



Provider Monitoring Report

Royal Academy of Dance (RAD)

21 June 2023 – 27 June 2023

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1 Background

Between 21 June 2023 and 27 June 2023, the Accreditation Auditor monitored remote examinations that had been conducted at six examination venues and had discussions with both RAD examiners involved in these examinations.

The Accreditation Auditor would like to acknowledge the staff at RAD for timely supply of extensive examination footage and related materials as part of the provider monitoring process. The Accreditation Auditor would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the two RAD examiners, which was very useful to the provider monitoring process.

1.1 Scope

SQA Accreditation carries out quality assurance activity in line with its *Quality Assurance of Approved Awarding Bodies Policy*. This involves monitoring a sample of the awarding body's approved providers or assessment sites. Provider monitoring visits will be conducted in a consistent manner within and between providers.

The aim of monitoring is to:

- ◆ ensure the awarding body's compliance with SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements
- ◆ confirm that quality assurance arrangements are being conducted by the awarding body in accordance with its prescribed arrangements
- ◆ ensure that quality assurance arrangements are being conducted in a consistent manner, within and between providers
- ◆ ensure that providers are receiving the appropriate guidance, support and documentation from the awarding body in order to facilitate a high standard of qualification delivery
- ◆ inform future audit and monitoring activity for the awarding body

All Principles may be included within the scope of the provider monitoring activity.

Awarding body documentation considered for review includes all documents banked on the awarding body's SharePoint place at the time of provider monitoring and information supplied by providers to support provider monitoring activity. Restricted or commercially sensitive information gathered during SQA Accreditation's quality assurance activities is treated in the strictest confidence.

SQA Accreditation provider monitoring reports are written by exception focusing only on those areas where corrective action is required or recommended.

1.2 Provider Monitoring Report Timescales

RAD provider monitoring dates:	21 June 2023 – 27 June 2023
Provider Monitoring Report approved by Accreditation Co-ordination Group on:	5 July 2023
Provider Monitoring Report to be signed by RAD:	17 August 2023
Action Plan to be emailed to regulation@sqa.org.uk by RAD:	17 August 2023

The process will apply in relation to the timescales specified above:

- ◆ The awarding body will be sent a copy of the Provider Monitoring Report by email.
- ◆ The awarding body must sign the copy of the Provider Monitoring Report and return by email to SQA Accreditation in accordance with the timescale specified above.
- ◆ The awarding body will also be emailed a copy of the Action Plan.
- ◆ The awarding body must complete and return the Action Plan in accordance with the timescale specified above and email this in Microsoft Word format to regulation@sqa.org.uk.
- ◆ SQA Accreditation will confirm when the Action Plan is appropriate to address the Issues and present it to Accreditation Co-ordination Group (ACG) for approval.
- ◆ Following approval by ACG, the awarding body will be sent a signed copy of the approved Action Plan by email.
- ◆ The awarding body must sign the Action Plan and return by email to SQA Accreditation.

The findings of this Provider Monitoring Report and the associated Action Plan will be published on SQA Accreditation's website following signed agreement.

SQA Accreditation will continually monitor progress towards completion of the proposed actions identified in the Action Plan and update the awarding body's Quality Enhancement Rating as appropriate.

1.3 Summary of Provider Monitoring Issues and Recommendations

An Issue has been recorded where evidence shows that the awarding body is not compliant with SQA Accreditation’s regulatory requirements. The awarding body must address the Issues and specify corrective and preventative measures to address them through its Action Plan.

The Action Plan is emailed to RAD as a separate document to the Provider Monitoring Report and must be submitted to SQA Accreditation in accordance with the timescale specified in 1.2. As a result of the provider monitoring activity, three Issues have been recorded and three Recommendations have been noted.

Issue	Detail of Issue recorded	Risk rating
1. Principle 9	RAD must ensure that documents on SharePoint are assigned to the correct Regulatory Principle and that all relevant documents are uploaded.	Low
2. Principle 12	<p>Of the six examination venues monitored, only one fulfilled all the requirements as stated in RAD documentation. The scheduled time of the examinations was not stated/presented in five of the venues; the date was not stated in three of the examination venues; and candidates did not say their names in three examination venues, only the Applicant did.</p> <p>This Issue was raised previously in the provider monitoring report of 2022–23.</p> <p>RAD must ensure that examination requirements are followed consistently across examination venues.</p>	Medium
3. Principle 12	<p>Of the six examination venues monitored, three of six did not show the videographer when panning the 360 degree view. Of these three, one did not show an additional person who was in the room at the start of the examination, only the voice could be heard. Additionally, the same examination venue only panned the room showing a 360 degree view at the beginning of the examination on day one of the examinations when there were four days in this venue.</p> <p>RAD must ensure that examination venues capture all authorised persons within the 360 degree panning shot and that this panning takes place at the start of each examination day, in accordance with RAD regulations.</p>	Medium

A Recommendation has been noted where SQA Accreditation considers there is potential for enhancement. The awarding body is advised to address any Recommendations in order to reinforce ongoing continuous improvement. However, measures to correct or prevent these are not mandatory and therefore do not form part of the Action Plan.

Recommendation	Detail of Recommendation noted
1. Principle 6	<p>While both examiners commented positively on the availability of the filmed examinations, it was felt that they did not replace the value of a live performance.</p> <p>Through discussion with examiners, RAD may wish to undertake comparative analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of both live examinations and filmed examinations.</p>
2. Principles 6 and 7	<p>In person examiner seminars have not been reinstated since the pandemic.</p> <p>Examiner 2 felt that their importance and necessity had been overlooked and that the ongoing training and standardisation facilitated by live seminars is essential.</p> <p>RAD may wish to consider the benefits of reintroducing live examiner seminars.</p>
3. Principle 12	<p>Examiner 2 felt that sometimes the filmed footage received was not good quality.</p> <p>RAD may wish to sample filmed footage from each Applicant before sending to the examiner and/or remind examiners that they should contact RAD if footage received is unsuitable so that this can be redone.</p>

1.4 Risk Rating of Issues

SQA Accreditation assigns a rating to each Issue recorded depending on the impact on or risk to the awarding body's operations, its SQA accredited qualifications and/or the learner.

Issues recorded during provider monitoring will count towards RAD's Quality Enhancement Rating which will, in turn, contribute towards future quality assurance activity. Further detail on how the Quality Enhancement Rating is calculated can be found on the [SQA Accreditation website](#).

2 Good Practice, Issues and Recommendations

The following sections detail:

- ◆ good practice noted by providers
- ◆ Issues recorded and Recommendations noted against SQA Accreditation's regulatory requirements

2.1 Good Practice

The following areas of good practice were noted by examiners:

Examiner 1 highlighted the:

- ◆ international reputation of RAD
- ◆ user friendly nature of the examination itinerary sent to examiners, which is simple and straightforward
- ◆ flexibility of filmed examinations for teachers and candidates, allowing these to be scheduled when candidates are ready rather than waiting for a specific in-person examination
- ◆ very supportive and helpful staff in RAD
- ◆ dedicated email and telephone number for examiners to seek support
- ◆ comprehensive and thorough process involved in becoming a RAD examiner
- ◆ twice yearly online standardisation activities

Examiner 2 highlighted the:

- ◆ exceptional reputation and world-wide respect that the organisation commands
- ◆ privilege of being an examiner with such an esteemed academy
- ◆ availability of filmed examinations which has allowed dance schools and their candidates to continue through the pandemic and beyond
- ◆ very structured process for filmed examinations from obtaining examiner availability to providing password protected filmed footage
- ◆ user friendly nature of the marking app for examiners

2.2 Issues

Regulatory Principle 9. The awarding body and its providers must maintain accurate documents, records and data.

In reviewing documentation on SharePoint in preparation for provider monitoring, the Accreditation Auditor noted that some documents are assigned incorrectly to some of the Regulatory Principles, for example complaints documentation is within Principle 12 when this should now be Principle 16.

Additionally, the Accreditation Auditor cannot find the *Filmed Examination Guidelines for RAD (RTS) Registered Teachers (Applicants)*, January 2023 or the *Filmed Examination Overview*, January 2023 on SharePoint.

RAD must ensure that documents on SharePoint are assigned to the correct Regulatory Principle and that all relevant documents are uploaded.

This has been recorded as **Issue 1**.

Regulatory Principle 12. The awarding body and its providers must ensure that they have the necessary arrangements and resources required to manage and administer qualification delivery and assessment.

Part 10 of Section 8 Filming Requirements within the *Filmed Examination Guidelines for RAD (RTS) Registered Teachers (Applicants)*, January 2023, states that 'Prior to the start of each set, the Applicant should clearly state the exam entry number, name and ID of school, date, scheduled time of examination and level of examination. Alternatively, this information can be written on a piece of paper and filmed for clarity. The Applicant should then greet the candidates "good morning/afternoon" and for each set, ask the candidates to say their names. After the candidates have verbally confirmed their names, the Applicant should clearly repeat each candidate's full name and ID number.'

Of the six examination venues monitored, only one fulfilled all these requirements. The scheduled time of the examinations was not stated/presented in five of the venues; the date was not stated in three of the examination venues; and candidates did not say their names in three examination venues, only the Applicant did.

This Issue was raised previously in the provider monitoring report of 2022–23.

RAD must ensure that examination requirements are followed consistently across examination venues.

The Accreditation Auditor acknowledges that RAD has recently produced a comprehensive *Checklist for Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) Filmed Examinations* in line with 2023 Guidelines which if completed correctly would ensure requirements were met.

This has been recorded as **Issue 2**.

Regulatory Principle 12. The awarding body and its providers must ensure that they have the necessary arrangements and resources required to manage and administer qualification delivery and assessment.

Following the provider monitoring report of 2022–23, part 8 of Section 8 Filming Requirements within the *Filmed Examination Guidelines for RAD (RTS) Registered Teachers (Applicants)*, January 2023, states that, '(NEW for 2023) Our regulators require that the camera pans round the room at the beginning of the examination day (e.g. a 360 degree view of the studio). This shot should capture the authorised persons who will be present in the studio during the examination (see 6). Applicants must ensure that they have relevant permissions for such persons to be so captured.'

Part 6 states that, 'the only people permitted in the studio are the person acting as the examiner, candidates and pianist or music operator, and a videographer (if choosing to use) with the exception of demonstration classes where an additional assistant may be permitted.'

Of the six examination venues monitored, three of six did not show the videographer when panning the 360 degree view. Of these three, one did not show an additional person who was in the room at the start of the examination, only the voice could be heard. Additionally, the same examination venue only panned the room showing a 360 degree view at the beginning of the examination on day one of the examinations when there were four days in this venue.

RAD must ensure that examination venues capture all authorised persons within the 360 degree panning shot and that this panning takes place at the start of each examination day, in accordance with RAD regulations.

As indicated in Issue 2, the Accreditation Auditor acknowledges that RAD has recently produced a comprehensive *Checklist for Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) Filmed Examinations* in line with 2023 Guidelines, which if completed correctly would ensure requirements were met.

This has been recorded as **Issue 3**.

2.3 Recommendations

Regulatory Principle 6. The awarding body must continually review the effectiveness of its services, systems, policies and processes.

While both examiners commented positively on the availability of the filmed examinations, it was felt that they did not replace the value of a live performance. Specifically, examiner 2 commented that even where the filming is faultless, the communication and eye contact and the individual vibe from each candidate present in live examinations is lost. Both examiners agreed that filmed examinations should continue as an option as they have many advantages but that they should not necessarily be the default.

Through discussion with examiners, RAD may wish to undertake comparative analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of both live examinations and filmed examinations.

This has been noted as **Recommendation 1**.

Regulatory Principle 6. The awarding body must continually review the effectiveness of its services, systems, policies and processes.

Regulatory Principle 7. The awarding body must have an effective approach for communicating with its staff, stakeholders and SQA Accreditation.

In addition to online standardisation tasks which examiners complete, prior to the pandemic, RAD also hosted in-person examiner seminars for the purpose of upholding standards and maintaining uniform marking levels. Examiner 2 commented that these seminars helped to unify examiners as an examining body, as they allowed examiners to discuss, compare, debate and determine various factors of the role over the course of a few days.

The seminars have not been reinstated since the pandemic, though one was due to be held at the beginning of 2023 but was then cancelled. While acknowledging the costly nature of in-person seminars, examiner 2 felt that their importance and necessity had been overlooked and that the ongoing training and standardisation facilitated by live seminars is essential.

RAD may wish to consider the benefits of reintroducing live examiner seminars.

This has been noted as **Recommendation 2**.

Regulatory Principle 12. The awarding body and its providers must ensure that they have the necessary arrangements and resources required to manage and administer qualification delivery and assessment.

Examiner 2 felt that sometimes the filmed footage received was not good quality, either because the picture was blurred, the sound was too low or distorted or the candidates had danced out of camera shot. While Applicants have been provided with guidelines on how to film their examinations, the examiner felt that if footage is below the required standards and is difficult to mark, it should not be accepted and the teacher asked to re-film.

RAD may wish to sample filmed footage from each Applicant before sending to the examiner and/or remind examiners that they should contact RAD if footage received is unsuitable so that this can be redone.

This has been noted as **Recommendation 3**.

3 Acceptance of Provider Monitoring Findings