



## Student Protection Plan

Provider's name: Collective Acting Studio

Provider's UKPRN: 10091065

Legal address: 11 Apollo Court, 188 High Street, Stratford, E15 2FF.

Contact point for enquiries about this student protection plan: Jenna Bonfiglio, Chair of the Board

### Student protection plan

**1. An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for your students, how those risks may differ based on your students' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise**

#### Institutional Closure

The risk that the Studio as a whole is unable to operate is low. Our Part-Time Drama School and Short Courses for Professional Actors have proven themselves to be highly profitable since we began trading – and are financially sustainable. These courses can operate from hired premises, have surpassed the recruitment targets outlined in our Business Plan of March 2022 (by 33.3% in the case of the Part-Time Drama School), and can be delivered by freelance staff if required. So there are few risk factors in this area of the business. We have established relationships with three important theatres/drama schools which we hire space from: Theatre Royal Stratford East, LAMDA and Theatre Deli. The Studio therefore has a number of options for hired spaces, meaning we are not reliant on one host venue, further minimising risk.

#### Inability to Secure a Leased Venue

The risk that the Studio will not be able to secure a suitable long-term premises for the BA Acting degree in time for the course to commence in September 2023 is considered moderate. Although there are number of potential venues the Estates Committee are liaising with (The Boury Academy, Theatre Royal Stratford East, Platform, Theatre Deli) non of these are yet fully costed.

#### Failure of Good Management and Governance

Our assessment is that the good management and governance matters are rated as 'not at higher risk'. Both the Board of Directors and the Senior Leadership Team are very experienced, and as a management group bring an impressive balance of expertise and skills.

### Financial Sustainability

The risk to the Studio's financial sustainability is considered moderate. Our Business Plan has ensured that, at any point, the Studio's current business activities build the necessary financial reserves before of the next stage of expansion then begins. This approach has ensured the Studio has always been profitable. Accurate forecasting has also ensured we have met, or bettered, our financial/recruitment targets. However, we recognise the risk as moderate because, with the addition of the degree course and its subsequent setup costs, it will be the end of Year 3 before a significant financial reserve is formed through surplus profits alone, placing the Studio at some degree of risk should it encounter a series of unexpected financial circumstances.

### Course Delivery

The risk that the Studio is no longer able to deliver material components of our courses is low because we design our modules to be taught by our contracted academic staff. We also have a wide pool of experienced, specialist freelance staff we can draw upon when required.

### Failure to achieve Validation of the BA Acting

It is deemed that the risk is low that the BA Acting course at Queen Margaret University (QMU) is not validated as scheduled. The Collective staff team working on the validation are highly experienced in this field and have a proven track record of taking a number of other courses through a validation process. The course documentation is already in high degree of preparation, and has received commendation from the senior staff at QMU. A draft contract was considered and approved by Collective's Board of Directors on December 9<sup>th</sup> 2022.

### Industrial Action

The risk that the Studio is unable to operate owing to industrial action is minimised by the institution beginning to establish frameworks for consultation and negotiation with the recognised trade unions. It is highly committed to maintaining an effective employee relations culture and working with trade union colleagues to achieve reasonable solutions to matters that may arise from time to time.

## **2. The measures that you have put in place to mitigate those risks that you consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise**

### In the event of institutional closure:

In the unlikely event that the Studio should have no option, other than to close, it may consider measures such as those below to protect the student experience:

- where possible, closing in a gradual way, over a period that would allow current enrolled students to complete their studies at the Institution;
- where gradual closure is not possible, in supporting students to transfer to appropriate programmes at other providers and (where appropriate financially) by compensating students where because of disruption to their studies they suffer demonstrable, material financial loss;
- merging with another institution to maintain all or part of the current provision.

### In the event of being unable to secure a leased venue for the BA Acting for September 2023:

Should our own campus not be ready in September, the Studio will consider implementing contingency plans such as the following:

- relocating the degree provision to a temporary alternative location for a short period. This may include the continued use of our current hired spaces for the programme delivery for a single semester. This approach has been sanctioned by QMU.
- altering timetables to enable all of the scheduled teaching to take place in smaller than planned available facilities. This may include student contact sessions being held outside normal hours. Where such an approach is taken, appropriate consultation will normally be conducted with stakeholders who may be affected; appropriate equality impact assessments will also be undertaken.

### In the event of unexpected changes in the Studio's financial circumstances:

Should we face unexpected changes in our income (mainly through lower-than-expected student recruitment on the degree course, or unanticipated additional costs), we will consider implementing plans such as the following:

- backdating our recruitment plan for the hiring of academic staff, to ensure we are not overstaffed if student recruitment is lower than expected. This will allow us to reduce costs, whilst maintaining an appropriate student/staff ratio, until student numbers rise;
- restructure the balance of the Studio's activities to accept more students on the Part-Time Drama School - where there is proven high demand for places and a high gross profit margin.

### Changes to Studio's programmes

If we are no longer able to deliver elements of a specific undergraduate programme the Studio will ensure alternative components of the programme are developed and delivered that ensure the continued achievement of the programme's specified learning outcomes.

### Should the Studio not pass its initial validation with QMU for the BA Acting:

Should we fail to gain the validation as scheduled in April 2023 we would implement the following plans:

- action feedback from the validation panel to make the required internal changes to pass the validation at a second attempt;
- through QMU reschedule the validation event for June/July 2023;
- If necessary, delay the start of this degree course to September 2024.

In the event of industrial action occurring:

Should industrial action take place the Studio will seek to:

- ensure that normal operations and services are maintained as far as possible;
- take all reasonable steps to fulfil its responsibilities to students in ensuring that any disruption is minimised and students are not, as far as is possible, disadvantaged by the action.

Should the Studio be affected by significant events involving theft, fire, flooding, fraud, terrorism, vandalism or IT and utilities failure:

The Studio will put in place a Disaster Contingency and Business Recovery Planning Policy and Procedure This policy and procedure will be drafted, reviewed and put in place by February 2022.

**3. Information about the policy you have in place to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to your students and to provide compensation where necessary in the event that you are no longer able to preserve continuation of study**

Please refer to the Studio's Refund Policy.

The Studio has identified that there are no students currently at an increased risk of non-continuation of study. However, the Studio is confident that it can gain access to sufficient cash reserves to provide refunds and compensation for a small number of students if necessary.

The Studio will endeavour to hold cash reserves sufficient to meet the demands of such refund claims. This would be based on simulated withdrawal data and in the financial year 2023/24 represents a sum of £5,000 (c. 2.5% of turnover).

The Refund Policy is administered by the Academic and Registry officer, who is contactable on [office@collectiveactingstudio.co.uk](mailto:office@collectiveactingstudio.co.uk)

#### **4. Information about how you will communicate with students about your student protection plan**

##### Communicating the provision of the Student Protection Plan

We will publicise our Student Protection Plan to current and future students by ensuring that this is placed upon the Studio's website. The Student Protection Plan will be provided to students as part of their registration documentation.

##### Ensuring staff are aware of the provisions of the Student Protection Plan

We will ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our Student Protection Plan when they propose changes to courses and programmes by making reference to this in our internal guidance documentation relating to processes and procedures concerning programme modifications and validations. Staff development time will also be spent on explaining the Studio's Student Protection Plan to staff members.

##### Involving students in the development of the Student Protection Plan

During the development of the Student Protection Plan, a draft copy of the document will be considered by the Student Senate and the views of its members sought.

##### Reviewing the Student Protection Plan

We will review the Student Protection Plan on an annual basis through the Studio's Teaching and Learning Committee and the Senior Leadership Team. Reviews of the document will take place involving the Student Senate's elected representatives.

##### Communicating with affected students should the Student Protection Plan need to be implemented

As at present, we will inform students via their Studio email accounts and in whole cohort meetings if there are to be material changes to their courses or programmes. On occasions where material changes are being considered, the Studio will seek to involve students in decision making relating to such modifications, through consultation with student representatives in the Student Senate.

Students will be provided with at least three months' notice prior to any material changes to their programme being implemented.

In exceptional cases, for our registered students, where partner institutions are not able to operate or deliver the published provision, the Studio will seek to provide students with alternative provision, addressing the relevant programme outcomes. The Studio will communicate with the students concerned as soon as possible and provide details of the alternative options available as soon as such arrangements are in place. These will be communicated by email via students' Studio accounts and, where practicable, via a cohort meeting.

We will arrange to ensure that our students have access to independent advice if we need to implement the measures in our student protection plan. This will be put in place in consultation with the Students' Union at Queen Margaret University.