



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Awarding body monitoring report for: British Ballet Organisation (BBO)

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Introduction

Regulating external qualifications

Responsibility for regulating external qualifications lies jointly with three regulators:

- the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)
- the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS), the body for Wales
- and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), the authority for Northern Ireland.

Following the accreditation of a qualification, the regulators systematically monitor awarding bodies against the requirements set out in the statutory regulations. The aim of this activity is to promote continuing improvement and public confidence in the quality of external qualifications.

Where an awarding body is found not to comply with relevant criteria, the regulators set conditions of accreditation. Even if an awarding body is compliant, the monitoring team may make observations on ways that the awarding body could change its systems and procedures to improve clarity or reduce bureaucracy.

Accreditation conditions and observations arising from this monitoring activity are specified at the end of each section of this report. Awarding bodies are required to produce an action plan to show how they will deal with accreditation conditions imposed as a result of a monitoring activity. The regulators will agree the action plan and monitor its implementation.

The regulators will use the outcomes of monitoring and any subsequent action taken by awarding bodies to inform decisions on the re-accreditation of qualifications, or, if necessary, the withdrawal of accreditation.

Banked documents

As part of its awarding body recognition processes the regulators require awarding bodies to submit certain documents to QCA for the purposes of 'banking' centrally. Information from banked documents will be used to inform monitoring activities and may also affect the awarding body's risk rating.

A suite of documents has been identified as suitable for banking and are those considered to be those most crucial in supporting an awarding body's ability to operate effectively. In order to maintain the currency of the banked documents awarding bodies are responsible for updating them as and when changes occur. They are also reminded to review them at least annually at the time of completion of the self-assessment return.

About this report

This is the second monitoring activity on BBO and was carried out by QCA on behalf of the regulators in January 2008.

The monitoring focused on the regulatory criteria relating to the following key areas:

- Governance
- Resources and expertise
- Quality assurance and control of independent assessment
- Determination and reporting of results
- Registration

The monitoring activities included desk research of information already held by the regulators including the awarding body recognition update (ABRU). Other activities included attendance at an awarding meeting and scrutiny of the BBO web-site. The monitoring team visited BBO's head office to conduct interviews with staff and review documentation.

This report draws together the regulators' findings from these monitoring activities.

About the AB

The British Ballet Organisation advocates 'dance for all'. It believes there should be opportunity for all those interested in acquiring dance performance skills to participate in a well devised, safe and developmental programme of dance study, and to recognise their progress and achievement through taking examinations. For further information on BBO please visit www.bbo.org.uk

Corporate governance

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 5, 6 and 7.

Findings

1. BBO completed an ABRU in 2005 and recently submitted its self assessment return and updated documents for banking. The review of the self assessment return and banked documents will be conducted separately outside of the monitoring activity.
2. BBO has seven qualifications accredited and is experiencing continuing growth particularly in its dance teaching qualifications. The dance teaching qualifications have been accredited since the last monitoring activity in 2003.
3. BBO has reviewed how it is organised and, as a result, is planning to implement significant organisational changes during 2008. BBO also carried out a risk assessment and produced a risk management strategy with indicators that include milestones and budget projections. The organisational changes combined with a more formalised strategic plan will enable BBO to be better equipped to deal with future growth and expansion across all areas of its business.
4. BBO is overseen by a Board of Directors that make decisions based on recommendation from the director and management team. The Board meets five times a year. The director reports to the board at each meeting. The monitoring team were given access to these reports.
5. The director is and will remain the principle point of contact for the awarding body. However, the review of this post and its key responsibilities revealed that there was an over reliance on this one person for many of the functions of the organisation as a whole. This has led to the creation of a new post the main focus of which will be business development.
6. The role of the business development manager will be to take over the day to day running of the organisation including office and line management responsibilities, and to deputise for the director. This will allow the director to focus his role more specifically on issues relating to quality assurance, strategic and longer term planning

and dealing with external agencies. The new post is to be advertised in January 2008.

7. BBO currently out sources its office services to an external organisation. The intention is for BBO to develop these processes in-house.
8. BBO contracts with a sector specific consultant who works in an advisory capacity on wider strategic and policy issues.
9. BBO has a management team currently consisting of the director, the chief examiner, the teaching qualifications coordinator and the director of training. It meets at least six times a year. The management team's remit includes monitoring and reviewing BBO qualifications, courses and continuous professional development for teachers and examiners. It makes recommendations for revised or new qualifications to the Board of Directors.
10. Qualification fees are reviewed annually and approved by the Board following recommendation from the director.
11. BBO staff confirmed that the other committees such as the membership committee and regional representatives committee remain unchanged from those previously reported in the ABRU.

Accreditation conditions

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

Observations

1. BBO is reminded to review all of its documentation to reflect the organisational changes and the introduction of the business and development manager role.

Resources and expertise

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 8 and 10

Findings

1. There are five full time staff at BBO that deal with awarding body business. Apart from the director and the newly created business development manager, BBO employs an examination coordinator, a full time administrator for the teaching qualifications and an awards administrator/personal assistant to the director.
2. The close working relationships between staff has meant that BBO has not seen the need to introduce formal staff appraisal system. Training and development needs are provided where needed.
3. BBO contracts with the chief examiner, the teaching qualifications coordinator and the external examiner on a part time basis. The chief examiner is mainly responsible for the examiners and for the graded and vocational qualifications. The teaching qualifications coordinator and the external examiner work together on the dance teaching qualifications and ensure effective communication between tutors.
4. There are 15 senior examiners and six examiners employed on annual contracts. The examiners are recruited from within the industry and are usually practitioners. Criteria for the recruitment of examiners are stated in the *Teachers Quality Assurance Manual*. This document is sent electronically to all examiners and teachers. It contains comprehensive information and guidance including BBO policies, staff list, codes of practice relating to graded and vocational examinations.
5. The training process for examiners is supervised by the chief examiner and mostly consists of shadowing more experienced examiners and writing mock examination reports. Training will continue until the chief examiner is confident of the examiner's ability. Thereafter attendance at annual training days and completion of continuous professional development (CPD) is compulsory.
6. BBO has drawn up a policy to ensure the CPD of its examiners and teachers and this is included in the *Teachers Quality Assurance Manual*. The policy is very detailed and lists many examples of how CPD can be gained and their level of 'credit'. It

expects at least two items of credit a year. For instance observing a full day dance course would equal one credit. CPD is taken very seriously by BBO. It is reviewed annually by the chief examiner.

7. BBO also has a team of nine regional representatives who act as the local contacts for teachers delivering BBO qualifications. Their role is to facilitate CPD opportunities by organising up to six regional events each year. BBO holds annual away days to support the regional representatives.
8. Included in the business plan are ways for BBO to secure its physical location to meet future demand. BBO also intends to increase the use of electronic data exchange and storage. The web-site is being expanded to include secure areas for teachers and discussion forums. All candidate assessment records are stored electronically and retained indefinitely. Teacher files currently exist in paper format although the CPD activities are all computerised.
9. Data is backed up on a monthly basis onto a CD and stored in a separate room. BBO should review this arrangement and assess whether it would be more appropriate to store back up disks off site.

Accreditation conditions

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

Observations

2. BBO should review the security arrangements it has in place for the backing up and storage of electronic data to ensure that, should any disaster recovery be necessary, candidate's records are not lost and they are not disadvantaged by it.

The quality assurance and control of independent assessment

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 13, 36, 56 - 58.

Findings

1. BBO's graded examinations were scrutinised at the last monitoring activity. Awarding body staff confirmed that there had been no significant changes to assessment methods since then. They are all assessed by an external examiner throughout.
2. The examinations for the graded qualifications can be taken on demand although most are taken at the end of each school term.
3. Three months prior to the examination BBO is advised of the potential numbers of candidates and preferred dates for the examination. One month prior to the examination these numbers are confirmed. The examination coordinator allocates sufficient numbers of examiners to each examination session, taking into account the different styles of dance and ensuring the allocated examiner is appropriately qualified. The chief examiner attends some examinations to monitor examiner performance as part of her monitoring role.
4. Examiners complete report forms for each examination session. Level descriptors have been agreed across the dance industry. The BBO examinations coordinator looks at every examiner report form to check for any discrepancies or issues. The chief examiner reviews any reports where there are any issues and it is her responsibility to 'sign off' all examination reports. The examiners report goes back to the teacher excluding the back page which is confidential to BBO. The comments on this confidential page may relate to the teaching, the examination conditions or may detail any reasonable adjustments made. These sheets are used in monitoring the examiner and the teachers' performance. Examiners are required to keep copies of their reports together with any handwritten notes. There is detailed guidance on record keeping in the *Teachers Quality Assurance Manual*.
5. The Level 3 Certificate in introduction to dance teaching qualifications and the Level 4 Diploma in dance teaching are the most recently accredited qualifications. They use a variety of assessment methods. These include practical teaching assessed by observation with follow up questioning. There are awarding body set assignments, essays and projects that are internally marked and externally moderated. Finally there is one multiple choice questionnaire that is set and marked by BBO. Teachers

are provided with *Course Specifications* for each level that include entry requirements, the units, learning outcomes, assessment requirements and a resource list for each unit.

6. Candidates are initially provided with an *Assessment Handbook* that gives an outline of the specification, assessment, level descriptors, marking processes and a timetable. The handbook also includes information on malpractice, appeals and details of some of BBO's committees. The monitoring team consider the provision of this handbook at an early stage to be good practice as it provides candidates with a complete overview of what is expected and allows them to plan their work.
7. More detailed material on the syllabus in the *Student Handbooks* for each level and detailed *Study Guide* is provided to candidates at induction and workshops. The *Study Guide* provides guidance on writing, researching for assignments and what is expected in the reflective journals. The handbooks also contain BBO policy information, codes of conduct and fees.
8. The course is developed by the teaching qualifications coordinator and it is evaluated annually. The modes of assessment are decided and the course tutors for each unit allocated. Tutors are drawn from the world of dance or teacher education. Sometimes guest tutors are invited to conduct workshops. Study days combine theory and practical elements so that candidates can put their learning into immediate practice.
9. Candidates are assigned a personal tutor who acts as the intermediary between the candidate, the course tutor and the teaching qualifications coordinator. The personal tutor will support their candidates. They also mark the reflective journals that are completed regularly by candidates. These are expected to show what candidates have learned throughout the course.
10. The multiple choice questions have been submitted by tutors and guest tutors and these now form a 'bank' of questions. The external examiner reviews the 'bank' annually and BBO have also had it reviewed by an external expert to ensure the questions are suitable.
11. The practical teaching units are considered to be the most important for these qualifications and are double weighted to reflect this. One of the two practical units is carried out in groups of five or six candidates with each one 'teaching' their peers. The majority of these take place at the BBO head office. They are observed by a combination of the chief examiner, teaching qualifications coordinator and possibly the external examiner. The second practical unit takes place within the candidates own school. A formative assessment is carried out by the candidate's tutor who provides feedback to the candidate on any areas for improvement. The final assessment is observed by an examiner. Examiners also talk to candidates about their teaching performance to assess their underpinning knowledge and

understanding. This questioning forms part of the assessment and is marked by the examiner.

12. As the course is delivered the written assignments are sent to BBO to meet the required timescales. All work is 25 per cent moderated by the teaching qualifications coordinator. A further ten per cent is sent to the external examiner for further moderation thus the moderator performance is being monitored. For candidates who have borderline marks or other issues that may affect a final outcome the external examiner is sent the work for all the units so that other work may be taken into account when making a decision.
13. All written work is duplicated and kept with the original going back to the candidate. This means that a full record of candidate work is retained from graded examinations onwards.

Accreditation conditions

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

Observations

There are no observations for this section.

Determination and reporting of results

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 63 - 67.

Findings

1. A member of the monitoring team attended the awarding meeting for the teaching qualifications.
2. The awarding committee is made up of the director, the teaching qualifications coordinator, the external examiner, all the examiners, the personal tutors involved and the teaching qualifications course administrator. It meets annually after the work for the qualifications has been completed, assessed, moderated and externally examined.
3. The committee looks at all the candidates and their marks paying particular attention to those with borderline marks or with extenuating circumstances. Candidates' marks are reviewed across all the units before a final mark is agreed. However the practical teaching units must be achieved to obtain a pass. All the marks are stated in the *Assessment Handbook*, *Course specifications* and *Student handbooks*.
4. Successful candidates may obtain a pass, merit or distinction for the Level 3 certificate in introduction to dance teaching. Successful candidates for the Level 4 diploma in dance teaching may obtain a pass.
5. Unsuccessful candidates may be deferred or referred for a further assessment. In those cases they will only achieve a pass mark. The committee agrees the appropriate course of action for each of these candidates.
6. The monitoring team were particularly impressed by the BBO spreadsheets that were available at the meeting. These were very clear in showing the marks achieved by each candidate for each unit. Work that had been moderated and those sent to the external examiner were clearly visible. Any mark changes agreed at the awarding committee were immediately recorded on to the spreadsheets by the teaching qualifications course administrator.
7. The awarding committee also reviews reports made by the teaching qualifications coordinator and the external examiner. Recommendations from these reports may go towards reviewing the qualifications as a whole.

Accreditation conditions

There are no accreditation conditions for this section

Observations

There are no observations for this section

Registration

This is subject to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004)*, paragraphs 11 and 12

Findings

1. BBO do not have approved centres in the traditional sense. Rather the teachers they use to deliver the qualifications are the 'centres' although teachers may be affiliated to dance schools. All teachers are approved by BBO before they can operate.
2. BBO review CV's and may conduct interviews or carry out visits if necessary. The level of checking is dependent on the history of the teacher and whether they are known to the BBO. It is now a requirement for BBO teachers to have the Level 3 Certificate in introduction to dance teaching as a minimum. Training is provided to ensure teachers understand the requirements of the syllabus. All teachers are provided with the *Teachers Quality Assurance Manual*.
3. There are about 350 teachers in the UK and BBO offers an annual two day training event. They also have the opportunity to attend regional events for further support. Teachers are expected to demonstrate CPD and specific guidance on how to meet CPD is in the *Teachers Quality Assurance Manual*. This guidance is in addition to that detailed in the CPD policy document. Teacher performance is monitored through the CPD records and examiner reports. Where there are concerns teachers may be disallowed from entering candidates for examinations.
4. Teachers and/or dance schools have to sign a 'centre agreement' that states the responsibilities of the dance teacher with regard to safe practice and conduct and the responsibilities of BBO in supporting them. BBO uses some external venues for practical examinations and it has criteria that must be met to use these venues for example, a barre and sufficient space for classical ballet.
5. Final candidate lists for the graded qualifications are received at BBO two weeks prior to the examinations from the teachers.
6. Potential candidates for the teaching qualifications are first required to complete an application form. They also have to attend an interview. Recommendations from the course evaluation identified that the selection process for candidates applying for these qualifications needed to be more robust. This has led to an additional practical demonstration being introduced as part of the interview process. This shows that BBO's evaluation and monitoring has been effective in making improvements to its procedures. Further monitoring will show if this has improved the quality of candidates.

7. All candidate information is entered onto the BBO database manually. Checks are made to ascertain if the candidate has taken any BBO qualifications previously. Candidates will be allocated the same identification number for all BBO qualifications. The monitoring team were shown that the system is able to produce an entire candidate history which may be from graded qualifications as a child progressing through to the higher levels.
8. The BBO database shows the examination session number and assessment details for each candidate. It checks that examiners are qualified to examine in the dance style selected. Further if the teacher is a student teacher the system will not allow that person to enter candidates for examinations. CPD is also shown on the system.

Accreditation conditions

There are no accreditation conditions for this section.

Observations

There are no observations for this section.