

AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES QUALITY AGENCY

Report of an Audit of the
National Institute of Dramatic Art

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CONTENTS

OVERVIEW OF THE AUDIT.....	1
Background	1
The Audit Process.....	1
CONCLUSIONS.....	3
Introduction to Findings.....	3
Commendations	4
Affirmations.....	4
Recommendations	5
1 INSTITUTIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE	6
1.1 Institutional and Educational Objectives	6
1.1.1 Change of Director/CEO	6
1.1.2 Strategic Plan	6
1.2 Institutional Structure	7
1.3 Institutional Governance	7
1.3.1 Board of Directors	7
1.3.2 Board of Studies	7
1.3.3 NIDA Foundation Trust.....	8
1.3.4 Relationship with UNSW	8
2 ACHIEVING EFFECTIVENESS IN TEACHING, LEARNING AND OTHER CORE FUNCTIONS	10
2.1 Admission and Progress.....	10
2.2 Teaching and Learning	10
2.2.1 Developing Approaches to Teaching and Learning	10
2.2.2 Graduate Attributes.....	11
2.2.3 Graded Assessment	11
2.2.4 Student Feedback.....	11
2.2.5 Industry Interactions	12
2.2.6 Course Advisory Groups	13
2.2.7 Industry Secondment Program.....	13
2.2.8 Transition to Employment.....	13
2.2.9 Alumni	14
2.2.10 Plagiarism	14
2.3 Scholarship and Creative Activity.....	14
2.3.1 Centre for Contemporary Performance Practice	14
3 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES, DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT TEACHING AND LEARNING AND OTHER CORE ACTIVITIES.....	16
3.1 Organisational Structures and Decision Making.....	16
3.1.1 Communication	16
3.2 Academic and Administrative Staff.....	16
3.2.1 Development of the Human Resource Function	16

3.2.2	Workload Policy	17
3.2.3	Casual Staff	17
3.2.4	Induction	18
3.2.5	Staff Performance Management	18
3.2.6	Professional Development.....	18
3.2.7	Marketing	19
3.3	Support and Student Learning	19
3.3.1	Student Load.....	19
3.3.2	Four-Term Model.....	20
3.3.3	Cost of Materials.....	20
3.4	Information Resources	20
3.4.1	Library	21
3.4.2	Academic Record Keeping	21
4	MAINTAINING A COMMITMENT TO QUALITY IMPROVEMENT	22
4.1	Review and Evaluation	22
4.1.1	Review	22
4.1.2	Benchmarking.....	22
4.2	Planning and Managing for Quality.....	22
5	DATA.....	24
	APPENDICES.....	25
	APPENDIX A: NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DRAMATIC ART	25
	APPENDIX B: AUQA’S MISSION, OBJECTIVES, VISION AND VALUES.....	27
	APPENDIX C: THE AUDIT PANEL	29
	APPENDIX D: ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS.....	30

OVERVIEW OF THE AUDIT

Background

In 2003, the Australian Government introduced the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA) which allows students in non self-accrediting higher education institutions (NSAIs) to receive financial assistance for their tuition fees through the FEE-HELP program. The HESA requires that HEPs whose students may receive FEE-HELP funds meet a range of quality and accountability requirements, including regular audit by a quality auditing body named in the Higher Education Provider Guidelines. NSAIs approved under the HESA for this purpose may be referred to as NSA-HEPs.

This Report of the audit by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) of the National Institute of Dramatic Art (the Institute or NIDA) provides an overview, and then briefly details the Audit Panel's main findings, and its commendations, affirmations and recommendations. A brief introduction to the National Institute of Dramatic Art is given in Appendix A; the mission, objectives, vision and values of AUQA in Appendix B; membership of the Audit Panel in Appendix C; and abbreviations and definitions used in this Report in Appendix D.

The Audit Process

AUQA bases its audits of non self-accrediting HEPs on each organisation's own objectives, together with the MCEETYA *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes* (available at: <http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya>), the DEEWR *Audit Handbook for non self-accrediting Higher Education Providers* and other relevant legal requirements or codes to which the organisation is committed. The programs or courses of NSAIs are accredited by government accreditation authorities, so quality audits of HEPs do not include a detailed examination of the academic quality assurance processes for programs of study.

HEP audits under the HESA consider institutional actions and performance in relation to, firstly, the institution's objectives; and, secondly, a group of criteria collectively known as 'Quality Audit Factors' (QAFs). The four QAFs are set out in the Handbook referred to above (and in the AUQA Audit Manual). Their primary purpose is to provide the HEPs with a framework for the review of certain aspects of institutional performance. In the report of its self review (the Performance Portfolio or Portfolio), the National Institute of Dramatic Art reported against each of the QAFs. The chapters in this Report use the four main topic headings provided by the QAFs. Within each chapter, all the criteria for that QAF are addressed, but usually in a holistic way rather than criterion by criterion.

On 5 February, the Institute presented its submission to AUQA, comprising a 61-page report against the individual QAF criteria, together with supporting materials. NSA-HEP audit panels generally meet by teleconference and the Panel met by this means on 26 February 2010 to consider these materials.

The Audit Visit at NIDA, in Sydney, took place from 22 to 23 March 2010. In all, the Audit Panel spoke with over 90 people during this audit visit, including the Board and Director/CEO, heads of department and discipline, managers, senior staff, students and external stakeholders. A session was also available for any member of the NIDA community to meet the Audit Panel but no one took advantage of this opportunity.

This Report relates to the situation current at the time of the Audit Visit, which ended on 23 March 2010 and does not take account of any changes that may have occurred subsequently. It records the

conclusions reached by the Audit Panel based on the documentation provided by the Institute as well as information gained through interviews, discussion and observation. While every attempt has been made to reach a comprehensive understanding of NIDA's activities encompassed by the audit, the Report does not identify every aspect of quality assurance and its effectiveness or shortcomings.

The Report contains a summary of audit findings together with lists of commendations, affirmations and recommendations. A commendation refers to the achievement of a stated goal, or to some plan or activity that has led to, or appears likely to lead to, the achievement of a stated goal, and which in AUQA's view is particularly significant. A recommendation refers to an area in need of attention, whether in respect of approach, deployment or results, which in AUQA's view is particularly significant. Where such matters have already been identified by the Institute, with evidence, they are termed 'affirmations'. AUQA indicates that some recommendations and affirmations have a high priority. It is acknowledged that recommendations in this Audit Report may have resource implications.

Quotations taken from the Portfolio are identified as (PF p).

CONCLUSIONS

This section summarises the main findings and lists the commendations, affirmations and recommendations. Other favourable comments and suggestions are mentioned throughout the text of the Report.

Introduction to Findings

Over the last eighteen months the National Institute of Dramatic Art has embarked on a large and strategic change agenda to renew and refresh its position as a 'national' education institution. AUQA acknowledges the enormous amount of work that has been undertaken within the Institute by staff at all levels in effecting change, and the strength of communication across the institution is commended. NIDA has developed a strategic plan in consultation with staff and stakeholders to give a framework to this change agenda and this provides a solid base for renewal. Many of the structures to support change are now in place and beginning to work well and this includes the development and implementation of many new human resource policies and processes. Both staff and students praised the industry secondment program and spoke highly of their respective involvements with this program. External stakeholders were also complimentary regarding the open manner in which NIDA is renewing itself and the relationships that are being actively built with industry. AUQA also commends the input of the course advisory groups and NIDA's ongoing relationship with the University of New South Wales (UNSW) and the assistance with student support the University provides. AUQA commends the recent review of the library and the operational changes which have occurred as a result of this review. Further, AUQA commends the overall review work being undertaken, the understanding of continuous improvement across the organisation and the strong communication processes in operation across the institution.

AUQA affirms the Institute's developing approaches to staff performance appraisal and professional development. In the short term, AUQA encourages a greater focus on professional development to explore pedagogy. NIDA's approach to benchmarking is also affirmed and encouraged.

The challenges for NIDA are to further explore the nexus between the creative arts and academic theory and practice in developing and promoting a culture of scholarship. These discussions need to be led by the Board of Studies. AUQA recommends that this defining of a culture of scholarship should flow onto the development of articulated approaches to teaching and learning. Additionally, but related to the development of a culture of scholarship, AUQA recommends that NIDA define graduate attributes to support approaches to teaching and learning, and consider the further development of transition to employment support for students. AUQA also acknowledges discussions by teaching staff and industry regarding the range and reach of the curriculum and recommends that NIDA undertake a review of its core curriculum to ascertain whether, and if so how, it is meeting the needs of a fast-paced and constantly evolving arts sector.

NIDA has a large casual workforce and AUQA recommends that a more coordinated management of these staff be developed. Whilst understanding that the commitment of staff at NIDA is strong, AUQA believes that a workload policy to support staff needs to be developed. AUQA also recommends a stronger focus on NIDA's approaches to consistent student feedback and encourages the Institute to develop more varied forms of feedback to suit small student cohorts.

A summary of commendations, affirmations, and recommendations follows. They are listed below in the order in which they appear in the Report.

Commendations

1. AUQA commends the National Institute of Dramatic Art’s strategic plan and staff and stakeholder involvement in the development and deployment of this plan.7
2. AUQA commends the National Institute of Dramatic Art’s ongoing relationship with the University of New South Wales and the assistance with student support services provided by the University.9
3. AUQA commends the National Institute of Dramatic Art’s broadening platform in actively engaging with the arts community.12
4. AUQA commends the role of the course advisory groups in advising the National Institute of Dramatic Art.13
5. AUQA commends the National Institute of Dramatic Art’s industry secondment program and the benefits this provides to both students and employers.13
6. AUQA commends the National Institute of Dramatic Art’s approach to communication, across all levels of the organisation and with students.16
7. AUQA commends the work undertaken and the achievements of the human resource function of the National Institute of Dramatic Art in developing systems and processes to better manage the Institute’s workforce.17
8. AUQA commends the National Institute of Dramatic Art for the new management of the library and the operational changes to its organisation.21
9. AUQA commends the National Institute of Dramatic Art’s developing approach to review and continuous improvement.22

Affirmations

1. AUQA affirms the National Institute of Dramatic Art’s recognition of the need to improve its approach to staff professional development and the need to ensure access to staff development is equitable and linked to achieving the educational objectives of the Institute.19
2. AUQA affirms the National Institute of Dramatic Art’s recognition that it needs to define key aspects of its offerings to students and stakeholders and the core characteristics of the institution.19
3. AUQA affirms the National Institute of Dramatic Art developing approaches to benchmarking and encourages discussions regarding benchmarking to contribute to the articulation of the NIDA culture of scholarship.22

Recommendations

1. AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art's Board of Studies lead and further explore and develop the nexus between the creative practice and academic theory and scholarship as it develops and defines a culture of scholarship and academic quality assurance.8
2. AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art develop and state a broad approach to teaching and learning, and consider the appointment of an experienced teaching and learning academic to assist the Board of Studies in leading, exploring and developing with staff approaches to pedagogy within a creative domain.....11
3. AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art under the auspices of the Board of Studies develop a set of NIDA graduate attributes in support of developing an approach to teaching and learning.11
4. AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art's feedback mechanisms ensure that student feedback is discussed with all staff each semester, and themes and issues from feedback are regularly presented to the Board of Studies.12
5. AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art further strengthen the curriculum and student support to prepare students for the transition to employment.....13
6. AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art conduct an annual survey of graduates, and use the results of this survey, through the appropriate academic governance structures, to inform teaching and learning.14
7. AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art develop a staff workload policy.17
8. AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art develop a coordinated approach to the management of casual teaching staff.17
9. AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art's staff performance management process links to equitable development opportunities focused on developing approaches to individual teaching and learning.18
10. AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art undertake a review of curriculum, including the first year experience to inform the future strategic directions of its curriculum design.....20

1 INSTITUTIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE

The National Institute of Dramatic Art sets out its vision, mission, core values and objectives in its National Institute of Dramatic Art Strategic Plan 2010–2012. These concepts and objectives may be found in Appendix A of this Report.

1.1 *Institutional and Educational Objectives*

1.1.1 Change of Director/CEO

In May 2008 a new Director/Chief Executive Officer (CEO) was appointed to NIDA. Prior to this appointment 'there was continuity of leadership with a long-serving Artistic Director (1969–2004) and a General Manager (1970–2008)' (PF p8). The two roles of Artistic Director and General Manager have been combined in a single Director and CEO position.

NIDA is moving through a process of change and renewal. Since the appointment of the new Director/CEO, NIDA has focused on redefining itself and developing its strategic plan. Through this planning process NIDA has involved staff, the Board of Directors and Board of Studies in reconsidering the Institute's purpose as a teaching and learning institution within the performing arts industry. NIDA is mindful that it will need to continue to redefine this purpose as the performing arts industry evolves. NIDA's approach to education is practically focused through a conservatoire model. NIDA recognises its role and responsibilities as a national arts school and its '...primary role is to discover and nurture future leaders of arts and entertainment' (NIDA Strategic Plan 2010–2012, p8).

NIDA is very concerned about its students and the recognition of the student as a creative artist. This is manifest in the strong devotion of staff in mentoring and nurturing students, and this is possible due to the small class sizes, and low student-staff ratios. NIDA is part-way through a process of renewal, one aspect of which is a growth in the awareness of how to better cater for students. It appeared to the Panel that there had been a lack of engagement with the changing needs of the student and with industry and there had been a reliance on tradition to inform current teaching practice. The Panel found evidence that NIDA is becoming more proactive in its relationships with external stakeholders and students and in thinking about the curriculum and how best to teach students. This has resulted, for example, in a recent move to a four-term year, with a focus on theory informing practice. The challenge, as NIDA is aware, is to balance the traditions of the past with the demands of the future, including new technologies and approaches to creative practice, to produce work ready graduates.

1.1.2 Strategic Plan

The NIDA strategic plan is well articulated and sets out the Institute's objectives, strategies and performance measurement. The Panel was provided with ample evidence that knowledge of the strategic and educational objectives is moving through the organisation. Whilst the deployment of the strategic plan still has some way to go, every staff member in a leadership position was able to discuss the objectives of the NIDA strategic plan, and the majority of staff had some knowledge of the strategic plan; had been involved in consultations regarding the development of the strategic plan, or the plan had been discussed with them when they attended induction/information sessions.

Commendation 1

AUQA commends the National Institute of Dramatic Art's strategic plan and staff and stakeholder involvement in the development and deployment of this plan.

1.2 Institutional Structure

NIDA is a small organisation with a total enrolment of 171 students in 2010 (data item 5.1). 'In 2009 there were an estimated 31.6 effective full time teaching staff and 24.0 effective full time general staff, in areas relevant to the higher education courses' (PF p10). This number includes many of the casual staff employed by NIDA over the course of the academic year. NIDA operates at one campus, in Kensington, Sydney. NIDA has a number of departments with a number of disciplines within each department. The structure of the departments broadly aligns with the teaching programs of the Institute. The Institute has a number of student and administrative services including marketing, library, philanthropy and events, operations, accounts and human resources.

NIDA also runs a successful program of short courses through NIDA Open Program and NIDA Corporate Performance. NIDA's training and performance space facilities are in high demand, as are NIDA Parade Theatres which are also accessible to the public. Whilst NIDA's educational programs are the highest priority, the Panel found that at times there is confusion amongst students and staff about priorities. For example, the competing priorities of the four strands of NIDA Open Program, NIDA Corporate Performance, performance and theatre space hire and undergraduate programs often resulted in high demand for rehearsal and practice space. NIDA is currently reviewing these four strands of activities, to seek a better balance between the important commercial activities and the space requirements of its undergraduate programs.

1.3 Institutional Governance

1.3.1 Board of Directors

NIDA has a constitution and is governed by a Board of Directors. There is a continuing focus on the development of a governance structure that has a logical and practical focus. For example, the Board undertakes an annual review in line with good practice in corporate governance. The Board of Directors has a range of representation and has recently appointed a new member with considerable higher education expertise to further strengthen the higher education skills on the Board. Other members of the Board include a representative from UNSW and members from the business sector. The Board of Directors delegates responsibility for the oversight of academic matters to the Board of Studies which is the equivalent to an academic board. There is a range of professionals who have been appointed to both boards over the last eighteen months and their skill sets are appropriate for their roles. It was apparent to the Panel that many of the members have a good understanding of the strategic role they play in achieving NIDA's strategic and educational objectives.

1.3.2 Board of Studies

The academic governance of NIDA is overseen by the Board of Studies (BoS). 'The current Chair and Director/CEO have further increased the academic focus of the BoS with the appointment of two additional academic members in 2009 and reshaping of the agenda towards the detailed content of the courses and academic quality assurance' (PF p16). The Panel believes that the academic leadership of the BoS needs to continue to be strengthened as does higher education

representation on the BoS, and the BoS needs to take a more active role in the academic governance and leadership of the organisation. The BoS also most importantly needs to affirm its role as the leader of academic quality assurance at NIDA and to be proactive in encouraging the development of a culture of quality teaching and learning and associated scholarship.

Whilst there is evidence in the BoS minutes that it is embarking on fruitful discussions around academic governance, ongoing discussions and thinking relating to creative pedagogies and scholarship also need to be led by the BoS. The involvement of teaching staff across the Institute will encourage the development and articulation of NIDA's approaches and depth of thinking regarding the creative practices and related academic theory and scholarship. The BoS needs to create a forum for discussion and debate on these issues to promote greater awareness of the teaching and learning of creative practice. It is important that NIDA develop and embed a strategic approach which moves beyond the current recognition that traditional academic approaches to teaching and learning and practical industry focused approaches are different. The overlap must be explored and built upon to build an articulated and commonly agreed basis for effective learning, teaching and scholarship.

Recommendation 1

AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art's Board of Studies lead and further explore and develop the nexus between the creative practice and academic theory and scholarship as it develops and defines a culture of scholarship and academic quality assurance.

Other areas in which NIDA could profit from stronger academic leadership of the BoS include the development of graduate attributes. The Panel asked in a number of interviews what defines a NIDA graduate, and the answers varied at all levels, with some employers considering that there is no difference between NIDA and other graduates such as those from Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) or the University of Melbourne's Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts and Music (VCAM). The Panel believes that an active discussion with stakeholders, led by the BoS, and the development of graduate attributes, could assist NIDA in defining the skills of NIDA graduates and development in a number of other areas. These include considering the employability skills of students once they leave NIDA and assisting in fundraising for NIDA.

1.3.3 NIDA Foundation Trust

NIDA receives financial sponsorship from the Australian Government through the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA). The NIDA Foundation Trust also raises funds from philanthropists and other donors, providing additional funding support, including for student bursaries. Both were supportive of NIDA's renewal process, and of the consultative management style of the Director/CEO. In terms of the Trust, the Panel noted that there is potential for an increased engagement to discuss strategic opportunities for NIDA with the Board and in strategic forums generally. The NIDA Foundation Trust is a separate entity that is used to raise funds on behalf of NIDA, including for scholarships for NIDA students. The Trust has the capacity to be a more involved strategic partner, particularly, for example, as NIDA begins to consider the feasibility study for the Centre for Contemporary Performance Practice.

1.3.4 Relationship with UNSW

NIDA has a positive and longstanding relationship with UNSW. The former president of the UNSW Academic Board is a member of the NIDA Board of Directors. NIDA has a negotiated service level agreement with UNSW, and many students utilise UNSW student support services

and library, security and ancillary facilities. A recent initiative is that a staff member of the UNSW Counselling Services is regularly available at the NIDA campus for student counselling. There is general appreciation amongst staff and students particularly for the work and advice that the UNSW Counselling Services area has undertaken with NIDA. Both NIDA and UNSW believe that the relationship will continue to strengthen over time and staff at NIDA are working more closely with marketing and other support areas of the University.

Commendation 2

AUQA commends the National Institute of Dramatic Art's ongoing relationship with the University of New South Wales and the assistance with student support services provided by the University.

2 ACHIEVING EFFECTIVENESS IN TEACHING, LEARNING AND OTHER CORE FUNCTIONS

NIDA is in a process of renewal, and in this renewal there is a focus on leadership in the arts. NIDA has some established teaching and learning approaches and frameworks in place, but these need to be rethought to better reflect the current context. The challenge for NIDA is to consider the practice of teaching and learning within a creative context, achieving a balance between industry professional practice and an academic approach to teaching and learning.

2.1 Admission and Progress

NIDA has a small intake of students each year across nine programs. The selection process is grounded in the reality of the arts industry and aims to select the most talented students from a very large pool in the most efficient manner. As NIDA operates with very small cohorts, and small student-staff ratios, the Institute monitors the progress of the students quite informally, and there are regular reviews and a formal student assessment at the end of each semester.

Whilst some of the programs are limited by industry demand for graduates, some of the smaller programs might benefit from a further consideration as to whether the smaller numbers are meeting industry needs and are viable. Whilst the Panel understands the conservatoire learning process and the practical and individualised learning approach, it questioned the efficiency of a course that taught four students in a year. Both industry and staff representatives had a desire for a slight increase in students in production and craft areas.

2.2 Teaching and Learning

2.2.1 Developing Approaches to Teaching and Learning

The fundamental challenge for NIDA is to develop an articulated approach to teaching and learning, to clarify what is good practice, and to define what comprises innovative approaches to teaching and learning. Whilst NIDA has some excellent practitioners teaching in programs or working with students in a guest capacity, the absence of the specification of an overall approach to teaching and learning and a culture of scholarship limits the development of good practice. For example, many teachers interviewed, despite having a broad range of experience and having worked in the education and creative arts for many years, found it hard to explain their approach to teaching.

The Institute has appointed an acting Teaching and Learning Manager who has been working with staff and assisting staff in moving to graded assessment and implementing student feedback processes within departments, and developing the foundations for a consistent approach to teaching and learning. The Panel believes that the Institute, under the direction of the BoS, needs to consider the appointment of a senior academic with experience in developing teaching and learning within a creative practice context to begin to seed, articulate and develop NIDA's approach to its practice and scholarship. At present NIDA is not providing a conceptual space for teachers to come together and discuss pedagogy. Such discussions, if well led, could go a long way in clarifying the NIDA approach to teaching and learning.

The absence of an explicit statement of a teaching and learning philosophy has inhibited the attention given to academic quality. The development of frameworks for effective teaching and learning is a good start but there needs to be a stronger articulation on how teaching and

learning can operate in a creative domain. One of NIDA's attributes has been that it does not, for example, prescribe to any particular model of teaching the discipline of Acting. But it is important to recognise that some industry practitioners may need some assistance in the classroom, and this assistance needs to be grounded in the NIDA approach to teaching and learning.

Recommendation 2

AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art develop and state a broad approach to teaching and learning, and consider the appointment of an experienced teaching and learning academic to assist the Board of Studies in leading, exploring and developing with staff approaches to pedagogy within a creative domain.

2.2.2 Graduate Attributes

In a range of interviews, participants were asked what makes a NIDA graduate. The responses did not describe to the Panel a consistent profile or set of attributes. NIDA aspires to produce future leaders and agents of change within the arts and entertainment industry. But currently NIDA is unable to define the characteristics that are being cultivated in students through the curriculum, and in this respect the curriculum does not seem to lead towards a cohesive outcome. Industry representatives were unanimous in suggesting that the outcomes of the current NIDA education are not fully preparing students for the reality of a fast changing arts world. In particular, the student's preparation for being self-employed or the ability to work across a range of creative platforms from the basis of a classical education was an area of considerable discussion.

Recommendation 3

AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art under the auspices of the Board of Studies develop a set of NIDA graduate attributes in support of developing an approach to teaching and learning.

2.2.3 Graded Assessment

NIDA is in the process of implementing graded assessment in all higher education programs. In 2009 a trial of graded assessment was conducted. In early 2010 all subject teachers have been fully briefed by the acting Teaching and Learning Manager and graded assessment is being introduced to first year students. The Panel was concerned that in some cases student cohorts are very small and teaching staff advised that they are developing their own marking scales. The Panel believes that a generic approach to a marking scale needs to be developed to ensure a consistency in the approach to marking across all disciplines.

2.2.4 Student Feedback

The Panel saw evidence of the beginnings of student feedback processes at NIDA, but much further work needs to be undertaken. The Panel also believes that there needs to be a more consistent approach to the undertaking of feedback and dissemination of feedback to staff. The Panel believes that all program units should be reviewed each semester. Due to the small groups in some classes, different and independent tools for feedback need to be used. This feedback also needs to be presented to the BoS regularly as part of the BoS remit of overseeing the quality assurance process for teaching and learning. At present it appears that feedback is

only being forwarded to heads of discipline. It is important that teachers receive direct feedback about their teaching, and students should receive regular information about what changes have occurred as a result of their feedback.

Recommendation 4

AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art's feedback mechanisms ensure that student feedback is discussed with all staff each semester, and themes and issues from feedback are regularly presented to the Board of Studies.

2.2.5 Industry Interactions

The Panel noted that there is significant support from industry for NIDA and enthusiasm for renewal of NIDA's links with the arts community. NIDA is perceived as becoming more open and proactive in its links with industry, and industry is very positive about this involvement. Practitioners and artists are involved in presenting small parts of the curriculum as casual staff or visiting scholars or artists and offer valuable insights. The Panel also noted that many staff and students acknowledge their great sense of privilege in that NIDA is able to attract the support of some of Australia's top artists who are willing and able to give their time to work with students and to share their insights.

Commendation 3

AUQA commends the National Institute of Dramatic Art's broadening platform in actively engaging with the arts community.

Amongst those industry representatives interviewed, the Panel found that there is an enthusiasm for stronger engagement and robust debate of NIDA's direction and focus. Industry representatives are highly interested in exploring with NIDA the concepts of classical versus contemporary training in relation to the future development of the art sector. Recognising that NIDA's curriculum is largely modelled on a theatre-based program, some industry representatives are also concerned about the employability of students, given the increasing demand of industry roles in television, film and in working with digital technologies. Many of the industry representatives interviewed are also keen to see a strengthening of film and television in the undergraduate programs. NIDA has moved to address these concerns and was in the process of appointing a Head of Film and Television at the time of the Audit Visit.

Whilst there are, and always will be strong opinions from industry about what NIDA could and should do, particularly because of NIDA's position as the 'national' arts education institute, industry representatives felt that in the past there had been very few channels through which they could contribute their opinions, and they would like more avenues to contribute to formative debate. The challenge for NIDA is to balance the philosophies of different industry stakeholders within the framework of the strategic and educational objectives of NIDA, to manage the debate around the arts and education in the arts to its advantage in designing curriculum in order to develop students who are leaders in the artistic community. The proposed Centre for Contemporary Performance Practice (CCPP), and the feasibility work NIDA is currently undertaking around the development of the Centre, provides an ample opportunity for NIDA to further scope this dialogue with industry stakeholders.

2.2.6 Course Advisory Groups

NIDA has five course advisory groups (CAGs), established in 2009, to advise on the reaccreditation process for the Bachelor of Dramatic Art courses. 'While the input from individual members of these CAGs continued at various levels throughout the accreditation process, each Course Advisory Group met once formally during the course review process' (PF p49). In interviews with CAG members it became apparent that there is a high level of enthusiasm within industry to be more involved in the development of courses at NIDA, with many members of CAGs wishing to have regular interaction with courses as they evolve. NIDA needs to consider how better to use industry stakeholders such as CAGs, ensuring that there is a regular two-way communication between the CAGs and NIDA, and providing timely feedback in the form of minutes and other communications.

Commendation 4

AUQA commends the role of the course advisory groups in advising the National Institute of Dramatic Art.

2.2.7 Industry Secondment Program

The Panel noted that the NIDA student industry secondment program is very well regarded and enthusiastically valued by industry and by those students who participate in the program. Employers and providers of secondment opportunities believe NIDA to be an exceptional education provider, and because of their positive experiences in hosting NIDA students on secondment, are then keen to reciprocate and participate with NIDA in the educational process in various ways such as making themselves available to participate in the industry week program and with other educational activities at the Institute.

Commendation 5

AUQA commends the National Institute of Dramatic Art's industry secondment program and the benefits this provides to both students and employers.

2.2.8 Transition to Employment

The performing arts sector is highly competitive and selective in employment, and many interviewees raised with the Panel the issue of employability of NIDA graduates. Whilst NIDA provides undergraduate training and secondment opportunities, many interviewees believed that NIDA's role in a student's transition to work could be further enhanced. There were a number of comments from both graduates and industry stakeholders regarding the need for students to be provided with business and self-management skills, and for NIDA students to have the skills to work across a range of mediums and technologies. As NIDA is in the process of broadening its engagement with industry, the matter of transition to employment could provide a platform for NIDA to engage further in discussions with industry. The development of regular approaches to surveying employers, graduates and industry stakeholders should also assist in NIDA being able to further monitor industry demand and to then reflect these needs in curriculum design.

Recommendation 5

AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art further strengthen the curriculum and student support to prepare students for the transition to employment.

2.2.9 Alumni

NIDA has appointed a part-time alumni coordinator who is developing a strategy for the management of alumni. As NIDA moves through the process of renewal, the Panel believes that NIDA needs to engage strongly with its alumni and seek regular feedback, and that this communication needs to be varied and ongoing. Further, the Panel believes that the surveying of graduates needs to be integrated into the quality assurance process at NIDA, conducted annually, with the results considered and used by the BoS in developing approaches to teaching and learning and curriculum design. NIDA conducted a graduate survey in 2009 and graduate comments were found to be valuable by the Institute in informing curriculum redesign (PF p24).

Recommendation 6

AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art conduct an annual survey of graduates, and use the results of this survey, through the appropriate academic governance structures, to inform teaching and learning.

NIDA has established a mentor scheme which is being piloted with one of the disciplines. Given the positive results of this pilot, the Panel encourages NIDA to consider extending this program more broadly. Graduates were generally very keen about this concept and felt it would be very useful.

2.2.10 Plagiarism

Students are made aware of the plagiarism policy upon orientation and in their Student Handbook. Staff are also given updates in various staff meetings, orientations and inductions.

2.3 *Scholarship and Creative Activity*

At NIDA there is a strong focus on creative practice. In addition to teaching, staff are encouraged to maintain engagement with industry and most staff are heavily involved in both industry and teaching at NIDA. Involvement in industry often includes working internationally or locally, and can include involving students in productions.

The Panel received mixed feedback about the presence of critical enquiry and innovation at NIDA. There was some evidence of the curriculum shifting to take advantage of opportunities to interact with visiting artists. NIDA is indeed privileged in that many visiting artists can make themselves available to work with students at NIDA. However, students note that these experiences can result in duplicated coverage and a lack of coherence in progressing learning outcomes. One area which has widespread support was the integrated approach to dramatic performance where different creative departments would work together at both graduate and undergraduate levels to produce full performances. This could be described as one of the strengths of NIDA's education.

2.3.1 Centre for Contemporary Performance Practice

NIDA aspires to develop a Centre for Contemporary Performance Practice (CCPP). A feasibility study, funded by the DEWHA, is currently being undertaken to consider the legitimacy of the Centre's development. The founding concept of the Centre is that, practitioners, after a period of working in the industry, may be interested in doing top-up courses or in further developing skills through postgraduate studies. Other aspirations for the Centre include the development of a research capacity within NIDA and the development of a Centre which will further and nurture innovation in the arts. In order to further support the development of its postgraduate

endeavours, and to embed its approaches to teaching and learning, NIDA needs to develop and articulate its culture of scholarship within creative practice. The CCPP offers a suitable environment in which robust debate on these matters might take place.

3 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES, DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT TEACHING AND LEARNING AND OTHER CORE ACTIVITIES

Since the appointment of the new Director/CEO, there has been a strong change focus in developing and reviewing systems and processes across the organisation. This is establishing a greater formalisation of processes within NIDA, to underpin the teaching and learning activities of the organisation.

3.1 *Organisational Structures and Decision Making*

Organisational structures and more formal decision-making processes are an area of rapid development at NIDA. The Panel found evidence of the beginnings of many formalised systems, particularly in Human Resources and Student Services and substantial change has occurred in the institution and implementation challenges are progressively being worked through. It is important that the administrative processes and systems of NIDA be developed to support the teaching and learning of the institution.

3.1.1 Communication

The Panel was able to confirm through interviews with staff and students that a range of levels of communication are occurring at NIDA. Many staff are involved in the change agenda at NIDA and are comfortable in communicating their ideas and concerns and responses to management, particularly as the change agenda is management driven.

The change agenda has been communicated across NIDA, with staff involvement in discussions at varying levels of detail through “all staff” meetings, teaching staff meetings and team meetings and student involvement through Director/CEO tutorials... and Director’s Consultative Committee (DCC) meetings...The Directorate...has also been increasingly empowered as a decision-making team. (PF p8)

NIDA will need to consider how it strengthens communication with external stakeholders as it redevelops and defines its approaches to the management of stakeholders. Students attend forums with the CEO and many of the students feel they could bring issues up with the CEO if they want to. Also, with the low student-staff ratios, there is high interaction and communication between staff and students. Staff are involved in a range of communication forums through different combinations of management and Directors’ meetings or within their own discipline and department structure.

Commendation 6

AUQA commends the National Institute of Dramatic Art’s approach to communication, across all levels of the organisation and with students.

3.2 *Academic and Administrative Staff*

3.2.1 Development of the Human Resource Function

One of the challenges in the management of NIDA’s change agenda is the management and development of staff. To achieve a more consistent and efficient management of staff, NIDA has

established and developed a human resource function to underpin many of the improvements and formalisation of improvements across the organisation. This area has been responsible for creating position descriptions, and has set up processes for recruitment of many new staff and staff appraisal. 'In 2009 the Director/CEO introduced a performance agreement process for academic staff, starting with Heads of Courses. A similar process will be commenced with other teaching staff in 2010' (PF p35).

Commendation 7

AUQA commends the work undertaken and the achievements of the human resource function of the National Institute of Dramatic Art in developing systems and processes to better manage the Institute's workforce.

3.2.2 Workload Policy

Staff at NIDA are generally very committed to their work and to working with students. The Panel found it difficult to obtain information about workload placement and how many hours both staff and students are working together in addition to formal class hours. Whilst the Panel applauds the commitment of staff and students to NIDA in pursuing their passions and interests, a workload policy is needed to ensure, that at least, equitable workloads are developed and allocated.

Recommendation 7

AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art develop a staff workload policy.

3.2.3 Casual Staff

At NIDA there is a high dependence on casual staff and due to the nature of the industry, casual staff availability can change quickly. Staff are encouraged to maintain engagement with the broader sector and the employment of casual staff is one way of maintaining this engagement. Further, NIDA often has access to eminent artists, often at short notice, which results in NIDA finely juggling its casual workforce. In some cases, there are staff who have had various periods of casual employment with NIDA some for more than twenty years. All appointments and casual staff allocations are handled at the head of course level.

The Panel believes that there would be a benefit to a stronger and coordinated oversight of the process and outcomes of the appointment and use of casual staff. The Panel is also concerned that casual teaching staff need to be inducted into the NIDA culture of scholarship, and its approach to teaching and learning. Casual staff also need to be clear on their expected contribution to the established curriculum, learning goals and graduate outcomes. It is important that visiting artists are given the flexibility to talk about their craft and work with students. But it is also important that if casuals are teaching regularly, they are involved in the development of a culture of scholarship and further the curriculum. Casual teachers, for example, benefit from undertaking performance assessment and professional development, and receiving the results of student feedback surveys conducted each semester, through an appropriate feedback process.

Recommendation 8

AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art develop a coordinated approach to the management of casual teaching staff.

3.2.4 Induction

Inductions are provided to all staff through an academic update at the beginning of the year. Staff advised that these sessions are useful and casual staff are paid to attend those meetings. NIDA is developing its approach to induction and the appointment of the HR Manager has further assisted in the development of induction processes for staff. NIDA's Portfolio also advises that 'Improving and documenting the induction process is a priority for 2010' (PF p33). In consideration of NIDA's high reliance on casual staff it is desirable that the Institute further develop its induction practices to ensure that all casual staff in teaching and support roles receive the appropriate briefings to operate in an effective learning environment.

3.2.5 Staff Performance Management

NIDA introduced a performance management process in 2008, and there is evidence of some completions of reviews amongst staff. This performance management process is being implemented across the entire institution. Further, the Panel believes that a focus on scholarship and pedagogy as part of the academic performance review process would be highly desirable, and this may require considerable professional development.

As yet, there is no substantive process for evaluating teaching effectiveness. The staff performance management process will also need to have a stronger emphasis on teaching and learning outcomes. The definition of a NIDA approach to scholarship and graduate attributes should assist in developing these approaches to evaluation once the approach to teaching and learning is more explicitly articulated. The Panel also strongly encourages NIDA to evaluate all units each semester and review student evaluations as part of academic performance reviews to reflect upon teaching effectiveness.

Recommendation 9

AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art's staff performance management process links to equitable development opportunities focused on developing approaches to individual teaching and learning.

3.2.6 Professional Development

In the past it appears that staff access to professional development opportunities have been ad hoc and limited. In particular some staff have benefited from access to professional development while others have not due to budgetary restraints. There needs to be a consistent policy regarding professional development and in particular access to external professional development. NIDA has recently increased its staff development budget, and is further developing its approach to staff development. NIDA's portfolio advises that: 'staff are encouraged to undertake additional studies' (PF p3). The Panel found evidence that a number of staff had commenced postgraduate degrees and NIDA is beginning to explore higher education teaching programs for staff. While NIDA has a number of staff working at AQF levels below the required level, these staff have a wealth of professional practice experience. As NIDA defines its approach to scholarship it will be important for NIDA to consider supporting these staff in their academic development and/or further education. NIDA could also investigate whether UNSW could be accessed far more intensively for academic development, and for advice in developing approaches to teaching and learning. For example, in 2009 the Learning and Teaching Centre at UNSW conducted a seminar for NIDA on student assessment and the characteristics of teaching and learning at NIDA. Professional development for casual staff will also need to be considered.

Overall, professional development for all staff needs to be linked to both the educational objectives of the Institute and to the staff performance management process.

Affirmation 1

AUQA affirms the National Institute of Dramatic Art's recognition of the need to improve its approach to staff professional development and the need to ensure access to staff development is equitable and linked to achieving the educational objectives of the Institute.

3.2.7 Marketing

NIDA's approach to marketing was reviewed in late 2008 and in early 2009 an integrated marketing department was established, NIDA is currently working through the implications and implementation of this review. The marketing of the four strands of NIDA's activities, NIDA Open Program, NIDA Corporate Performance, facilities and space hires and undergraduate and postgraduate education has now been combined into one marketing area. NIDA has begun some initial brand analysis with an external consultant to consider how it manages and builds the NIDA brand and its various segments. NIDA is also aware that it needs to further consider and develop what value NIDA is offering students, and what defines a NIDA graduate. This definition will flow onto fundraising and philanthropy, as it will assist in providing a clear message to donors on what NIDA stands for. For example, the Panel was advised that the public perception is that NIDA only offers Acting courses and NIDA has been actively seeking to promote its offerings and showcase other programs and activities. The Panel considers that defining NIDA's graduate attributes will assist NIDA in further developing its brand and value proposition. The Panel was also advised that the marketing area of NIDA is working more closely with UNSW Marketing services.

Affirmation 2

AUQA affirms the National Institute of Dramatic Art's recognition that it needs to define key aspects of its offerings to students and stakeholders and the core characteristics of the institution.

3.3 Support and Student Learning

3.3.1 Student Load

The NIDA student operates in an unusual and intense domain where the curriculum is dense and arduous. 'Unlike other higher education courses in some other disciplines, students attend NIDA from 9am to 6pm from Monday to Friday and engage in performances and production work at various times in the evenings and on weekends' (PF p9). Students are expected to be present on campus from early morning to late in the day and when productions or performances are operating they may be there at least six days a week. This places considerable pressure on the students' financially and personally. The Panel also noted that due to donations and bequests NIDA has a bursary program and financial support was provided to 73 students in 2009.

There is strong evidence that the curriculum and assessment practices require further review, and this is being undertaken through various review processes. However engagement with the industry with this process is necessary. The Panel strongly suggest that the student load also be reviewed. In the longer term, this may require a review of what content is really required in face

to face learning. NIDA is presently monitoring the student load as a result of the move to a four term year.

3.3.2 Four-Term Model

Students who commence at NIDA are advised that they will be working intensely, and students and graduates confirm that there is very little chance for a life outside of NIDA-related work; working fourteen hour days can be common. NIDA recently moved to four terms to alleviate pressure on students. NIDA was only in the first term of the first year of this revised structure at the time of the Audit Visit, and this change is being closely monitored. The Panel observed that there was a mixed reception of this change in course structure. There was also discussion amongst staff about moving to a four-year course in order to accommodate the current content and focus, but it may be more important for NIDA to focus on a more streamlined program. A careful review of what is covered in the curriculum and whether it is effectively managed would be beneficial.

While the curriculum emphasises performance and practice, it could also consider a greater integration of academic subjects. NIDA has made a start on this process with the introduction of the new Bachelor of Dramatic Arts Courses in 2010. Students noted some challenges in acquiring basic academic skills in their first year, particularly with regard to information literacy, critical enquiry and academic writing. While NIDA students have access to the UNSW Learning Centre to assist them with difficulties in academic writing, the Panel found little evidence of other institutional services to support the acquisition of these skills in the first year of study other than through their head of course and Head of Performance Practices. It is recommended that there be a review of how these skills might be better integrated into the curriculum. Additional support for first year students would better assist their learning outcomes. Information literacy, for example, is viewed as using the catalogue, and it would be valuable to review and update this interpretation. Information technology and the rapidly evolving nature of technology in the creative arts is placing pressure on NIDA's technology platform, and developing the foundation skill of students is an area NIDA will need to consider further in its future artistic and educational directions.

Recommendation 10

AUQA recommends that the National Institute of Dramatic Art undertake a review of curriculum, including the first year experience to inform the future strategic directions of its curriculum design.

3.3.3 Cost of Materials

The Panel was advised that the cost of materials is an issue for some students in some courses and a more careful consideration of the costs associated with some courses could be taken by the BoS. Students reported to the Panel that the costs are a major burden attached to performing their learning, for example in the production and design areas where students advised that they must source their own materials. NIDA advised the Panel that it provides most materials and tries to alleviate cost constraints by offering financial support to some students in the form of small bursaries.

3.4 Information Resources

NIDA has an IT plan and the Panel was advised that the Institute has undertaken some upgrading of facilities, for example, it supports a CAD Laboratory and a multimedia studio. However, the students continue to be critical of the slow responses for requests for IT

infrastructure, specifically wireless technology. IT is an area NIDA will need to further consider particularly given the proposed approaches to digital modes of learning and creative endeavour within the arts industry. IT and information literacy also need to be more closely integrated into the academic programme, creative renewal plans and culture of scholarship and considered within this framework.

3.4.1 Library

At the time of the Audit Visit the library had just completed a review which has resulted in a number of staffing and operational changes to its organisation, including new library staff, more space for students and a reduction in the backlog of processing materials and donations. The new management of the library is keen to benchmark with other specialist libraries such as the Australian Film, Television and Radio School. The library currently offers a service from 11:00am and is increasing its hours in line with student requests to open from 8:30am from April.

Commendation 8

AUQA commends the National Institute of Dramatic Art for the new management of the library and the operational changes to its organisation.

3.4.2 Academic Record Keeping

The Panel was advised that a combination of paper and electronic records are maintained. However these are held centrally thereby reducing the capacity of teachers to readily access information about students. Staff did indicate that they use an informal verbal exchange regarding individual students, but this may not be captured in the students' record.

4 MAINTAINING A COMMITMENT TO QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

NIDA has begun to embed its approach to quality management as it renews and redefines its educational and organisational objectives. The Panel was pleased to observe the progress the Institute has made in building quality assurance and continuous improvement processes across the institution.

4.1 *Review and Evaluation*

4.1.1 Review

The Panel found evidence of a number of reviews which have been undertaken or are being undertaken in support of the change agenda of the Institute, including a recent review of the library, and a current review of the marketing area. A number of feedback and review processes are in place at both macro and micro levels of the organisation. Staff interviewed showed an awareness of many of the reviews, and the results of these reviews have been discussed from the Board of Directors through to teaching staff. Over the last eighteen months, much work has been undertaken to renew and embed academic policies and supporting feedback processes; there is evidence feedback processes are now informing review. For example, the BoS has recently commissioned a review of the Acting discipline in response to student feedback. A review Panel has been appointed and terms of reference for this review were under development at the time of the Audit Visit.

Commendation 9

AUQA commends the National Institute of Dramatic Art's developing approach to review and continuous improvement.

4.1.2 Benchmarking

The Panel noted that staff at all levels are very knowledgeable about benchmarking and involved in a large number of both formal and informal benchmarking arrangements and partnerships both locally and globally, many of which have been built up over many years. The Panel believes that these benchmarking activities now need to be undertaken in a more coordinated manner, namely discussed and shared to promote continuous improvement across the organisation. Many of the examples of benchmarking discussed with the Panel indicated that staff knowledge within their field of practice is strong and discussions around benchmarking experiences could also contribute to academic forums in developing and articulating the NIDA culture of scholarship.

Affirmation 3

AUQA affirms the National Institute of Dramatic Art developing approaches to benchmarking and encourages discussions regarding benchmarking to contribute to the articulation of the NIDA culture of scholarship.

4.2 *Planning and Managing for Quality*

NIDA is an organisation in the process of change which is being driven from the top and is permeating down through the organisation. The Panel acknowledges the large amount of work

which has been undertaken in support of a renewal of the Institute's activities, and is pleased that there is evidence that NIDA is pursuing its change agenda through the implementation of its strategic plan. In tandem NIDA is actively developing its quality management system to support the diverse range of activities of the organisation. Staff have a high awareness of continuous improvement and many feedback processes are being deployed across the organisation.

5 DATA

Item 5.1: NIDA student numbers 2010

STUDENT NUMBERS 2010 (as at January 2010)			
All students are full time and all study at the NIDA campus, there is no mid year enrolment)			
Accredited Course	Domestic Students	Overseas Students	Total
Bachelor of Dramatic Art (Acting)			
Acting 1	23	1	24
Acting 2	21	2	23
Acting 3	23	1	24
Bachelor of Dramatic Art (Design)			
Design 1	8		8
Design 2	8		8
Design 3	7		7
Bachelor of Dramatic Art (Production)			
Production 1	15		15
Production 2	11	1	12
Production 3	15		15
Bachelor of Dramatic Art (Costume)			
Costume 1	4		4
Costume 2	2		2
Costume 3	4		4
Bachelor of Dramatic Art (Properties)			
Properties 1	4		4
Properties 2	5		5
Properties 3	1		1
Advanced Diploma of Dramatic Art in Scenery Construction	2		2
Graduate Diploma – Directing Stream	6		6
Graduate Diploma – Playwriting Stream	6		6
Master of Dramatic Art – Directing Stream	1		1
Totals	166	5	171

Sources: National Institute of Dramatic Art data collection.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DRAMATIC ART

Introduction

This section is in the main quoting from the National Institute of Dramatic Art Strategic Plan 2010–2012.

The National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) is an independent organisation and is accorded national status as a training institution by the Australian Government. It is associated with the University of New South Wales and maintains strong links with national and international arts training organisations especially through the Australian Roundtable for Arts Training Excellence and industry partners such as theatre, dance and opera companies, festival and film and television companies.

NIDA delivers education and training, within the higher education sector, that is characterised by quality, diversity, innovation and equity of access. The Institute's focus on practice-based teaching and learning provides a strong foundation for graduate employment across a broad range of performance contexts. For fifty years, NIDA has been seeding the arts in Australia and internationally with talented actors, designers, producers, directors, craftspeople and technicians.

The Institute is approved by the Australian Government as a Higher Education Provider giving NIDA students access to financial assistance for tuition fees through FEE-HELP. NIDA's courses are accredited as higher education degree courses by the NSW Department of Education and Training. NIDA and NIDA's courses are also approved for listing on CRICOS (Commonwealth Register of Courses for Overseas Students).

Vision

NIDA is Australia's national education and training institution for the dramatic arts, discovering and nurturing creative professionals and dynamic arts practice. Our graduates will become the future leaders, innovators and agents of change for the arts and entertainment industry, enabling Australia to develop its cultural identity both at home and on the international stage.

Mission

Creative transformation is at the heart of NIDA's mission. NIDA will continue to provide immersive conservatoire-based education and training, and a collaborative environment to support exceptional students on their personal journeys to become innovative creative artists and practitioners.

Core Values

In our commitment to excellence, we value leadership, integrity, collaboration and innovation.

Objectives

- To maintain and enhance NIDA's position as Australia's national training institution for the dramatic arts, reflecting the unique Australian voice, in all its cultural diversity
- To educate and train students to become innovative creative artists and practitioners, and future leaders of the arts and entertainment industry.
- To attract and retain high quality staff across NIDA through the best employment practice that encourages scholarship, creative growth, continuing professional development and training for all staff.

- To provide collaborative theatre training as the essential foundation for innovative and experimental artistic practice across a broad range of performance and production contexts.
- To support life long learning within the industry through an enhanced post graduate school and a continuing professional development programme within a Centre for Contemporary Performance Practice.
- To develop relationships with a broad range of industry and training partners through collaborations and engagement to ensure vibrancy, breadth and currency of courses and ensuring the best possible opportunity for industry employment and recognition for all graduates.
- To develop a NIDA Alumni programme, including ambassadors and mentors for students within a 'Pathways into Industry' program.
- To develop an international perspective in all areas of the NIDA programme reflecting NIDA'S role in the global artistic community.
- To increase engagement with the public and revenue through developing audiences for student productions and participants for NIDA'S Open Program, Corporate Performance Program and Parade Theatres Program.
- To increase and diversify revenue streams and address organisational efficiency.

APPENDIX B: AUQA'S MISSION, OBJECTIVES, VISION AND VALUES

Mission

AUQA is the principal national quality assurance agency in higher education with the responsibility of providing public assurance of the quality of Australia's universities and other institutions of higher education, and assisting in enhancing the academic quality of these institutions.

Objectives

AUQA is established to be the principal national quality assurance agency in higher education, with responsibility for quality audits of higher education institutions and accreditation authorities, reporting on performance and outcomes, assisting in quality enhancement, advising on quality assurance; and liaising internationally with quality agencies in other jurisdictions, for the benefit of Australian higher education.

Specifically, the objectives of AUQA are as follows:

1. Arrange and manage a system of periodic audits of:
 - the quality of the academic activities, including attainment of standards of performance and outcomes of Australian universities and other higher education institutions;
 - the quality assurance arrangements intended to maintain and elevate that quality;
 - compliance with criteria set out in the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes; and
 - monitor, review, analyse and provide public reports on the quality of outcomes in Australian universities and higher education institutions.
2. Arrange and manage a system of periodic audits of the quality assurance processes, procedures, and outcomes of State, Territory and Commonwealth higher education accreditation authorities including their impact on the quality of higher education programs; and monitor, review, analyse and report on the outcomes of those audits.
3. Publicly report periodically on matters relating to quality assurance, including the relative standards and outcomes of the Australian higher education system and its institutions, its processes and its international standing, and the impact of the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes on Australian Higher Education, using information available to AUQA from its audits and other activities carried out under these Objectives, and from other sources.
4. Develop partnerships with other quality agencies in relation to matters directly relating to quality assurance and audit, to facilitate efficient cross-border quality assurance processes and the international transfer of knowledge about those processes.

Vision

To consolidate AUQA's position as the leading reference point for quality assurance in higher education in and for Australia. Specifically:

- AUQA's judgements will be widely recognised as objective, accurate and useful, based on its effective procedures, including auditor training and thorough investigation.
- AUQA's work will be recognised by institutions and accrediting agencies as adding value to their activities, through the emphasis on autonomy, diversity and self-review.
- Through AUQA's work, there will be an improvement in public knowledge of the relative academic standards of Australian higher education and an increase in public confidence in Australian higher education.
- Through AUQA's work with other quality assurance agencies, the international quality assurance requirements for Australian higher education institutions will be coherent and rigorous, avoiding duplication and inconsistency.
- AUQA's advice will be sought on quality assurance in higher education, through mechanisms including consulting, training and publications.
- AUQA will be recognised among its international peers as a leading quality assurance agency, collaborating with other agencies and providing leadership by example.

Values

In its external relations, AUQA will be:

- *Rigorous*: AUQA carries out all its audits as rigorously and thoroughly as possible.
- *Supportive*: AUQA recognises institutional autonomy in setting objectives and implementing processes to achieve them, and acts to facilitate and support this.
- *Flexible*: AUQA operates flexibly, in order to acknowledge and reinforce institutional diversity, and is responsive to institution and agency characteristics and needs.
- *Cooperative*: AUQA recognises that the achievement of quality in any organisation depends on a commitment to quality within the organisation itself, and so operates as unobtrusively as is consistent with effectiveness and rigour.
- *Collaborative*: as a quality assurance agency, AUQA works collaboratively with the accrediting agencies (in addition to its audit role with respect to these agencies).
- *Transparent*: AUQA's audit procedures, and its own quality assurance system, are open to public scrutiny.
- *Economical*: AUQA operates cost-effectively and keeps as low as possible the demands it places on institutions and agencies.
- *Open*: AUQA reports publicly and clearly on its findings in relation to institutions, agencies and the sector.

APPENDIX C: THE AUDIT PANEL

Professor Shelda Debowski, (Chair) Winthrop Professor (Higher Education Development) and Director, Organisational and Staff Development Services, University of Western Australia

Mr Gary Thomas, Director, Equity and Student Support Services and Director, Indigenous Education, La Trobe University

Ms Karen Treloar, Audit Director, Australian Universities Quality Agency

APPENDIX D: ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

The following abbreviations and definitions are used in this Report. As necessary, they are explained in context.

AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AUQA	Australian Universities Quality Agency
BoS	Board of Studies
CAG(s)	course advisory group(s)
CCPP	Centre for Contemporary Performance Practice
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DEWHA	Australian Government Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts
DEEWR	Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
FEE-HELP	FEE-HELP is a loan given to eligible fee-paying students to help pay part or all of their tuition fees.
HEP(s)	higher education provider(s)
HESA	<i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i>
Institute	National Institute of Dramatic Art
IT	information technology
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (now MCEECDYA (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs))
NIDA	National Institute of Dramatic Art
NSAI(s)	non self-accrediting institution(s)
PF p	Performance Portfolio page reference
Portfolio	Performance Portfolio
QAFs	Quality Audit Factors
UNSW	University of New South Wales
VCAM	University of Melbourne's Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts and Music
WAAPA	Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts

