

REVIEWING NATFA

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Iskra Nikolova
Head of International Relations
The National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts (NATFA)
Sofia, Bulgaria

The Review of the National Academy of Theatre & Film Arts took place in the end of 2006. It was carried out under the auspices of the pilot Quality Assurance and Enhancement process developed by the Inter}artes Thematic Network.

The ELIA - Inter}artes Evaluation Team (ET) comprised the following members: Professor Anthony Dean (Chair); Dr. Maisa Huuhka, Carsten Burke Kristensen, Dr. Milan Rasla, Lars Ebert (Secretary).

The NATFA Steering Group included: Prof. Snejina Tankovska – Dean of the Stage Arts Faculty, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Iskra Nikolova – Theatre Studies Department (Liaison), Prof. Plamen Markov (Head of the Acting and Directing Department), Assoc. Prof. Petia Stoilova (Head of the Stage Movement Department) Prof. Slavi Malenov (Puppet Theatre Acting and Directing), Jana Dzharova – student.

In line with the requirements of the pilot Quality Assurance and Enhancement procedures, the ET made two visits to the Academy. A preliminary visit took place from the 23rd to the 25th October 2006 and the main Review visit took place from the 11th to the 13th December 2006.

The ET took as the starting point for the Review a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) that was produced by NATFA in advance of the preliminary visit. This was revised and updated by the Academy before the main visit and was presented to the ET together with a Disciplinary Self-Evaluation Report (the selected discipline was Puppet Theatre Acting). NATFA also provided a range of translated documents as had been requested by the ET at the end of the preliminary visit.



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On the basis of the two site-visits and the submitted documentation, the ET prepared an evaluation report, which was sent to NATFA in January 2007.

The review process was well-planned and co-ordinated, although the workload was heavy throughout the evaluation. The main challenge was the preparation and translation of all necessary documents. Also, the two visits ran on a pretty tight schedule. Thanks to the efficiency of the Evaluation team and to the co-operation of all participants, the review procedures were completed successfully and in time.

The two site-visits as well as the comprehensive review documentation and reports enabled both the visiting experts and the NATFA participants to analyse the Academy's development within the context of the Bologna objectives, to raise specific quality problems and issues, to identify examples of good practice. The principles of the peer-review were implemented at all stages of the evaluation. The expert team and the participants involved in the meetings maintained a positive attitude and established a friendly and open atmosphere. Talks were held with NATFA's Management and with representatives of the academic, administrative and technical staff, to discuss their roles and input into the quality enhancement processes. Student feedback played an important part in the quality evaluation. The agendas of the two visits aimed to ensure communication with as many people as possible, with each meeting providing different perspectives and points of view.

Going through an external evaluation process is a good occasion for self-reflexion and self-evaluation. This process helped us to gain a better understanding of quality, in terms of the ways in which it transforms and fosters the creative and professional potential of NATFA's students. It helped us outline possibilities for the further improvement and development of higher education in the fields of stage and screen arts.