme specification for BA Acting met the requirement for ‘an ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline’ in the following programme learning outcomes:
- Analyse and evaluate a professional-standard script quickly, including rewrites, to act material effectively with little rehearsal.
 - Critique the effectiveness of established acting methodology in relation to performance of different film and television genres.
 - Analyse, critique and modify their individualised acting process in response to a given play text and the working methods of a professional director and creative team.
- c. The module outlines for BA Acting met the requirement for ‘an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge’ in the following final year module learning outcome, in that the career progression in the acting profession is often very unpredictable:
- Evaluate potential career progression through the creation of a Personal Development Plan.
- d. The module outlines for BA Acting met the requirement for ‘the ability to manage their own learning’ in the following final year module learning outcome:
- Re-assess, modify and apply their acting process to successfully meet the demands of commercial promotional performances, i.e. showreels and voicereels.
- e. The module outlines for BA Acting met the requirement for students ‘to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline’ in the following final year module learning outcome:
- Appreciate and recognise the creative intentions of emerging and/or established writers in order to make informed and effective acting choices in performance.
- f. The module outlines for BA Acting met the requirement for ‘the ability to manage their own learning’ in the following final year module learning outcome:
- Respond to the individual rehearsal processes of two professional theatre directors to demonstrate the flexibility and self-reliance needed to work on a professional production upon graduation.
177. The assessment team’s judgement is that the courses Collective intended to provide if it is registered, appropriately reflected the standards set out in part A.3 of the sector-recognised standards.

B: Classification descriptors for Level 6 bachelors’ degrees

178. Collective’s BA Acting degree course is classified as distinction/pass as the award is aligned with the SCQF. The provider intended to ensure that applicants are provided with clear information regarding the classification of the course, and student feedback will be aligned with this classification.

Annex A: Approach to sampling of evidence

Conditions B7 and B8

1. Collective has applied to register as an in prospect provider delivering a single degree course and the assessment therefore considered all course materials. As Collective does not have current students no student assessed work was available for consideration.



© The Office for Students copyright 2024

This publication is available under the Open Government Licence 3.0 except where it indicates that the copyright for images or text is owned elsewhere.

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/