

Higher Education Review (Foreign Providers) of NYU in London

March 2021

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About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Foreign Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at NYU in London. The review took place from 2 to 3 March 2021 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- x Barbara Howell
- x Dr Terence Clifford-Amos.

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provision and to make judgements as to whether or not academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. These expectations (and the associated Core and Common practices) are the statements in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (the Quality Code)¹ setting out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and of each other, and what the

Key findings

Judgements

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision.

- x The quality of student learning opportunities meets UK expectations.

The QAA review team also provided a commentary on academic standards.

- x The provider satisfactorily

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

Core practice (Q1): The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.

Findings

2.1 NYUL holds affiliate status with NYU and therefore does not have primary responsibility for the admission of students. Admissions and academic oversight are managed by NYU. In the 2018-19 cycle, the total number of applicants to all three degree-awarding campuses was 84,000. The admission's process for the MA programme is run by the Graduate School of Arts and Science (GSAS) at NYU. NYUL supports the applications for graduate students to apply for Tier 4 visas.

2.2 The team tested the evidence through scrutiny of related documents pertaining to admissions and recruitment, student responses to the admission's process and arrangements for students with disabilities. The admissions process is rigorous and transparent, appropriate to a leading university and is a highly competitive process. The Office of Global Programmes (OGP) manages the entire application process and liaises with home schools' advising centres in determining eligibility to study away. All applicants should have a 3.0 cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) or above and must have completed at least two semesters prior to applications. A good academic record on their home campus without any major disciplinary concerns are prerequisites to enrolment at NYUL. The Tisch School of the Arts programme requires an interview or audition (for actors). Similarly, interviews and portfolios are required in the admission process for the Screenwriting pathway students. Applications are made to the Tisch Special Programmes office in liaison with OGP throughout. These special programmes also require a GPA minimum of 3.0 but, if justified by the audition process, applicants who fall below that figure might be considered. MA programme admissions are coordinated by the Graduate School of Arts and Science at NYU. Application to study for a semester or a year at NYUL requires a check that students have a sufficient standard of the English language. This is compliant with UKVI visa regulations.

2.3 Students receive an Academic Staff Handbook and a Policies and Procedures Manual. An induction session is held a few weeks before the start of the away semester. This involves a review of the policies and procedures together with their agreed contracts; there is an orientation to the facilities including classrooms and IT provision, together with guidance how to use NYU Home, affiliated applications such as NYU email and the virtual learning environment (VLE). A draft syllabus is reviewed both by the home university and locally, and new instructors who teach on the programmes can request one-to-one training from the Academic Office staff. Inclusivity and diversity, are highly important to NYU and there are extensive scholarships offered for students who require financial assistance. Students who receive accommodations from NYU, signifying one or more disabilities, can benefit from particular support offered by the London Moses Centre.

2.4 Students met by the team were following the Go Local programme in which students can attend NYUL if they are resident with family in London for the duration of their studies there. They can attend any of the 12 campuses, provided they satisfy the residency requirements. There are no additional fees other than home US university fees and organisation is largely in the hands of home universities. All courses carry credits towards US degrees. All students interviewed had an adviser in their home campus. The Go Local programme was an extraordinary measure devised for academic year 2020-21 in response to the exigencies of the pandemic and is unlikely to be repeated.

Core practice (Q5): The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.

Findings

2.23 The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience, mostly through evaluative feedback mechanisms. The review team considered student involvement outlined in the SED and student feedback mechanisms. Regular and end-of-term student feedback is important in making adjustments towards the continuous improvement of various aspects of the student experience, from the

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handbooks, faculty who teach on the programmes are aware of the processes for appeals and complaints. References are made to other policies and complaints about various matters are often resolved informally, though procedures for formal routes are clearly outlined in cases where informal resolution has not been achieved. Students met by the team were aware of the complaints and appeals procedures but had no reason to use the formal complaints process.

2.28 Students are able to appeal grades and can informally or formally raise academic concerns through the Assistant Director of Academics, Programme Manager for Liberal Studies and Creative Arts, or the Director. Home departments and academic advisers can also deal with appeals and complaints. Grading in the programme is not always a straightforward process, as UK academic staff are not used to the American system. There are no examination boards, externals, or automatic second markers. However, the system does not disadvantage the student, who is permitted to contest a grade within the first 30 days of its official receipt. MA students are provided with a very detailed handbook containing academic policies and processes for appeals.

2.29 The Global Judicial Process document outlines expected standards in student conduct as well as the appeals process. Bias, discrimination, or harassment issues can be reported through an NYU hotline. A poster is widely communicated, illustrating ways in which

Core practice (Q8): Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high- quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.

Findings

2.31 NYUL has offered and developed a range of progressive, supportive partnerships, which have enabled students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. NYUL has established six primary partnerships with institutions in the UK for students studying away for one or two semesters. These have been with EUSA - a third party provider, dealing with internship placements - Birkbeck, Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, National Film and Television School, School of Oriental and African Studies and Senate House. The team researched NYUL's partnership provision held discussions with students and staff and examined programme documentation.

2.32 The partnership with EUSA has not been in formal agreement since 2013. Other partnerships, with agreements that have expired, are RADA, NTFS and Senate House. It is unclear about the expiry date with SOAS. The partnership between NYUL and Birkbeck will conclude in August 2021. The agreement with the Senate House for the use of the library terminated during the pandemic (30 June 2020). In light of the pandemic, some arrangements were put on pause as they would have obliged NYUL to provide payment and take on responsibilities that were not appropriate or necessary as students could not travel to the UK and enrol in NYUL programmes. NYUL staff have kept in contact with the providers with the understanding that arrangements would resume when conditions permitted, and students could return to NYUL. NYUL has worked closely with these providers for a number of years and staff are confident of re-establishing agreements as pandemic circumstances change. As NYUL is not a degree-granting institution, these external relationships are not intrinsic to student completion of their degrees and alternatives can be found (primarily via resources at the home campuses) to ensure students remain on degree-progress throughout the pandemic.

2.33 NYU's Tisch School of the Arts relates to the provision delivered by RADA and the newer provision with NFTS. RADA and NFTS have liaised regularly with NYUL staff and the Executive Director of the Tisch Office. Visits are made to these institutions and meetings take place with instructors. Both organisations offer higher learning, specialist teaching and training. NYU course evaluations for the courses are completed by students. Any matters of concern have normally been addressed by NYUL staff. In light of the pandemic, no NYU students could study away at RADA in 2020-21, therefore, NYU did not take the step to finalise this new draft contract. The student actors were supported by their home departments in Tisch School of the Arts to do alternative coursework. Given the pandemic conditions and greatly reduced student numbers under the Go Local scheme in 2020-21, NYUL was not in a position to send students to NFTS in the spring semester of 2021 (NFTS is a spring-only program). If it becomes clear that NYUL can again enrol students onto this programme for spring semester 2022, NYUL will arrange a second amendment to the NFTS agreement.

2.34 The legal studies arrangement has been based on an agreement with the Birkbeck School of Law. Classes have operated in Bedford Square. In this specific instance, NYUL contracted with a whole department. Hitherto, Birkbeck has determined which lecturers are available and suitable for the teaching provision. NYUL hired Dr Jeremy Pilcher and Dr Serene John-Richards as full-time academic staff to bring all the instruction for the Legal Studies programme in-house. Drs Pilcher and John-Richards will take on the teaching for all five courses, develop co-curricular programming, legal sector internships, and advise students on the Solicitors Qualifying Examination route for those who are interested in

qualifying in the UK. Both staff members will liaise closely with NYU Admissions and provide advice to students before they come to study in London.

2.35 For arrangements with SOAS, NYUL students have been able to take three designated SOAS classes in Term 1 and SOAS students can attend two designated NYUL classes in the NYUL fall semester. There has been access to the SOAS library, VLE, SOAS email and any other provision in support of their studies.

Core practice (Q9): The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

Findings

2.39 NYU's global network is purposed to allow students to enrich and enhance their learning and research in offering opportunities with some of the world's leading centres as a complement to their home university. The indispensable elements and structures such as course objectives, desired learning outcomes, key assessment requirements, designated textbooks, grading criteria and other related areas are all grounded in the curricula and pedagogy at the home university. This ensures parity with courses delivered in NYU New York, NYU Shanghai, NYU Abu Dhabi, or NYU London. The team discussed the inclusion and achievement of academic and professional outcomes with staff and students, and examined a range of documentation.

2.40 Pre-pandemic, the Faculty Committee on the Future of Technology-Enhanced Education at NYU explored several possible pedagogic innovations to assist with the implementation of blended delivery including: the inclusion of easy integration of specialised third-party tools; enhanced design and delivery of fully online, hybrid, synchronous and asynchronous courses and programmes; easier construction and delivery of e-learning modules and other digital assets; maximising the efficiency of course management and offering a platform that is digitally accessible which performs seamlessly at and across NYU's global locations. The Committee was convened to monitor and manage this transition to the new Learning Management System (NYU Classes). It is intended that this outcome-orientated work will continue post-pandemic and will be rolled out by September 2021.

2.41 In other innovative designs, NYUL academic staff have encouraged the use of the twice-weekly pattern, similar to freshmen courses, where there are evident benefits to undergraduate learning outcomes when first-year students meet more frequently and for shorter periods of time and the spreading out of assignments. This helps to support more effective monitoring of student progress and to identify any emerging issues. NYUL also publishes a process and outcome set of guidelines for all staff: "

Common practice (1): The provider reviews its Core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.

Findings

2.51 Every semester, Academic Affairs colleagues review all the syllabi to verify that the vital core NYU requirements are met. New courses receive particular scrutiny by the Assistant Director for Academics and any courses which have undergone any significant modifications. Particular attention is given to new courses, courses which have had substantial changes and proposals for new developments. The Programme Manager for Creative Arts at NYUL remains in contact with senior staff at RADA to ensure the provision is maintaining high standards across the programmes. External reference points are used in all reviews of syllabi and their concomitants. Feedback from students is also material in such periodic surveys and evaluations. The review team considered a range of documents in relation to quality and enhancement and interviewed staff and students.

2.52 The London Site Specific Advisory Committee includes Global Coordinators from academic units that sponsor courses at NYUL and contribute to discussions and debates on academic standards and academic cohesion across the London provision. Visits to London are made by the Global Coordinator, or other delegations, to meet with NYUL teaching colleagues, visit their classes, or remotely to examine the reliability and equity of students' coursework. NYUL receives regular visits by colleagues across the different schools and academic and administrative departments. These are made by staff from the rraa.6 (eac)-ad6o0.002 Tc 5no

opportunities for individual and collective involvement of students in the assurance and enhancement of quality ensures that the Common practice is met with a low level of risk.

Common practice: Met

Level of risk: Low

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.64

e-learning

See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

Expectations

Statements in the Quality Code which clearly and succinctly express the outcomes providers should achieve in setting and maintaining the standards of their awards, and for managing the quality of their provision.

Flexible and distributed learning

A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations. See also distance learning .

Framework

A published formal structure. See also framework for higher education qualifications .

Framework for higher education qualifications

A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) and The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland (FQHEIS).

Good practice

A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

Learning opportunities

The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

Learning outcomes

Quality Code

Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of reference points for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the Expectations (and associated, applicable, Core and Common practices) that providers are required to meet.

Reference points

Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured.

Self-evaluation document

A report submitted by a higher education provider, assessing its own performance, to be used as evidence in a QAA review.

Subject Benchmark Statement

A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or e-learning)

Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

Threshold academic standard

The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national frameworks and Subject Benchmark Statements.

Virtual learning environment (VLE)

An intranet or password-only interactive website (also referred to as a platform or user interface) giving access to learning opportunities electronically. These might include such resources as course handbooks, information and reading lists; blogs, message boards and forums; recorded lectures; and/or facilities for online seminars (webinars).

Widening participation

Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a w0 Tw 32.402 0n