Level 6 Diploma in Professional Musical Theatre

**ASSESSMENT POLICY**

**Introduction**

This policy synthesises Laine Theatre Arts’ internal strategies and aligns them with external regulatory frameworks to ensure a robust approach to assessment. It underpins the College’s commitment to nurturing a high standard of learning, fairness in evaluation, and preparedness for industry standards.

It includes protocols for the assessment of practical and written work, clarifying where procedures vary between assessment modes. It emphasises the evaluation of practical skills and creative abilities in alignment with professional expectations, ensuring assessments are rigorous, equitable, and developmental.

**Scope**

This policy specifically applies to students undertaking the Level 6 Diploma in Professional Musical Theatre validated by Trinity College London and relates to the assessment of both practical and written work.

**1. Purpose and Principles of Assessment**

Purpose:

* Facilitate Progression and Graduation: Assessments demonstrate readiness to advance and meet course requirements.
* Classify Performance: Provide a transparent evaluation of skills and learning outcomes.
* Enhance Learning: Offer developmental feedback to refine practical skills and prepare for professional demands.

Principles:

* Validity and Reliability: Assessments are designed to measure intended outcomes effectively, ensuring consistency.
* Inclusivity and Accessibility: Adjustments support diverse needs without compromising course outcomes.
* Transparency and Equity: Processes and criteria are clearly communicated.
* Professional Alignment: Assessments simulate real-world scenarios and align with industry expectations.

**2. Roles and Responsibilities**

**2.1 Course Leader:**

The Course Leader holds overall responsibility for ensuring that all assessments adhere to institutional policies, align with course learning outcomes, and meet the requirements of external validation bodies. Specific duties include:

* Collaborating with Heads of Departments to produce assessment schedules, marking rubrics, and frameworks, and sending them to Directors of Faculty for approval.
* Overseeing the planning, delivery, and evaluation of assessments and assessment outcomes across all modules.
* Acting as a liaison between the Learning Support Team, Heads of Departments, and Trinity College London to ensure consistency and compliance with institutional and external standards.
* Reviewing feedback processes to ensure they are timely, constructive, and effective in fostering student development.

**2.2 Heads of Departments:**

The Heads of Departments are responsible for ensuring that assessments within their respective disciplines are rigorous, consistent, and aligned with professional and academic standards. Their responsibilities include:

* Designing assessments that reflect the course's intended learning outcomes and industry relevance.
* Collaborating with the Learning Support Team to ensure reasonable adjustments are implemented for students with SEND, as outlined in the SEND and Reasonable Adjustments policies.
* Providing clear and accessible instructions to teaching staff and ensuring that assessment delivery adheres to the approved guidelines.
* Conducting pre-assessment standardisation meetings to ensure that all staff involved in marking understand and apply the rubric consistently.

**2.3 Teaching Staff:**

Teaching staff are integral to the assessment process, conducting and evaluating student work based on established criteria. Their roles include:

* Delivering assessments in accordance with the approved schedules and rubrics provided by the Heads of Departments.
* Marking student submissions and performance using consistent, standardised criteria.
* Offering constructive feedback that helps students identify strengths, areas for improvement, and practical steps for progression.
* Participating in standardisation meetings and moderation processes to ensure fairness and consistency in grading.

**2.4 Moderators:**

Moderators play a critical role in maintaining the integrity and fairness of the assessment process. They include both internal Standard Holders and external validators:

**Standard Holders (internal):**

* + Standard Holders, such as the Director of Dance, Director of Musical Theatre, Director of Studies or Deputy Director of Studies facilitate panel discussions to address discrepancies in grading and ensure that marks align with the assessment rubrics and institutional standards.

**External Moderators:**

* + External Moderators, typically provided by Trinity College London, review a sample of assessments to ensure compliance with external standards and professional benchmarks.
	+ External Moderators monitor internal assessment activity
	+ Their feedback informs ongoing improvements to assessment practices and ensures that the overall quality of evaluation meets the expectations of accrediting bodies.

**3. Assessment Design**

**3.1 Assessment Types:**

Given the performance-focused nature of training at Laine Theatre Arts, assessments on the Diploma course predominantly evaluate practical skills and creative outputs. The exception to this is in Contextual Studies, where students are required to submit written work for assessment, including essays, reflective journals and portfolios.

**Assessment modes in the Practical Disciplines:**

* Practical: Performances, choreography, and technical skill demonstrations.
* Oral: Presentations, reflective discussions, and audition interviews
* Portfolio: reflective journalling

**Assessment modes in Contextual Studies:**

* Written: Critical essays or reports supporting practical work
* Oral: Presentations, reflective discussions
* Portfolio: Creative collections documenting progress

**3.2 Judgement-Based Marking**

Due to the subjective nature of the performing arts, the College accepts that judgements and interpretations will differ between disciplines, and that unconscious bias exists. It seeks to ensure that standards will remain consistent, and that personal preferences in social contexts do not influence formal assessments. To mitigate unconscious bias, assessors are encouraged to critically examine areas where such bias could affect the student’s output and actively aim to minimise its impact.

**3.3 Standardisation**

Similarly, the subjective nature of assessment in the performing arts can lead to comparative rather than analytical judgements, and interpretations of written standards may vary. To mitigate this and apply best practices, the College has established the following protocols:

* Calibration: A peer review process that ensures the panel understands the standards of the College and its disciplines. This involves opportunities for assessors to independently mark and collaboratively discuss and review examples of previous student work to reach a shared understanding of academic standards.
* Internal Moderation: The use of Standard Holders and Panel Discussions to ensure consistency in practical assessments, and verification/sampling procedures in the assessment of written work.
* External Moderation: Oversight by Trinity College London to ensure alignment with external benchmarks.

**4. Panel Structure and Marking Process**

**4.1 Panel Structure (Practical, Oral and Performance-based Assessments)**

The assessment panel is designed to ensure a robust, fair, and consistent evaluation of students’ practical work. It comprises three members:

* A subject-specific Faculty member
* The Head of the Department or Faculty
* A Standard Holder

The Standard Holder plays a critical role in upholding the integrity of the assessment process and ensuring consistency, which can be performed by any senior member of the academic team.

If either of the designated assessors are unavailable, the Director of Musical Theatre or the Course Leader may act as a substitute to maintain the panel's functionality.

**4.2 Marking Process – Practical, Oral and Performance-based Assessments**

To achieve fairness and alignment with assessment criteria, the panel will use one of the following methods to determine the final mark:

* Both assessors independently evaluate the student’s work using a standardised marking rubric, scoring from 0 to 10. The two scores are then averaged to produce the final mark.
* The Standard Holder moderates the panel’s final decision, ensuring the mark aligns with the assessment criteria and institutional standards.

**4.3 Marking Process – Written and Portfolio-based Assessments**

To achieve fairness and alignment with assessment criteria,

* All written and portfolio-based work will be marked by the Contextual Studies Tutor
* Once marking is complete all assignments are subject to Verification
* Verification is conducted by the Director of Studies and Course Leader, who will sample at least 10% of all assignments, ensuring that marks align with the assessment criteria and institutional standards.

**5. Feedback and Appeals**

**5.1 Feedback**

Feedback is a critical component of the assessment process, designed to guide and enhance student learning while fostering continuous improvement. The following practices underpin the feedback process:

1. **Timelines**
* Feedback will be provided within 20 working days following the assessment submission or examination date. If delays occur, students will be informed promptly, with reasons and a new timeline for feedback issuance.
1. **Content**:

Feedback will include:

* + Major strengths of the work.
	+ Areas where improvement is needed.
1. **Delivery Methods**:
	* Feedback may be delivered in written form, via a proforma, cover sheet, or directly on the assessment artefact.
	* Oral feedback may supplement written feedback and can be given individually or in group sessions, ensuring accessibility for all students.
2. **Formative and Summative Feedback**:
	* Formative feedback is used throughout the course to support student development, allowing opportunities to apply insights before summative assessments.
	* Summative feedback relates directly to the learning outcomes and criteria outlined in the assessment brief, helping students understand their performance in relation to the module’s objectives.
3. **Alignment with Learning Outcomes**:
* Feedback is explicitly linked to assessment criteria and intended learning outcomes, using language consistent with marking rubrics to ensure clarity and relevance.
1. **Student Engagement**:
* Students are encouraged to engage with feedback actively and critically, using it as a tool for reflection and self-improvement.

**6. Return to Training Assessments**

Return to Training Assessments are used to evaluate a student’s ability in subjects that were unassessed at the end of the previous academic year. These assessments are used in exceptional circumstances only and are held prior to the commencement of the next academic year in an informal environment.

A panel, consisting of an Assessor, a Standard Holder, and a teacher, will evaluate the student’s capability to transition smoothly to the next academic year.

**7. Fit to Sit Policy**

**Scope**

Laine Theatre Arts operates a ‘Fit to Sit’ policy, which means it is the responsibility of each student to ensure that they only sit or submit their assessments if they are fit to do so.

Being ‘fit to sit’ means that the student knows of no reason why their performance would be adversely affected during assessments and is not aware of any circumstances that could negatively impact their performance. These are referred to as Extenuating Circumstances and may require the student to participate in a ‘Deferred’ assessment.

Further information can be found in the College’s Extenuating Circumstances Policy

* 1. **Reasonable Adjustments**

Reasonable adjustments ensure that students with disabilities or long-term health conditions can access training and assessments equitably, while still being required to meet the established learning outcomes of their course.

Reasonable Adjustments to assessment may include modifications to assessment formats, additional time, or other support mechanisms tailored to individual needs. Requests for Reasonable adjustments will be assessed by the Learning Support Lead in consultation with the Head of Department, who will, where appropriate implement specific modifications.

**9. Use of Generative AI**

Laine Theatre Arts is committed to promoting the safe and ethical use of AI to ensure it is explored responsibly and it supports the innovative use of AI as a progressive tool for learning and development but emphasises the importance of academic integrity. Teachers and assessors will only accept work that is demonstrably the student’s own. Students must identify any AI-generated elements in their work and failure to do so will be treated as Academic Misconduct.

Concerns about the authenticity of a student’s work will be investigated in accordance with the Academic Misconduct policy. Additionally, AI will not be used by Laine Theatre Arts for assessment, marking, or grading activities.

**9. Academic Appeals**

Students who believe that their assessment outcomes do not reflect their performance, or who have concerns about the conduct of their assessments, may request a review through the Academic Appeals Policy. Grounds for appeal may include:

* Procedural errors or irregularities in the assessment process.
* Evidence of bias or unfair treatment.
* Extenuating circumstances that were not considered during the assessment.

Appeals must be submitted within the timeframe outlined in the Academic Appeals Policy and must include relevant evidence to support the case. The appeals process ensures that all concerns are addressed impartially and transparently, with decisions made by an independent panel.

Students are advised to review the Academic Appeals Policy and consult with their Course Leader or Heads of Departments for further clarification and support.

**Policy revised November 2024 – Date of next review – July 2025**