

LIPA

THE LIVERPOOL INSTITUTE FOR PERFORMING ARTS

Exceptional Funding Statement

LIPA is a small specialist Higher Education Institution, which is in receipt of Exceptional Funding from HEFCE: the Higher Education Funding Council For England.

This document explains what this funding stream is and summarises the reasons why we have been granted this funding.

Definition of exceptional public funding (and so ‘additional public value’)

‘an institution should receive exceptional funding only if it provides more public value than it would have been able to provide using only standard levels of HEFCE funding (including other income, such as fees) ... for instance, presumably there are things that LIPA does that it would not be able to do, if it did not receive exceptional funding of around £800,000. And these may well enable LIPA to generate public value that it would not otherwise be able to generate’.

(Anna Sherratt: e-mail 14.08.08)

Employment standards

To compete nationally and internationally, additional funding is needed to achieve entry employment standards. These are set by national benchmarks.

Sustained employment

One of our Founding Principles was to provide learning that enhanced sustained employment. To achieve this, we developed a *whole institute curriculum* that embraces the seven disciplines we teach: acting, dance, music, management, theatre technology and design, sound technology and community drama. We deliver these major disciplines within an integrated curriculum under one roof, rather than concentrating on just one, which we believe delivers a special additional public benefit (as well as being expensive). Aside from people like George Martin, the content of every discipline was and continues to be informed by practitioners. To create an environment where students could successfully compete on leaving, we needed a curriculum that provided the skills that practitioners identified as critical to their success and survival.

Evidence of sustained employment

Our measurement of these is an alumni survey we undertake annually by contacting graduates three years after leaving us. We would be glad to provide the detail both of the questions asked and the data that emerged. A simple summary demonstrates that of the roughly 85% traced, more or less 85% still work in arts and entertainment. We believe sustained employment demonstrates sustained additional public value.

Delivering a learning fundamental

Delivering a practical vocational discipline can only be achieved through doing, rather than commentating. This is the fundamental difference between, say, a university department of

drama and vocational acting course. Practitioners consistently emphasise the importance of this kind of learning. David Mamet (the American playwright, author and film/theatre director) had this to say in his latest book: *'As in theatre, as in combat, as in sex, the theoretical is all well and good if one's a commentator, but the thing itself can actually be understood only through experience'*. (Bambi vs. Godzilla) This is not to miss the allied importance of analysis, reflection and understanding.

Exporting the curriculum model

Our practitioner informed, evolving inter-disciplinary curriculum, has attracted interest internationally. It could be argued that additional public interest has been served from the export of ideas overseas.

Modest academic profile of entrants

With the exception of specialist skills needed for sound technology and music, the academic profile of entrants is not high. Given sustained employment our graduates achieve, this could be considered additional public value.

Low dropout rates

The audition processes involved additionally ensure low dropout rates. The drop out figure for Theatre Performance Design and Technology, for instance, in 2007/8 was nil, as was Acting.

Geographic distribution of specialist HE performing arts institutions

This is uneven and reflects the piecemeal way in which these institutions were formed – often by a driven, entrepreneurial founder. Taking the centre of England as Birmingham, there are just six institutions to the Scottish border. The presence of these six has meant that aspiring students could study relatively near or in their hometown. The absence of these six would mean that aspiring students from the Midlands and the North would either incur additional costs studying in the South or be unable to incur those costs so removing potential talent for additional public value.

Contribution to local performing arts activity

To take just one discipline we teach, Theatre Performance Design and Technology, our contribution to Liverpool's live entertainment industry demonstrates additional public value. The Royal Court Theatre, the Playhouse Theatre, the Everyman Theatre, Adlib Lighting and Audio, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Liverpool Scenic are significantly staffed by our graduates and, with placements, undergraduates. Performing arts organisations are receiving a significant human resource, in partnership, without payment.

It may be imagined this additional public benefit only refers to performers or technicians. Continuing the ethos of learning by doing, our managers undertake a variety of projects for public consumption and contribute to the delivery of public art programmes, as do our community dramatists, dancers, actors and musicians – in short, every discipline we teach.

Provider of public entertainment

Our shows include productions in The Unity Theatre, the Tate, a range of music venues and community environments – these are aside from the two seasons of 16 public shows in our two venues.

Contribution to city/regional development

While LIPA has strong practical relationships with a variety of performing arts organisations in Liverpool, the Capital of Culture year provided additional activities that required technical and performance support. Since the performing arts organisations (including The Liverpool Culture Company) were unable to pay the true (in the majority of cases, any) cost of our students' participation, this demonstrates additional public value.

We are a contributor and appear in the draft Cultural Strategy for Merseyside.

Contribution to the national and international profile of Liverpool

Our presence in Merseyside (a region that received EU Objective 1 funding, in recognition of its relative poverty) has assisted not just the national, but international profile of the city.

Many students originate from overseas. As graduates become well known (for sample: Sandi Thom, The Wombats) so the performing arts profile of the city is maintained.

Contribution to local communities

We have matched the taxpayer's money for HE for the good of the local community. We have delivered over 40 ESF projects across all performing arts disciplines; two big transnational projects in collaboration with partners (Government Office on Merseyside, Department of Work & Pensions, SMEs across the region, community organisations and five international partnerships. These partnerships created 60 entrepreneurial apprentices (a model Mersey Partnership recommended for replication). We delivered the New Deal for Musicians programme for six years – described as '*best practice*' by the Adult Learning Inspectorate. Premium funding enabled us to afford top teachers and facilities - not just for the benefit of undergraduates - but also for the wider community.

We now work intensively with eight local schools engaging youngsters from non-traditional (in terms of making HEI applications) early on ('*Educational achievement is strongly influenced by the attitudes of children towards learning, and these attitudes start developing from an early age*'). Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2008). We are committed to achieving the Quality Care Mark from The Frank Buttle Trust - so focussing forward activity towards children who have been in care.