Further Education
Learning & Teaching Strategy

Introduction

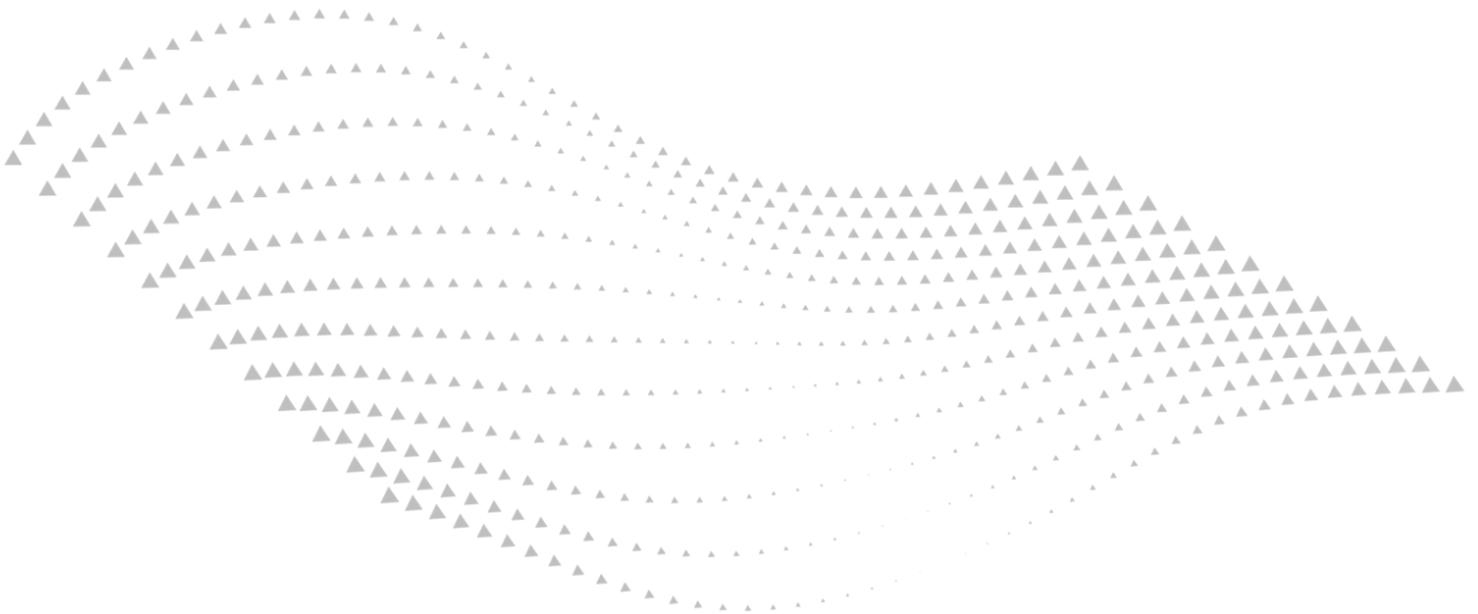This Strategy, which applies to all Further Education provision delivered at BIMM Institute, the Institute of Contemporary Theatre, Performers' College and Screen & Film School (collectively referred to as "the Institute"), is comprised of three parts:

1. Strategic Aims & Principles.
2. FE Learning & Teaching Observation Policy.
3. FE Assessment Policy.

Values

Our mission:

To appropriately prepare students for study in Higher Education and/or further training and provide them with the best opportunity to achieve a sustainable career in the creative arts industries.

Our core values:

- That the development of identity, creativity and imagination are fundamental to success in the creative arts.

- That being creative requires risk-taking, collaboration, determination and the development of resilience through the experience of both success and failure.

- That students should be provided with opportunities to develop the communication, emotional intelligence, and teamwork skills that underpin continuous development of their creative practice.

- Our approach to learning and teaching will produce completing students who are:
  o Resilient and Adaptable
  o Creative, Collaborative and Connected
  o Globally Aware
  o Socially Responsible
  o Professional
  o Intellectually Curious
  o Self-Aware

Part 1: Strategic Aims & Principles

1.1 Aims

The Institute is committed to providing high quality teaching and support for its students in accordance with the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF), and in line with the practices and guiding principles of our funding partners and awarding bodies.

The Institute aims to meet these expectations as follows.

Quality of Education

- Construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all students, particularly the most disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or high needs, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
- Plan a curriculum that is coherent and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment.
- Have the same academic, technical or vocational ambitions for almost all students. Where this is not practical – for example, for some students with high levels of SEND – our curriculum is designed to be ambitious and to meet their needs.
- Ensure curriculum delivery by lecturers that have outstanding and current knowledge of the subject(s) and courses they teach.
- Employ lecturers that present subject matter clearly, promoting appropriate discussion about the subject matter they are teaching. They check students' understanding systematically, identify misconceptions accurately and provide clear, direct feedback.
- Promote a course of study where teaching is designed to help students to remember in the long term the content they have been taught, and to integrate new knowledge into larger concepts.
- Employ lecturers that use assessment well, to help students embed and use knowledge fluently or to check understanding and inform teaching.
- Employ lecturers that create an environment that allows the student to focus on learning.
- Encourage students to develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well. Where relevant, this is reflected in results from national tests and examinations that meet government expectations, or in the qualifications obtained.
- Ensure students are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. Where relevant, they gain qualifications that allow them to go on to destinations that meet their interests, aspirations and the intention of their course of study.

Personal Development

- Create a curriculum that extends beyond the academic, technical or vocational, which will provide for students' broader development, enabling them to develop and discover their interests and talents.
- Develop a curriculum and wider work that supports students to develop their character – including their resilience, confidence and independence – and helps them know how to keep physically and mentally healthy.
- Prepare students at each stage of their education for future success in their next steps.
- Prepare students for life in modern society by:
  - equipping them to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society.
  - developing their understanding and appreciation of diversity.
  - celebrating what we have in common and promoting respect for the different protected characteristics as defined in law.

Leadership & Management

- Have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education and training to all. This is realised through strong, shared values, policies and practice.
- Focus on improving staff's subject, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge to enhance the teaching of the curriculum and the appropriate use of assessment. The practice and subject knowledge of staff are built up and improve over time.
- Aim to ensure that all students complete their programmes of study.
- Engage effectively with students and others in the community, including – where relevant – parents, carers, employers and local services.

1.2 Principles

This Strategy has the following key principles:

Ensuring our students are supported and enabled:

- We will ensure that students are supported to achieve their potential and we will address any barriers to success and achievement.

Outstanding Learning & Teaching:

- All students will make substantial and sustained progress from their identified and recorded starting point.
- All pedagogical approaches adopted by the Institute will be flexible, diverse, inclusive and appropriate to the skills and needs of individual students.
- Assessment and feedback will enable learning through an approach that allows for reflection and dialogue, developing meta-cognition (awareness of one own thought processes and motivations/preferences in the context of learning) and recognising the shared responsibility of students and teachers in the process of giving, receiving and using feedback.
- Data and quality assurance processes must ensure that the Institute is able to monitor and respond to trends and make evidence-based interventions in order to maintain standards and enhance the quality of learning opportunities.
- Learning environments should be designed flexibly to promote deep and active learning, to enable diverse approaches and to reflect future workspaces.
- Learning and teaching will incorporate the appropriate use of technology enhanced and blended learning in order to support students and draw on innovative pedagogical practice.
- The use of digital technology will be driven by sound pedagogy and good educational practice.

Establishing and supporting learning communities:

- We recognise that knowledge, understanding and learning are socially constructed in learning communities where staff and students become partners as co-creators of understanding and co-producers of learning.
- A learning community should be a safe space for challenge and transformation where every individual is valued and respected.
- Our approach to learning and teaching should support a culture of active engaged students, both inside and outside of the Institute.
- We should develop opportunities for experiential and professionally authentic learning, in our colleges, with employers and within our local communities.
- We will support our students to become responsible for their own part in learning through the development of individual confidence and skills of self-reflection and questioning.

- We should support our students to challenge their own and others' pre-conceptions of the world and to develop their own viewpoint.
- We will work together to ensure we nurture resilience and promote wellbeing amongst all members of our community.

Valuing and supporting the development of staff:

- Lecturers are carefully selected, appropriately qualified and supported in developing their expertise and we are committed to the on-going development of all staff who support learning.
- Our approach to academic staff development ensures that learning, teaching and assessment practices are evidence-based, informed by scholarship and supported by up-to-date tools and technologies.
- We are committed to building lecturer expertise in curriculum design to provide accessible, diverse learning opportunities with clear paths into further training and employment.

Effective and transformational curriculum design:

- All lecturers understand their students' identified and recorded starting points, and plan a diverse and non-discriminatory approach to delivery that underpins this.
- We will develop our curriculum in a holistic and considered way using overarching aims that provide direction in the formulation of learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment strategies at course level.
- Checks for learning are conducted in all sessions to evaluate progress in relation to stated aims, and distance travelled from recorded starting points. Assessment for learning allows for stretch and challenge and informs next steps.
- We will include employers and other expert external stakeholders in curriculum development and review.
- Learning, teaching and assessment should be informed by both research and practice and draw on innovation in pedagogical research and practice including the incorporation of appropriate learning technologies.
- The curriculum should encourage students to ask deep questions, exploring uncertainty and challenging conventional thinking.
- Asynchronous and distance learning models should not be seen as inherently lesser experiences than synchronous and in-person education. A critical approach should be taken to ensure that assumptions and past practice do not limit the design opportunities available.

Integrating employability and introducing diverse perspectives:

- Initiatives to support work-based learning opportunities and employability should be embedded in the curriculum and informed by employers and other relevant stakeholders.
- For all level 2 and level 3 vocational courses, the curriculum fosters transferable and soft skills such as personability, professionalism, healthy work ethic, emotional resilience, the origination and application of creative and critical thinking and contextual awareness.
- Cultural and international perspectives should inform and be made explicit in the curriculum and support students in understanding of diversity and inclusion.
- Curriculum content should challenge cultural bias and stereotyping.

Integrating digital, distance and face to face approaches to learning:

- Ensuring an institutional understanding of digital technology in learning and teaching contexts and the benefits and challenges faced.
- Ensuring that the use of digital technology at the Institute is accessible to all students and integrated with real-world contexts.

- Digital technology should be viewed as socially constructed. Discourse that views technology as having innate educational ability or, conversely, views technology as just a tool limits our ability to critically evaluate its potential. (Hamilton and Friesen, 2013).
- Ensuring that both lecturers and students are provided with opportunities to develop digital literacies.
- Ensuring that developments in Digital Learning & Teaching are responsive to needs at all levels of the organisation.
- Many of the supposed benefits of digital technology have not been realised over the last 30 years (Selwyn, 2011) and implementations of technology may have unintended consequences (see Lea & Jones (2011) discussion of Turnitin). A critical approach to the implementation of technology is required to ensure that benefits are realistic, challenges are appropriately taken into account and unforeseen outcomes are limited. The use of technology should be informed by research, theory and practice at the forefront of the field in relation to the effective and ethical use of technology in education.
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- Digital education requires an institutional understanding of the preparation and delivery requirements placed on lecturers as well as consideration of concepts such as contact time.

Ensuring approaches to using digital technology are driven by sound pedagogy and good practice:

- The principles outlined above as equally applicable to real-world, blended and fully digital approaches to education. Principles such as those relating to communities of practice, feedback (particularly student to student), active learning, co-authoring of learning and authentic assessment should be at the forefront of the Institute's implementation of technology.

Ensuring that digital technology is accessible to all students and integrated with real-world contexts:

- Technology cannot be separated from real-world contexts or viewed in isolation.
- Blended approaches cannot view the digital and real-world situations in which lecturers and students find themselves, as separate. The physical classroom and the digital technology employed should be integrated into a unified approach.
- Approaches to implementing technology should consider issues of accessibility, taking into account not only the potential benefits for students with specific learning needs, but an understanding of how technology can potentially perpetuate systemic issues - such as widening the gap between those who can afford the technology required to access and those who can't.

Ensuring that lecturers and students are provided with opportunities to develop digital literacies:

- Technical ability with a given technology does not necessarily translate to the ability to work critically with these resources (Lamb, 2018).
- Different modalities and technologies present information differently, for example they may not present their information linearly (Kress, 2005). Thought needs to be given to how to support and assess students when using these technologies as traditional print standards may be limiting or not applicable (Adsanatham, 2012)
- When looking at multi-modal assessments facilitated by technology thought must be given to how students can be supported to realise the potential of new modalities (DePalma and Alexander, 2015; Adsanatham, 2012)
- Attention should be paid to the process of learning in digital environments, the different challenges that students face and the role of the institution of overcoming these. For example, students are often used to drawing together increasingly complex multi-modal materials however

in order to fully engage with such materials they often look for institutional validation of what is acceptable (Lea and Jones, 2011).

Ensuring that developments in Digital Learning & Teaching are responsive to needs at all levels of the organisation:

- We support our lecturers to be reflective practitioners. Moreover, it is noted that the use of technology is largely dictated by lecturers (Selwyn, 2011) so it is vital that the reflections of lecturers are engaged with to identify developmental needs and these feed into the advancement of digital technology where appropriate.
- Institution-wide initiatives should be driven by clear pedagogic needs informed by themes emerging from data from sources such as teaching observation reports, learning analytics, annual monitoring reports and student satisfaction data.
- The student voice should be engaged with to ensure that the student experience in digital spaces is improved.

Ensuring that the implementation of technology is subject to evaluation of its effectiveness:

- The implementation of digital technology will be assessed against the goals of the FE Learning & Teaching Enhancement Plan.
- Almost any intervention is likely to have a positive effect (Hattie, 2012). Therefore, it is important to evaluate how effective an intervention has been and whether it is an effective use of resources.

1.3 Pedagogic Approaches

The Institute encourages lecturers to adopt innovative and inclusive approaches to academic and vocational pedagogy and seeks to promote an active community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) where students and professionals from the creative industries are able to interact and learn from each other through practice and participation. This approach fosters reflection on and in action (Schon, 1981) or metacognition (Flavell, 1979).

Furthermore, teaching should aim to make learning visible to both teacher and student and create an environment where there are opportunities to practice the skills being taught (Hattie, 2009) and make use of feedback as one of the most powerful influences on learning (Hattie & Timperley 2007). Teachers should also be flexible and open in their approaches, acting as experts in their subject, but also as guides or facilitators and as co-creators (McWilliam, 2008). We recognise that learning in the creative industries is both formal and informal (Green, 2002) and we seek to draw on what our students learn in class and outside in making the opportunities for learning we provide more effective. The Institute also recognises that learning in the creative industries is an iterative and aesthetic process (Finney, 2002) and above all a process of identity formation (Frith, 2004). Finally, that the education we provide should be an experience that is authentic to our students and one that encourages them to be creative and innovative practitioners.

Learning & Teaching practice reflects the stages of assessment through Further Education courses:

At NVQ Level 2 (Level 2 Diploma)
Students are introduced to the methods and skills required for successful Further Education Study at level 2. The curriculum has a practical focus and is built around student-centred activity and preparation for progression to the workplace or further study, often at NVQ level 3. There is some individual responsibility and students are supported towards working with a degree of autonomy. Activities can be complex or non-routine and collaboration with others is often a requirement. Students are assessed against specified assessment criteria. Transferable skills and functional skills are embedded into the qualification.

At NVQ Level 3 (Level 3 Diploma)
Students are introduced to the methods and skills required for successful Further Education Study at Level 3. There is an expectation of competency within a leaners' specialist field involving application of knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts, often complex and non-routine. Students are expected to work with considerable responsibility and autonomy in working towards personal goals and objectives. The curriculum has a practical and academic focus where students will develop skills to critically analyse and apply underlying concepts, whilst also developing employability skills to support progression to the workplace or further study, often at FHEQ Level 4.

Implementation of the Institute's Further Education Learning & Teaching Strategy

This strategy is owned and implemented by the Institute's Further Education Learning, Teaching & Enhancement Committee (FELTEC) – a sub-committee of Academic Board. Implementation of the policy will be achieved through the policies and action planning outlined in the appendices that follow, which are in turn guided by the aims and principles laid out above. The quality assurance and enhancement of learning and teaching is operated by conducting learning and teaching observations via the Further Education Learning and Teaching Observation Policy with each college reporting thematically to FELTEC. FELTEC then uses this data and the data generated by College Boards of Studies (BoS) to inform the themes for the Further Education Learning & Teaching Enhancement Plan (FELTEP), which are responded to in the College Enhancement Plans (CEPs) that feed into institutional action plans and shared with Academic partners as required.

Academic Staff Development

Staff development is supported both at college level and centrally through the principles laid out in the Academic Staff Appointment & Continuing Professional Development Policy and the work of FELTEC to produce an annual Further Educations Academic Staff Development Plan.

College teams are responsible for:

- Ensuring that lecturers deliver the approved curriculum.
- Ensuring that the curriculum and assessment requirements are clear to the students, that feedback on assessment is of good quality and students are supported in developing their capacity to use feedback for learning/personal development.
- Ensuring that lecturers are assisted and supported with appropriate training to maximise the potential of their teaching.
- Helping lecturers maintain a professional, respectful and relaxed environment conducive to students in the creative industries realising their potential.
- Ensuring that delivery teams are aligned with and adhere to all funding and awarding body policies and procedures.
- Ensuring that delivery teams are abreast of updates to Further Education statutory requirements and sector expectations.

Part 2: FE Learning & Teaching Observation Policy

2.1 Policy Overview

The purpose of this Policy is to clearly identify the way that teaching observations are used and managed in Further Education Centres at the Institute. As an organisation, the Institute places very high value on the quality of learning and teaching within its Colleges and utilises both management and peer observation of teaching in order to monitor and report on standards, provide opportunities for feedback and mentoring and sharing of good practice. Our aim is to develop a culture of critical self-reflection that is effectively supported by peer feedback. There are written criteria and feedback forms for all observations.

2.2 The Policy

The primary objectives of teaching observations are as follows:
- To develop new lecturers as pedagogical professionals in line with sector expectations.
- To ensure that experienced lecturers are fully supported in their classroom practice and their professional development.
- To maintain appropriate professional standards in line with the EIF and ensure and enhance the quality of the learning experience for all students.
- To foster dynamic approaches to learning and teaching that are student centred, holistic, creative and innovative.
- To recognise and value the variety and quality of learning, teaching and assessment practice.
- To ensure teaching and learning is in compliance with Further Education sector statutory requirements and educational frameworks.
- To ensure that where appropriate, teaching and learning aligns with academic partners and Awarding Organisations (AOs).

2.3 Implementation

Responsibility for implementing these objectives is held by FELTEC, which oversees the construction and approval of the observation schemes for observations in FE to ensure that criteria and approaches used are suitable and effective in achieving the objectives of this observation policy, taking into account the relevant educational and legislative frameworks, and approaches to teaching and learning specific to Further Education.

Operation of Observation Scheme

Operation of observation schemes is the responsibility of each local College academic leadership team which will include a designated FE learning and teaching lead, and which may differ from college to college.

Observations will be undertaken by a small team of experienced observers in each college who are trained and supported by the college's designated FE learning and teaching lead.

Staff who are acting as observers must undertake training and regular refresher sessions to ensure that they are up to date with the current scheme.

Staff new to observation will be required to co-observe until they are confident to work autonomously.

The Observations Working Group, chaired by the Associate Dean of Learning & Teaching, will work to support colleges in their approach to training and delivery.

Lesson Learning Walks

All Further Education lessons will be subject to at least one 'learning walk' annually. Learning walks are short visits by one or two members of the observation team to observe and reflect on the quality of learning taking place in a class. A learning walk provides a 'quality snapshot' and is not to be considered a formal observation or evaluation of lecturer performance/teaching, nor should it be an observation of teaching or an assessment of performance. Additionally, no student evaluation of teaching should be requested.

Where there is reasonable concern regarding the quality of learning taking place in a class, appropriate measures towards improving the quality of learning should be considered. These may include (but are not limited to):
- Reviewing class profiles
- Reviewing additional support needs
- Reviewing student experience
- Reviewing resources
- Referral for lesson observation

A learning enhancement plan will then be agreed with the FE learning and teaching lead.

Peer Lesson Observations

Peer lesson observations will mirror the approach taken with [Higher Education](#) but will include FE-specific focus to align with Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) in order to allow for a developmental approach towards improving the learning and teaching taking place towards improvement of the student experience.

All lecturers are encouraged to observe their peers, as and when they wish to, and colleagues at all levels within the organisation may drop in to observe teaching with the agreement of the lecturer being observed. This may be purely informal with only verbal feedback or more formal providing written feedback and comments designed to provide support in professional personal development.

Funding Partner Lesson Observations

FE Funding partners may carry out lesson observations of learning and teaching on an annual basis.

Additional visits may occur as required to support continual quality/developmental improvements and compliance within the Education Inspection Framework

Reporting

Colleges will provide a progress report on implementation of the annual observation scheme to FELTEC each meeting, using the relevant report structure for the scheme. FELTEC will receive an annual observations summary report in their first meeting each year.

Cross-College Moderation/Calibration

Observation schemes will be subject to cross-college standardisation processes in line with the details set out in that scheme. Reporting of these processes will be included in the Reports to FELTEC.

Part 3: FE Assessment Policy

The Institute will provide appropriate and fair access to assessment for all students on level 2 and level 3 vocational qualifications, in line with the policies and procedures of the relevant awarding organisations.

3.1. Aims:

This Policy has the following key aims:

- Assessment should be valid and standardised both locally at least once per term, and across the institute at least once per annum.
- Information about assessment should be explicit, accessible and transparent, and where possible assessment should be inclusive and equitable.
- Assessment should also be integral to course design and relate directly to course aims and learning outcomes.
- The amount of assessment should be manageable, and assessment should be carried out using both formative and summative methods.
- Feedback on assessment should be developmental.
- Lecturers involved in assessing students must be trained to an appropriate level and students must be supported to interpret and use the feedback they gather.
- All formal assessment must be compliant with awarding organisation policies and procedures.

3.2 Principles:

This Policy has the following key principles:

- To ensure assessment is conducted fairly, with rigour and in an appropriate time frame.
- To ensure that the standard for each award and award element is set and maintained at the appropriate level, and that student performance is properly judged against this.
- To enable Higher Education Providers and employers, to be sure that the student has attained an appropriate level of achievement that reflects the academic standards set.
- To ensure that there is an emphasis on assessment for learning that reflects professional practice and includes self-assessment, peer assessment and work-related assessment.
- To promote and enhance student learning by providing the student with continuous, motivating and constructive developmental feedback, which helps the student improve their performance and achievement.
- To enable students to understand the assessment process and develop skills of self-evaluation and professional judgement, and the ability to articulate and express what they have learnt in support of application for further study or training, or future employment
- To ensure that assessment is conducted with attention, integrity and with due regard for security, safeguarding and GDPR compliance.

The principles of this Policy are achieved through:
- Evaluating the extent to which assignment briefs and associated tasks are effective and sustainable in measuring student achievement of the intended learning outcomes of both formal and informal assessment, and courses.
- Ensuring that the amount and timing of assessment enables effective and appropriate measurement of students' achievement of intended learning outcomes.
- Where possible, co-ordinating assessment deadlines, including resits, to avoid clashes and excessive assessment burden for students and staff, whilst also ensuring appropriate frequency and regularity.

- Designing assessments that provide adequate opportunity for students to undertake assessment of work that is demonstrably their own.
- Encouraging students to adopt good academic conduct regarding assessments and ensuring that they are aware of their responsibilities.
- Promoting diversity and authenticity of assessment practice and requiring and enabling students to appropriately demonstrate their capabilities and achievements within each class or course.
- Providing and using clear assessment criteria and marking schemes and Internal Verification (IV) to ensure that marking is carried out fairly and consistently.
- Providing appropriate, clear and timely feedback to students on assessed work in a way that promotes learning and personal development.
- Providing adequate opportunity for students to apply formative feedback (from lecturers or peers) to improve their performance in further assessments.
- Encouraging the development of feedback mechanisms that are flexible and suited to students' needs.
- Working with students to develop their engagement with feedback as a shared dialogue between student and lecturer.