

# Educational Oversight Visit

**The Scottish Institute of Theatre, Dance, Film and  
TV Limited.**

**23/04/2024**

<b>Head of Establishment</b>	<b>Giles Auckland-Lewis</b>
<b>Review Date</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> February 2024</b>
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## 1. Background

In Scotland, Education Scotland's HM Inspectors of Education are responsible for providing educational oversight of provision up to and including Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 8, offered by private colleges or English language schools. These organisations are referred to as 'providers' and are either (a) existing, or are seeking to become, a Student Sponsor on behalf of Home Office UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI), or (b) delivering provision supported by funding from the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS). This review was undertaken as part of the SAAS provider designation arrangements. Further information about how HM Inspectors undertake educational oversight reviews are available [here](#).

During the review, the team engaged with managers, staff and learners. This report outlines the findings from the visit, and includes aspects of positive practice, aspects for improvement, and any associated main points for action. The report will be shared with the provider and SAAS and will be published on Education Scotland's website.

## 2. The organisation and its context

The Scottish Institute of Theatre, Dance, Film and TV Limited (the Institute) is based in Livingston, West Lothian and was previously the MGA Academy of Performing Arts which was founded in 2005. The Institute currently has 151 full-time learners from across the United Kingdom, 128 of whom are funded by the SAAS. The Institute delivers a range of Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Higher National (HN) qualifications in professional dance performance, acting and performance and musical theatre to 30 learners. A further 121 learners are enrolled on degree-level programmes in musical theatre and acting and dance for commercial performance validated by Bath Spa University.

The Institute is validated by the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre (CDMT) and is approved by the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD) to deliver the diploma in dance education teaching qualification (DDE) for tap and modern dance. A junior school delivers vocational training to 80 school-age learners at weekends. The Institute has received approval from Bath Spa University to deliver Master of Arts degrees in theatre making and dance & choreography from September 2024.

### 3. Outcomes of external review

The review team assigned the following grades for each of the three key themes:

Key theme	Grade awarded
Outcomes and impact	Very Good
Service delivery	Very Good
Leadership and quality culture	Very Good

### 4. Summary of key findings

#### Learner progress and outcomes

##### How well are learners progressing and achieving high quality outcomes?

###### Areas of positive practice

- Rates of learner retention over the last 3 years for Higher National Certificate (HNC) programmes are high. Almost all learners successfully completed their programme.
- Overall attainment for HNC programmes is high and has been over the last 3 years. Almost all learners successfully completed their qualification.
- Most learners who successfully complete the HNC qualification progress to further study in higher education.
- HNC programmes are preparing learners for further study well, and teaching staff are supporting learners to achieve their identified goals in higher education or employment.
- All learners have opportunities to develop technical skills in acting, dance and musical theatre. They gain confidence in performing and auditioning and develop useful employability and business management skills.

###### Areas for development

- None identified.

##### How well do we meet the needs of stakeholders?

###### Areas of positive practice

- The Institute has in place a range of programmes that enable learners to progress to degree level study. This raises the aspirations of learners and promotes awareness of opportunities to progress within the creative industries.
- Staff engage productively with schools across Edinburgh, West Lothian and Fife to raise awareness of careers in the creative industries. They deliver classes and workshops to school-age young people and attend school events to explain and promote the range of opportunities available. This is contributing positively to recruitment rates.

- All staff use formal and informal arrangements effectively to check learner progress. Teaching staff meet regularly with learners to discuss progress, and staff use team meetings to ensure that arrangements to support individual learners are communicated and actioned.
- All staff engage well with quality assurance arrangements to ensure a high level of compliance with SQA external verification requirements. This provides staff with opportunities for professional learning and ensures a high level of confidence with other awarding agencies.

### **Areas for development**

- None identified.

## **5. Service delivery**

### **Delivery of learning and teaching:**

#### **How good is our delivery of learning and teaching?**

### **Areas of positive practice**

- All staff have joined the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme. This is monitored well by managers to ensure that staff understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding arrangements for young people and vulnerable groups.
- Teaching staff set high standards and provide learners with appropriate levels of support and challenge to develop their academic and vocational skills. They encourage and support learners well to take responsibility for their studies and practice independently.
- Teachers take good account of individual needs and provide opportunities for learners to select learning methods that reflect their abilities and learning preferences.
- Cross-curricular working is a key feature of curriculum planning. Staff work together well to provide opportunities for peer learning across different programme areas to widen their knowledge of creative industries.
- All staff work proactively to develop learners' confidence and skills. Teaching staff support individual learners well to identify aspects of their technical skills that require improvement. They apply teaching approaches that involve learners in critiquing their abilities and use repetition effectively to improve performance and build confidence in performing.
- All staff develop a useful range of online learning resources that support learners well to consolidate and enhance their learning out with class times.
- Almost all teaching staff signpost regularly, meta skills within lessons. They support learners well to create a digital portfolio of their skills to show to prospective employers and enhance employment prospects.
- Employability skills are promoted well by teaching staff, and career management skills are embedded within the curriculum. This is supported to good effect through regular visits by industry speakers and external practitioners.

- All teaching staff draw productively on their industry work experiences to make lessons relevant, interesting and stimulating for learners.
- All staff use effective informal peer observation arrangements alongside team-teaching approaches, to improve and enhance learning and teaching and share best practice.
- Almost all learners value the high level of support they receive from staff throughout their programme. All learners benefit from the advice they receive from teaching staff to make informed choices about their chosen career and progression pathways.
- Staff arrange frequent visits to theatres and industry events to provide learners with up-to-date information and insight into the creative industries. These events encourage learner progression and stimulate consideration of employment opportunities.

### **Areas for development**

- None identified.

## **Management of learning and teaching**

### **How good is our management of the delivery of learning and teaching?**

#### **Areas of positive practice**

- Recruitment arrangements allow staff to draw constructively on pre-entry auditions designed to assess technical skills and place applicants on an appropriate level of programme.
- Well-considered induction activities provide learners with useful information about their programme and the range of services to support learning.
- Pastoral support is coordinated well, and learners have good opportunities to disclose additional support needs prior to and during programmes. Staff and management work purposefully together and with external agencies to ensure all learners have access to support mental health issues.
- Learner representatives make good use of advisory board meetings to suggest improvements to curriculum design and learning and teaching approaches. Examples of improvements include increased access to rehearsal spaces, and establishment of a wellbeing room.

#### **Area for development**

- Arrangements for evaluating learning and teaching are not sufficiently systematic. Teaching staff are not yet able to contribute fully to identifying actions for improvement.

## 6. Leadership and quality culture

### How good is our strategic leadership?

#### Areas of positive practice

- The Institute's strategic plan is well-considered and is communicated effectively to staff. It takes good account of current and emerging industry requirements and opportunities to deliver provision to local communities.
- All staff take advantage of the new building design to collaborate in the delivery of the three disciplines of dance, acting and musical theatre. Staff work together purposefully to redesign the curriculum and provide opportunities for learners to gain wider employability skills.
- Appropriate arrangements are in place to meet the requirements of awarding bodies and funding agencies, including standardisation and contextualisation of assessment for learners. This ensures a consistent approach to assessment and promotes opportunities for learners to achieve.
- All managers take good account of the views of learners and staff. Student representatives gather and communicate learner feedback for each programme of study. Learner and staff feedback is used systematically by programme boards, advisory boards, the learning and teaching board, and within annual programme review arrangements to inform future planning. As a result, staff and learners feel their views are valued.
- All staff complete training on PREVENT. Managers draw constructively on participant feedback to embed key principles into organisational policies, procedures and teaching materials.

#### Areas for development

- Managers do not systematically collate, analyse or reflect upon equalities data to support action planning for improvement. This limits the implementation of the equality, diversity and inclusion strategy.
- Staff do not have sufficient opportunity to access support to develop their teaching practice or share good practice.

## 7. What happens next?

We are confident that the provider has the capacity to continue to improve and we will make no further visits as a result of this review.

Sarah Halliwell  
HM Inspector