

ArtsEd student protection plan

Provider's name: ArtsEd (The Arts Educational Schools)

Provider's UKPRN: 10000381

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Student protection plan for the period 2018-19

1. An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for our students, how those risks may differ based on our students' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise

When a student is accepted onto a course at ArtsEd, we are committed to delivering that course and supporting the student to successfully complete their studies. In the very unlikely event that something happens to prevent us from being able to deliver any of our courses, this student protection plan has been developed to identify any risks to continuation of study and the actions we would take should any of these risks become a reality¹.

The following factors have been identified as **very low risk**;

- ArtsEd is unable to operate as a result of weak financial performance
- Loss of validation or accreditation of any of our programmes
- Suspension of our Tier 4 Licence
- Closure of our Acting and Musical Theatre degrees due to loss of key staff
- Change in location
- Events beyond our control

We are closing our part-time evening top up Post Diploma programme, and the 10 students currently enrolled will be the final cohort. There is a **moderate risk** that the very small number of students who have intermitted may not be able to complete their studies if they cannot return before the course is closed. The measures we have put in place to mitigate this risk are set out below.

We are planning a major redevelopment of our building. Works are planned to take place from July 2019 to December 2020. There would therefore be no risk to students in the 2018/19 academic year (covered by this student protection plan) but the works could pose **moderate risk** of disruption to students during the twenty month development period. Any undergraduate students enrolling at ArtsEd in September 2018 will be in their second and third years during the works. MA students enrolling in September 2018 will not be affected, as their studies will be complete before works begin.

¹ All references to 'continuation of study' or 'completion of courses' or similar wording is subject to the student complying with ArtsEd's Student Regulations and to passing the relevant requirements for their course as set out in the Student Handbook.

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2. The measures that you have put in place to mitigate those risks that you consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise

The body with ultimate decision making powers at ArtsEd is the Board of Trustees, which delegates responsibility for day-to-day operations to the Senior Strategy Team, led by the Principal. We operate a risk register, which is updated whenever new risks are identified. The risk register is a standing item on the agenda for at least one meeting of the Board of Trustees each year, which ensures that governors and senior managers are aware of any risks to operations and have formulated strategies to mitigate those risks.

Risks associated with weak financial performance

The risk that ArtsEd is unable to operate is very low because our financial performance has been secure for many years and is projected to remain so for the foreseeable future. In addition to private fee income, and some smaller income streams such as outside hires of ArtsEd studios when not in use for core courses, we currently receive income in excess of £1.25m in Dance and Drama award funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency. The costs associated with our planned building project have been carefully budgeted for, including a contingency.

The Board of Trustees receive detailed financial reports every term and together with management are well positioned to take any corrective actions necessary well in advance of any financial problem arising. In short ArtsEd has very secure and robust finances which are open to challenge by suitably qualified Trustees.

Loss of designation, accreditation or validation

We consistently meet all external regulatory requirements. We underwent a successful Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) in October 2017, which confirmed the quality and academic standards of our degrees. All indicators demonstrate the strength of the programmes and success of the students: retention, progression and achievement statistics are very high, our overall student satisfaction rating in the 2018 NSS survey was 95%, and our graduate destinations continue to demonstrate our students' success at gaining employment in their chosen fields.

ArtsEd's vocational courses are fully accredited by the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre (CDMT) which ensures the provision of high quality professional training. Full accreditation is only awarded to those schools and colleges that have successfully undertaken a thorough and comprehensive, institutional level review of provision by a panel of CDMT nominated industry experts.

We have a strong and long-standing relationship with our validating partner, City, University of London, going back to 2001, and our agreement with them, should there be any future change to validation arrangements, is to support our students to complete their studies, either by 'teaching out' or by helping us to find an alternative validating university. Furthermore, the government's higher education regulator the Office for Students can be called upon either to help broker a new agreement, or to become the 'validator of last resort.'

Suspension of Tier 4 Licence

We regularly review our processes to ensure that we comply with Home Office regulations and consistently pass the compliance assessment. We do not recruit overseas and have very small numbers of overseas students enrolled on any of our programmes. We are

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therefore confident that if our Tier 4 License was suspended we could work with the Home Office to offer individual support to these students to complete their studies or to help them transfer to another similar provider.

Closure of programmes due to loss of key staff

We have a proven track record as a small, specialist provider of conservatoire Acting and Musical Theatre training. The risk that we are no longer able to deliver programmes or material components of our courses, or that we may lose key staff (due to illness, bereavement etc) in these highly specialised areas is very low for the following reasons:

- the programmes are led and taught by an integrated team of academic staff comprising over 30 specialist technical tutors, enhanced by the involvement of over 45 freelance industry practitioners
- we have very strong industry links and appropriate HR policies and recruitment procedures in place, including succession planning, to enable us to replace staff as and when necessary

Change in location

The risk that we will no longer deliver courses at our Chiswick campus in the next three years is very low because we are committed to a major redevelopment of the site (see 'planned building project' below).

Events beyond our control

Our Terms and Conditions set out events that are beyond our reasonable control (often known as 'Force Majeure'), and the reasonable steps that we would take to minimise disruption to your studies should such events arise. We have begun work on a disaster recovery plan, which will be in operation by July 2019.

Risks associated with the planned building project:

Detailed contingency plans to manage any disruption are in hand, which could involve moving affected operations to temporary alternative sites and other locations in the area where suitable accommodation is available. All the necessary standby options will be in place before the contractors start on site.

Detailed planning work has been undertaken by the Project Manager, in consultation with the Senior Strategy Team, and reviewed by the Board of Trustees, to ensure delivery of programmes and high quality student experience. The building project will be led by a subcommittee of the Board of Trustees, the Project Board, who will keep students informed with progress at each stage. The building plans have included detailed searches for any problem that could delay the construction process once it has begun, and no unusual or unexpected problems have been identified. In addition we have business interruption insurance to cover the loss of income if a disaster prevents us from being able to operate.

We have experience of successfully managing such projects in the recent past, having completed another major building project in 2014. We built a new theatre, tv studios, disabled access and wardrobe store without losing a single day of teaching and with minimal disruption to students and staff.

All prospective students who apply for places during the 2018/19 academic year for entry in September 2019 will be informed about the planned works before they make the decision to take up the offer of places.

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Risks associated with the part-time Post Diploma BA Performance Studies course

As stated above, the decision has been made to close this course after the current cohort have completed their studies and there will be no further cohorts recruited to this programme. Recruitment has steadily declined over recent years. The original purpose of the programme was to offer the opportunity to students who had completed a 3-year accredited Acting or Musical Theatre course to top up their Diploma to an undergraduate degree by undertaking a year of part-time study. Since the programme was first validated in 2004 the majority of Acting and Musical Theatre courses offered by other providers now lead to a degree qualification, so there are fewer and fewer candidates in need of this top up programme. The course has provided a very valuable route to further study for many years and we are proud of all our graduates' achievements.

The current cohort will complete their studies in March 2019. The very small number of students from this or previous years who have not completed their studies (currently two students) will be offered the following options, subject to having achieved the required number of credits:

- tutorial support from in-house and/or freelance staff
- transfer to the distance learning BA (Hons) Theatre course at the University of Surrey/GSA

3. Information about the policy you have in place to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to your students and to provide compensation where necessary in the event that you are no longer able to preserve continuation of study

If we are unable to deliver a course for reasons within ArtsEd's control, our Terms and Conditions set out that a student may have an option to cancel the contract with us and be entitled to a full refund of tuition fees, and we will use reasonable endeavours to assist the student in finding an alternative comparable programme with another Higher Education provider in the UK. ArtsEd's refund policy sets out the processes that would enable fees to be refunded to students, sponsors, or the Student Loans Company, as appropriate, in the event of a programme ceasing. This information will be published to applicants and students from 2018/19.

If ArtsEd was unable to make arrangements for students to complete their studies, study on an alternative replacement programme, or if students suffered other loss or damage as a result of the discontinuation of the programme due to circumstances within ArtsEd's reasonable control, we would consider this impact and any associated compensation claims on a case-by-case basis at that time. Cases would be considered through our Student Complaints procedure. Our ability to offer appropriate compensation in those cases would be underpinned by our financial position and the insurance cover we have in place.

We will designate part of our general reserves towards a fund to compensate students for non-continuation of courses. This will be an agenda item for the first Finance Committee meeting of the 2018/19 academic year, to ensure that adequate funds are in place by 1 August 2019.

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4. Information about how you will communicate with students about your student protection plan

We have consulted with students in the development of this student protection plan, and will engage with them in an annual review to ensure that they understand the implications of the plan and the actions we will be able to take in the event that it needs to be implemented. Students will be involved in the annual review by taking part in a working group comprising student representatives and senior staff.

We will publicise our student protection plan to future students by providing a copy to every successful applicant and by publishing it on our website. The plan should be read alongside our Terms and Conditions and our Refund Policy, and forms part of the contract agreed to when an applicant accepts the offer of a place on a programme.

If the student protection plan is triggered for any reason, we would:

- Meet with affected students to provide an explanation for the situation
- Provide students with support depending on the specific needs of a student
- Make provision for further meetings, either individually or collectively
- Engage with student representatives to create a plan to support the affected students
- Write to the affected students to confirm the position and confirm the process for submitting any formal complaints
- Provide financial compensation arising from settlement of any complaint as awarded by our own Complaints Procedure, the Office for the Independent Adjudicator, or a UK court of law