

Rambert School Student Engagement Framework

Introduction

Rambert School was a Member School of the Conservatoire for Dance & Drama (CDD) until gaining independent registration with the Office for Students in August 2022. From 2017 to August 2022 Rambert School followed the CDD's Student Engagement Framework. This established a set of principles and operational mechanisms that form the bedrock of our current approach to student engagement and representation in Rambert School.

From August 2022, as an independently registered Higher Education Provider with the Office for Students, Rambert School has updated and adapted established policies and frameworks that it was instrumental in creating as part of the Conservatoire for Dance & Drama. Our Student Engagement Framework is one of these. A significant difference is that the CDD Student Engagement Framework was wholly based on the old version of the QAA's Quality Code (pre-2018), and thus also pre-dates the Office for Students.

The Rambert School revised Student Engagement Framework builds upon the CDD Student Engagement Framework which was designed specifically for our institution, and is now informed by the OfS ['B Conditions'](#) governing quality, reliable standards and positive outcomes for all students. It is also designed to comply with the expectations for student engagement of the validating university, the University of Kent.

Our Framework also takes account of the Office for Students' priorities for student engagement, as well as retaining good practice principles endorsed by the UK Quality Code (2018), as the UK Quality Code adheres to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality and thus helps Rambert School ensure a comprehensive approach to student engagement.

Rambert School approach to Student Engagement

We define our institutional Student Engagement as 'the meaningful participation of students in the quality assurance and enhancement of their training and in shaping the wider School'. Our approach recognises that student engagement in Rambert School needs to be considerate of our conservatoire context, where students have significant contact hours with limited flexibility and free time. The intention of this Framework is to ensure there is effective student engagement within this context. We also recognise that a variety of mechanisms for student engagement, and flexibility within these, suits our small but diverse student body.

The Rambert School Student Engagement Framework has Four Areas:

- **Area One: Engaging students with their training / learning**
- **Area Two: Student engagement with quality assurance and enhancement in School**
- **Area Three: training for student representatives**
- **Area Four: Measuring student engagement against performance indicators**

Students and the Framework

Our Student Engagement Framework is designed to cover all students, not just elected student representatives. Our approach to Student Engagement aims to capture the voice and input of our whole student community.

We are a small specialist institution with around 150 students and we do not have a Students' Union. However, we have the benefit of being easily able to reach out and understand our community Student Voice as well as that of individuals, alongside having an agility in being able to respond. We are committed to a continuous dialogue with our students as partners not only in their learning but also as part of the School community, and may evolve our approaches to methods and mechanisms for student engagement subject to need.

Staff and the Framework

For the Student Engagement Framework to be effective, both teaching and non-teaching staff involved in student engagement activity should be familiar with student engagement practices and the role student representation plays. Staff should feel enabled to signpost, respond and deal appropriately with the contribution from students and their representatives.

The full Rambert School Student Engagement Framework can be found on pages 5-9 of this document.

Higher Education Sector Principles informing this Student Engagement Framework

Applicable OfS 'B' Conditions B1-B2:

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------|----|--|
| B: Quality, reliable standards and positive outcomes for all students | General Ongoing Condition | B1 | Academic Experience The provider must ensure that the students registered on each higher education course receive a high quality academic experience. A high quality academic experience includes but is not limited to ensuring that each higher education course: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Is up-to-date;2. Provides educational challenge;3. Is coherent;4. Is effectively delivered; and5. Requires students to develop relevant skills. |
| | General Ongoing | B2 | Resources, support and student engagement The provider must take all reasonable steps to ensure: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Students registered on a higher education course receive resources and support to ensure:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. A high quality academic experience for those students; andb. Those students succeeding in and beyond higher education; and2. Effective engagement with students to ensure:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. A high quality academic experience for those students; andb. Those students succeed in and beyond higher education |

The Office for Students (OfS) [defines Student Engagement as “the strategic and impactful involvement of students or students’ perspectives”](#). Along with being designed to meet the above ‘B’ conditions of registration, Rambert School’s approach to Student Engagement is informed by the following [OfS Principles of Student Engagement](#):

Student Engagement should be:

- Strategic
- Impactful
- Purposeful
- Inclusive
- Timely
- Transparent
- Empowering

OfS Student Engagement Priorities (as at April 2022)

- Help students and students’ union officers enhance the quality and outcomes of their education.
- Engage students to understand the issues OfS should focus on to protect their interests effectively.
- Involve students and students’ unions in shaping our regulatory approach to freedom of speech.
- Continue to work with students to ensure universities and colleges act to prevent and respond to incidents of harassment and sexual misconduct.
- Support the work of groups funded by the OfS on student issues relating to equality, diversity, and inclusion, such as the disabled student’s commission.
- Engage students in our work to understand and share what works in supporting student mental health and wellbeing.
- Develop a training package for student representatives to effectively engage and shape our regulatory processes.

Applicable parts of the UK Quality Code (as at August 2022)

| Part of UK Quality Code | Applicable aspect |
|---|--|
| Expectations for Standards: Common Practice | The provider reviews its core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement |
| Expectations for Quality: Core Practice | The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. |
| Expectations for Quality: Core Practice | The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience. |

| | |
|--|---|
| Expectations for Quality: Common Practice | The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience. |
| Advice & Guidance: Guiding Principles | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student engagement through partnership working is integral to the culture of higher education, however and wherever provision is delivered - student engagement is led strategically, but widely owned. 2. Higher education providers, in partnership with their student body, define, promote, monitor and evaluate the range of opportunities to enable all students to engage in quality assurance and enhancement processes. 3. Effective student engagement supports enhancements, innovation and transformation in the community within and outside the provider, driving improvements to the experience of students. 4. Arrangements exist for effective representation of the collective student voice at all organisational levels including decision-making bodies. 5. Providers recognise and respond to the diversity of their student body in the design and delivery of student engagement, partnership working and representation processes. 6. Student engagement and representation processes are adequately resourced and supported. 7. Providers work in partnership with the student body to close the feedback loop. | |

Rambert School Student Engagement Framework

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- **Area One:** Engaging students with their training / learning
- **Area Two:** Student engagement with quality assurance and enhancement in Rambert School
- **Area Three:** training, briefing and support for student representatives
- **Area Four:** Measuring student engagement against performance indicators

AREA ONE: Rambert School Principles of Student Engagement

As set out earlier in this document, the Rambert School Student Engagement Framework is informed by sector requirements and good practice, which have been used to create the following School principles for student engagement. These reflect the relationship between student engagement and the particular character of the conservatoire training provided by Rambert School.

Principles of student engagement:

1. **Students engage in and with their learning** – Rambert School staff progressively encourage and support students towards their responsibilities to develop as independent learners and to prepare them for careers as performers, makers and production professionals. Staff create an inclusive environment which anticipates the varied needs of learners and aims to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities.
2. **Students engage in the enhancement of teaching and learning** – With leadership and guidance provided by staff, students and student representatives are active participants in shaping the content, delivery and organisation of their teaching and learning, in order to enhance their overall training experience.
3. **Students engage actively as members of a learning/artistic community** – Rambert School facilitates and enables students to collaborate, interact, work and research in partnership with other students, staff and members of the professions, including alumni, who belong to the wider community.
4. **Students engage with the profession** – Rambert School encourages and supports sustained student engagement with professional learning opportunities so students have the opportunity to realise their potential as artists or production specialists.
5. **Students engage in consultation, quality processes and decision making** – Students are encouraged and are provided with opportunities to express their individual and collective opinions, concerns and ideas at all relevant levels of decision making and internal review.
6. **Students engage through effective student representation** – Student leaders (such as representatives and inclusivity advocates) are an essential part of the School community and help to shape our institution and its future. Staff create an inclusive environment where students are encouraged to participate in leadership roles and are supported by staff and training to act on behalf of their cohorts.

AREA TWO: Student engagement with quality assurance and enhancement in Rambert School

Rambert School recognises the value and importance of the Student Voice and student engagement with quality assurance and enhancement in the School. As a result, we have various different methods of facilitating engagement, which are underpinned by the following principles:

Principles for Student Engagement in Quality Assurance & Enhancement

- A variety of mechanisms allows for diversity of representation, voice and agency;
- Effectiveness is key. The most effective methods will be used for the applicable purpose;
- More than one method of student engagement may be used for a single quality assurance/enhancement purpose;
- All elements of Student Voice, whether actively engaged by the School during a student's tenure (such as student committee membership), or passively engaged (such as the National Student Survey) are considered by the School to constitute student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement.

Our approach to Student Engagement reflects our size, culture and makeup. The above principles are supported by the following arrangements:

- student membership on the School's Academic Quality & Standards Board
- written terms of reference for a SSCC (Student Staff Consultative Committee), a sub-Committee of the School's Academic Quality & Standards Board
- students will have the opportunity to take a lead role in SSCCs, for example through co-chairing
- there is a meeting of the SSCC at least once a term
- there is a written record of all SSCC meetings and their actions, which includes a record of the consideration of issues and ideas raised formally by student representatives
- the feedback loop is closed by feeding back both to student representatives and to all students; a variety of methods can be used for this, including in-person/virtual meetings, TEAMS, emails etc
- the process for electing/selecting student representatives is transparent, inclusive and student-led
- all students know who their student representative is (or representatives are) on the SSCC, with consideration given to level of study and range of subjects in the arrangements for representation
- all student representatives have adequate training and support to perform their responsibilities
- the roles and responsibilities of representatives are clearly outlined in their student handbook
- students are adequately signposted to appropriate formal and informal routes to raise matters of concern, give feedback and highlight good practice
- there is opportunity for all students to provide individual feedback and there are effective mechanisms to relay back to students where student feedback has been acted upon, or where change is not possible and the reasons why this has not happened
- wherever it is appropriate to do so, there is student representation and/or consultation at all levels of decision making within the school about matters relating to students

- there is a mechanism for schools to annually review, in partnership with students, the effectiveness of student engagement and representation arrangements
- information about programmes from internal quality processes is shared with and considered by student representatives. Examples of this may include: NSS results, course evaluations and other student feedback, periodic review, external examiners reports, annual monitoring and Graduate Outcomes Survey results.
- as appropriate changes to courses, policies and procedures are discussed with student representatives / students¹

¹ This includes consultation of students which is formally provided for in student terms and conditions.

AREA THREE: Training, briefing and support for student representatives

The UK Quality Code Advice and Guidance on Student Engagement states:

Effective student engagement requires clearly identified resourcing at a strategic level. Students and staff benefit from induction and ongoing training and support relating to student engagement. Providers offer and evaluate the training and support provided to ensure it is appropriate for the role.

The students' representative body requires adequate resource to lead on facilitating student academic representation, and providers often work with them on the delivery of induction and training activities. Consideration is given to ensuring training supports students to develop informed views, independent from the provider, which are representative of the wider student body.²

Rambert School recognises that it is expected that representatives receive the relevant information in order to fulfil their roles effectively. Across the HE sector, this generally takes the form of an 'in person' training session, supplemented by handbooks and online resources, where appropriate. To meet this expectation, Rambert School will ensure that the generic training needs of student representatives are met in the form of a face-to-face information session.

Coverage of training and written resources

The table below sets out a baseline of subjects for inclusion in training for student representatives.

| | |
|---|--|
| Understanding role & support available³ | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Role description and responsibilities• How the School/supports you in the role• Committee/School structure• Staff contacts and responsibilities• Signposting to relevant support staff and procedures |
| Communicating with students and staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to engage and consult students and ensure they know how to feedback to the School• Communication channels for feeding back• Understanding what reps can ask students for• Communicating with staff• Examples of expected feedback from students |
| Attending meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Detailed information about purpose of the meetings rep will attend• Role of reps in those meetings, including how to represent others• Meeting and negotiation skills• What to report to which meeting and how to do so• Most common topics and how to proceed with them |
| Feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What information should go to whom• How to communicate the information and what channels are available• Co-operation with other reps on their course and in School |

² See <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/student-engagement>

³ Basic information in this box is made available to all students in the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Student handbooks.

AREA FOUR: Measuring student engagement

Rambert School recognises that in order for us to ensure Student Engagement is effective, it should be monitored and measured. The following indicators therefore will be used to measure the effectiveness of student engagement in the School:

- **Indicator One:** ensuring that each student is represented by at least one student representative at School;
- **Indicator Two:** the percentage of student representatives at School and representatives on the School Student Staff Consultative Committee who have undertaken training;
- **Indicator Three⁴:** responses to all applicable Core questions of the NSS survey which might reasonably provide a measure of Student Voice. This may include, but not be limited to, some or all NSS questions covering the following areas:
 - Teaching on my course
 - Learning Opportunities
 - Marking and Assessment
 - Academic Support
 - Organisation and Management
 - Student Voice
 - Mental Wellbeing Services
 - Freedom of Expression
 - Overall Satisfaction with the Course
 - Open Text Question(s)

Indicator Three: 'Student voice' in the NSS survey

Indicator 3 should provide a measure against which Rambert School can review our student engagement and representation activity annually. The responses will be able to provide data from the student body on feedback mechanisms and how well these work, and can be used to inform future initiatives and strategy for Student Engagement.

Mechanisms for monitoring

When the School was part of CDD, Student Engagement was monitored via Annual Programme/Course Monitoring. From 2022-23 onwards, Rambert School will ensure that Student Engagement is monitored via its Academic Quality & Standards Board and sub-Committees, and will work to find the most effective means of monitoring this. Our cycle of monitoring will be annual, but mechanisms for monitoring will naturally occur throughout the year. In line with Rambert School's ability to be an agile and responsive institution, we may take action arising from any monitoring and review at any point throughout the academic year, rather than waiting for the annual monitoring and review points.

⁴ Updated November 2022 following revision of NSS Questions by OfS/HESA