

# ACADEMY OF MUSIC & SOUND

## LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

### 1. Policy Statement

This policy has been formulated in a way which draws together various theories, practices and statutory requirements associated with learning and teaching. It is a response to the quality agendas presented by the Common Inspection Framework (Ofsted) and the QAA. It is also a challenge to develop our approach to learning and teaching which will take full advantage of the emerging technologies AMS is creating for all its students and staff.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all AMS programmes

### 3. Aim

The overall aim of this policy is to channel and direct the experience of learning and the practice of teaching in ways that maximise our student's potential, taking into account the national benchmarks where appropriate and promote lifelong interest and commitment to learning.

### 4. Principles on which this policy and its associated practices are based

There are three general and inter-related principles that should inform our approach to learning and teaching:

- a) The learner should be at the centre of everything we do;
- b) Everything we do should promote inclusive learning;
- c) Everything we do should be guided by evidence-based practice that enhances successful learning.

#### 4.1 learner should be at the centre of everything we do;

Putting the learner at the centre of the learning process places the greatest emphasis on developing individual students' capability to learn as well as personalising their learning. This model of teaching and learning emphasises the importance of practices such as: the initial diagnostic assessment of students; identifying students' learning styles as a tool for discussing learning; differentiating classroom activities and assessment; promoting student-centred formative assessment; developing higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation; and setting and reviewing learning targets by means of individual learning plans in regular tutorial sessions. Such practices are central to good, effective learning and they are standard practice across

the AMS. AMS has created a learning environment where the transmission of information and data will be readily accessible via electronic format (MyAcademy).

#### **4.2 Everything we do should promote inclusive learning**

Promoting inclusive learning is a wide-ranging educational idea that develops further the principle of putting the learner and not the provider at the centre of everything that we do. It requires us to match up provision to the needs of all the prospective learners served by AMS irrespective of their age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion and learning difficulty or disability. We will promote equality of opportunity and tackle issues of racism and discrimination. This element of the policy is vital to achieving the AMS vision; it is what AMS is all about and should therefore be central to our core business, namely teaching and successful learning for all.

#### **4.3 Everything we do should be guided by evidence-based practice that enhances successful learning.**

Pursuing evidence-based practice challenges us to re-consider teaching and learning practices that are less successful and concentrate on practices that have been proved to be more successful in raising student achievement and commitment to learning.

### **5. Learners' Entitlements**

Within the framework of the three general principles stated above, all AMS learners are entitled to;

- Information, support and guidance on the course or programme of their choice and what is expected of them (i.e., the learning requirements associated with the level of award);
- Initial assessment of their capability to succeed on the course or programme, Including any additional help that they may need, such as support with English, Maths, study skills and ICT;
- Access to courses or programmes, all of which minimise barriers to learners who have a learning difficulty and/or disability;
- A comprehensive induction programme, including the approaches to teaching and learning that will be employed on the course or programme;
- Where appropriate, an individual learning-plan based upon the outcomes of initial assessment that identifies specific and challenging targets agreed with their Course Coordinator or Course Leader
- Continuous guidance and support from the teaching staff addressing progress in learning and achievement and lack of progress due to learning errors and/or difficulties being experienced;
- Guidance on the full range of learning resources available including ICT and e- learning resources;
- Opportunities for developing their understanding and use of learning resources including:

## **ICT and e-learning**

Support in using such learning resources.

## **Learning Environment**

A learning environment that: encourages questioning; nurtures independent thinking; and, where appropriate, develops higher-order thinking skills that enable students to distinguish facts from values, develop and sustain arguments and make informed judgments.

### **6. All of the above entitlement statements presuppose:**

- Differentiated teaching approaches that recognise and build upon individual learner's needs, interests and previous learning experience;
- Well-designed teaching and learning programmes that structure and sequence learning in a meaningful way;
- Teaching that is provided by qualified and experienced staff who set and achieve high standards;
- Lessons start promptly, and are only cancelled or rescheduled in exceptional circumstances.

### **7. Learners' Responsibilities**

Successful teaching and learning is a two-way process that also places responsibilities on the learners. Learner entitlements are most likely to be met fully when all learners:

- Make a positive commitment and contribution to their own development and learning;
- Attend all lessons and timetabled activities as required and punctually;
- Contribute fully and make best use of their time inside and outside the classroom, including timely completion of homework, guided self-study, working to achieve their Individual Learning Plan and providing feedback to course teams through formal and informal routes;
- Complete and submit course work on time;
- Act upon the advice and feedback from the teaching staff on their progress and what they need to do to improve;
- Make a positive contribution in class;
- Co-operate with the teaching staff, Course Coordinators and fellow learners;
- Show courtesy and respect to others at all times, and uphold the AMS's commitment to the principles underlying equality and diversity;
- Abide by the rules governing the use of ICT and e-learning.

### **8. Teaching Staff's Responsibilities**

The teaching staff should ensure that:

- There are clearly articulated teaching and learning strategies agreed and understood by all those teaching on the course/programme;

- Such teaching and learning strategies should address how learners will be helped and supported in their endeavours to meet all the learning objectives/outcomes prescribed by the course/programme. For courses subject to OfS, the strategy is an integral requirement of the Programme Specification;
- Each member of the course team is clear about his/her contribution to the teaching strategy;
- Students' entitlements are fully met and not left to chance or to be determined by the response of individual teaching staff. This is particularly important in respect of such entitlements as initial diagnostic assessment, personalising students' learning, learning plans with challenging targets set and met, identification of learning errors and difficulties, opportunities and support in ILT and e-learning and functional/key skills, listening to the learner voice, differentiated teaching, opportunities to develop awareness of equality and diversity issues and all learners have prompt starts to lessons or practical sessions;
- Their continuing professional development, needed to meet students' entitlements, and is identified and brought to the attention of their Centre Managers in line with the AMS Staff Development Strategy.

### **9. AMS Management's Responsibilities**

AMS Management should ensure that:

- All teaching staff are fully conversant with this policy and the demands it places on them;
- All staff are competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities;
- All staff actively embed the principles of equality and diversity in their teaching;
- All newly appointed staff have, as part of their induction, training and development opportunities to meet the requirements of this policy;
- All other teaching staff receive training and development that enhances competence and skill in teaching and promotes and shares best practice in learning and teaching.

### **10. Monitoring & Evaluation**

The Senior Management Team is responsible for the periodic review of this policy. The success of this policy can be evaluated by:

- Learner voice, including the student satisfaction survey, showing high levels of satisfaction with the quality of teaching they receive
- External reports on the quality of teaching and learning
- Profiles of grades awarded for the observation and assessment of teaching and learning
- Staff feedback on the quality of support provided by the AMS to enhance competence and skill in teaching and sharing best practice in teaching and learning.

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**Agreed by:** Mel Baxter, Steve Ryan