

# **Educational Quality Review Policy with Grading and Evaluations Guidelines**

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# Educational Quality Review Policy

BADA regularly monitors and develops the quality of the learning environment that it offers to its students. This quality review will be undertaken by the Dean in partnership with the Faculty Members. In order that the Dean and Managing Director can make impartial, informed decisions about how best to improve the learning experience of students at BADA the academy evaluates feedback from all those who deliver its educational programs.

In undertaking this evaluation of the education offered by its Faculty the Academy operates a five stage process.

1. Classes taught by new Members of the Faculty are monitored within the first four weeks of the semester by the Dean
2. Students are invited to evaluate their classes
3. Faculty undertake a self-evaluation after finishing their teaching
4. The Dean reviews this self-evaluation with Faculty
5. If necessary the Dean and Faculty Member draw up an action plan for future teaching

BADA believes these five stages are inter-dependent. Responses arising from one stage must be evaluated in relation to each of the other stages before any decision is made and, if appropriate, acted upon. All BADA staff and contracted Faculty understand these reviews are not a personal judgment on a teacher's qualities but rather tools to facilitate the improvement of the education offered to students. The process is a fully collaborative activity between BADA and its Faculty and both together are responsible for its implementation and review.

Information gained from this educational quality review process is only to be used to develop action plans for maintaining and improving the quality of the academic experience. An action plan will be developed in conjunction with student evaluations and, where appropriate, feedback from visiting professors from American universities (whose impressions of BADA help them decide if they will encourage their students to attend our courses) Any necessary follow-up review dates will be agreed and implemented by the Dean and the Faculty Member.

Information obtained and recorded as part of a quality review process will be recorded and kept securely on file and on electronic file in the BADA's office in accordance with the Data Protection Act and BADA's own Confidentiality Policy. Any Member of the BADA Faculty may request, at any time, to see the evaluation records held relating to their class and their teaching. Should they feel that the evaluation as recorded does not accurately reflect their experience of the classes they taught or their teaching style and method, they should approach the Dean or Managing Director with their concerns. The Dean may then decide to reconsider the evaluation, consult other elements of the educational quality review process or call for a second review to be carried out.

Following this review, a meeting should be held between the Faculty Member and the Dean. (See below: *Faculty Review*). If the Faculty Member feels the evaluation gives

an erroneous picture of their teaching then the standard BADA Grievance Policy should be followed.

#### *Note on Appointment of Contracted Faculty and Creatives*

When appointed all Faculty and creative production staff contracted to BADA will receive their contracts, BADA Handbook, the terms and conditions of the contract, course guidelines and grading guidelines where applicable. These documents set out clearly their objectives and the standard of performance expected of them by BADA. It is the responsibility of the Dean and Managing Director to ensure that all contracted Faculty and creative production staff read and understand these documents and their role within the Academy.

The Dean ensures all creative production staff understand that BADA aims to provide a professional experience but within an educational environment so that when BADA contracts industry professionals it expects them to be fully committed to the educational welfare of its students and to be fully aware of their role as educators, even during the production process.

#### *Teaching Plan Outlines*

All Faculty are required to produce an outline in writing for the course that they will be teaching their students at BADA. All Faculty must submit their course outline to the Programs Manager in advance of the semester.

This outline should set out the Faculty Member's teaching objectives and provide clear guidelines for the students about what their learning outcomes will be during the teaching period. These are designed to provide a clear overview of what students will experience and learn during the class and what the Faculty Member intends to help the students discover through the process of working in that discipline (voice, movement, acting, history and culture, dramatic criticism etc).

In addition Faculty should include a short week by week plan of what they intend in each of their classes. However, the course outline should be seen as a living document. It is not holy writ! Faculty can amend their plans throughout the time they are teaching in order to reflect the emerging needs of their students whilst holding faith with the original objectives of the course.

If in the view of individual Faculty Members these changes are significant they should be communicated to the Programs Manager and the Dean.

Should a Faculty Member teach the same class during another semester they will only be expected to revise their course outline if they intend to make significant changes to what they teach and the ways in which they teach it. (In formal terms their curriculum and pedagogy.)

All semester outlines and any amendments are reviewed by the Dean before the start of the semester, and when approved are given to the students on their arrival.

### *Class Observation*

The Dean may observe the work of all Faculty contracted by BADA in class, during production rehearsals and in performance. In practice the Dean will only sit in on classes or rehearsals when they are being taught or directed by a Member of Faculty who is new to BADA.

Such visits will always be carried out in consultation and with the Faculty Member's full agreement. Before observing a class, the Faculty Member will have a short discussion with the Dean in order to explain what they are hoping to achieve in the class/rehearsal that is to be observed and what they hope the students will learn from the session. After observing a class or a rehearsal the Dean will meet again briefly with the Faculty Member to discuss how they felt the class had gone.

The Dean will also complete a class observation form which will document discussions with the Faculty Member. The idea is that this should be a record of what is essentially a collaboration between the Dean and Faculty, so that the written record can be discussed with the Faculty Member as part of a review of what they have achieved by the end of the semester. This review can, of course be earlier, should that be necessary

In addition to such class observations, the Dean may also carry out any necessary additional observations if a Faculty Member is in an agreed review period or a review following a dispute procedure.

### *Moderation of Written Work*

If a Faculty Member marks written work within their module (LTP-Theatre History and Drama Criticism) then a Faculty peer will be asked to cross-mark a sample of 3 essays from each group.

Where a Faculty Member is not available or a non-specialist in the material in the course under review, an external specialist marker will be appointed. There will be a set fee paid for peer monitoring these additional papers. The results of the sample papers will be entered into the Moderation of Written Work Spreadsheet by the Programs Manager for review by the Dean.

All the Faculty involved in the moderation of written work should have access to these results. As with all internal evaluations the cross-marking of essays is designed to develop a full and accurate representation of the educational experience delivered to the students of BADA.

### *Faculty Self Review*

At the end of the teaching period or after the semester productions all Faculty will be asked to complete a short evaluation in writing of what they believe they achieved with their students and the issues that they might address in order to improve their teaching offer. This evaluation will form the basis of a conversation with the Dean. If required the Member of Faculty working together with the Dean will devise an action plan to help them to develop their teaching. It is likely that this conversation will be on the telephone rather than face-to-face.

# Grading and Evaluations Guidelines

## Introduction

Grading and evaluation are an essential part of every student's education. In measuring a student's progress and achievement, BADA plays a role in the final award of a degree. Maintaining a satisfactory grade average may be essential if a student is to receive financial aid during their time at university.

BADA is committed to ensuring that the grades and evaluations it gives to its students fulfil the stated requirements of the American universities with whom the Academy is affiliated. The guidelines that govern the award of grades and the preparation of evaluations need to be understood by both students and Faculty. And they are designed to guarantee that all students are treated equally.

BADA is also committed to monitoring the quality of the education that it provides for its students and such monitoring plays an essential role in measuring, reviewing and refreshing our educational offer.

These guidelines are to assist Faculty in grading and evaluating students' work. If difficulties should occur in the process - great or small – then the Dean is happy to advise.

A student who successfully completes the LTP is awarded 15 credits towards their BA degree. Although, this is a straightforward pass/fail course, BADA grades its students and writes evaluations of their work as a record of each individual's progress. These are for the student and their home college or university. A snapshot of that progress is taken by all teachers at the Faculty meeting in the first half of the semester and this provides a benchmark against which a student's final achievement can be measured.

It would be impossible to devise a single standard for grading. Nevertheless, BADA subscribes to a set of core values that inform all of our students education while they are with us. The Faculty needs to keep these values in mind when evaluating a student's development.

## 1. Attendance

All students are required to attend every class within their course. To miss a class without prior permission or to be late are violations of BADA's Rules and Regulations and may lead to a student being failed for that class.

However, BADA recognises that students should not be penalised if they are sick or have been granted an authorised absence either from class or a one-to-one tutorial. If such 'catch up' opportunities are not possible, then the Faculty Member and the student will devise an appropriate way of retrieving the lost class time – practical or written. This work must not interfere with a student's other course work.

## 2. Continuous Assessment

In tandem with teaching students BADA asks its Faculty Members to judge the work and the progress of all students through a process of continuous assessment.

Students are offered regular verbal guidance and feedback on their progress in class. Their developing skills are also under continuing review. Both personal progress and developing skills will be reflected in grades and recorded in the final evaluation that is given to each student.

In the rehearsal period for the productions there is a continuous exchange between directors and students. The ability to accept and to act on constructive criticism is part of every actor's life and so an essential skill for theatre students to acquire.

- (i) An assessment is made by measuring an individual student's achievement and progress against the guidelines set out in the course outline and confirmed in the Student Handbook
- (ii) Assessment strives to be objective and is made from the observation of actual work. It is not required to speculate on how a student may or may not develop.
- (iii) The assessment process must be transparent and equitable. BADA is scrupulous in ensuring that no assessment is undermined by anything that might be construed as personal choice or preference.
- (iv) Assessments must be written in plain English in a style that avoids emotion and conveys a sense of fairness and objectivity.
- (v) Faculty should endeavour to keep a brief written record of their continuous assessments at the end of a class, rehearsal or performance. Such notes can form the basis of the informal report on students at the mid-term Faculty meeting. And if required a point of reference for student appeals and/or for the Academy should it wish to question a particular grade or evaluation.
- (vi) Responsibility for ensuring that continuous assessment is undertaken in an appropriate way rests with the Dean.

### 3. Continuous Assessment: LTP Evaluations

In evaluating their students Faculty should consider

- The student's motivation
- The quality of the work
- Their progress
- The steps to be taken if a student's work is to develop and to improve.
- Evaluations together with grades need to be consistent and Faculty should remember that that each student will read their comments.

### 4. Grading Practical Work

In assigning a letter grade for students, Faculty should take account of the following guidelines.

Letter Grade	Learning	Class Work	Skills	Initiative/Imagination
<b>A/A-</b>	<p>Outstanding ability to understand, manage and organise different performance perspectives offered in class.</p> <p>Exceptional diligence in learning.</p> <p>A clear understanding of the importance of personal discipline in all aspects of the learning process.</p>	<p>Comprehensive understanding of and response to class teaching.</p> <p>A complete understanding of ensemble work both inside and outside the classroom.</p> <p>Presenting work of an exceptional quality.</p>	<p>A deep connection with and understanding of complex text and its relation to character.</p> <p>Consistent character work in every performance environment, however complex or unpredictable.</p> <p>An unerring ability to integrate advanced skills and techniques in respect of voice and movement.</p>	<p>An ability to initiate and to follow through original research.</p> <p>Exceptional inventiveness in all areas of work.</p>

<p><b>B+/B/ B-</b></p>	<p>A good ability to understand, manage and organise different performance perspectives offered in class.</p> <p>A mastery of learning text.</p> <p>An appreciation of the importance of personal discipline in all aspects of the learning process.</p>	<p>An understanding of and good response to class teaching.</p> <p>An understanding of the importance of ensemble work both in the class room and beyond.</p> <p>A satisfactory contribution to the class and evidence of personal development.</p>	<p>A good understanding of complex text and its relation to character.</p> <p>A clear grasp of character work in every performance environment, however complex or unpredictable.</p> <p>An understanding of the importance of integrating advanced skills and techniques in respect of voice and movement.</p>	<p>Frequent examples of creative originality.</p>
<p><b>C+/C/ C-</b></p>	<p>Inconsistent standards in the preparation and delivery of class work.</p> <p>Some understanding of textual accuracy.</p> <p>Some appreciation of the importance of personal discipline in all aspects of the learning process.</p>	<p>An uneven understanding of and response to class teaching.</p> <p>A failure to contribute in a consistent manner to ensemble work both in the classroom and beyond.</p> <p>An uneven contribution to class and little evidence of personal development.</p>	<p>Limited understanding of character work in the class room.</p> <p>Sporadic grasp of how to approach complex text and character work in all performance environments, however complex or unpredictable.</p> <p>Adequate but inconsistent integration of advanced skills and techniques in respect of voice and movement.</p>	<p>Little evidence of either an inventive approach to the work or any measure of personal creativity.</p>



<b>F</b>	In respect of practical work this grade is reserved for students who have failed to submit required work or it is incomplete.			
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## 5. Grading Written Work

BADA understands that Faculty teaching different classes will look for different achievements when grading written work. Nevertheless, there are a number of common requirements for all courses where students are partly assessed on written work. These requirements must be fully explained to all students both in the course outline and in class.

Written work is expected to demonstrate:

- Relevant content that is presented with a measure of individual insight
  - A clear understanding of the subject matter of the written work
  - The use of independent research undertaken outside the class room
  - Appropriate footnotes for all sources used and quoted and a complete bibliography of these sources
  - It should be written in plain English and properly spelt and punctuated
- In assigning a letter grade for students, Faculty should take account of the following guidelines

Letter Grade	Knowledge and Content	Methodology and Language	Critique	Initiative
<b>A/A-</b>	<p>Outstanding originality in argument and a well-developed ability to handle conceptual thought</p> <p>An absolute instinct for relating texts to the social, cultural and political background of the period in which they were written and first performed</p> <p>A mastery of course work</p>	<p>An extremely carefully nuanced thesis for a paper</p> <p>The ability to introduce relevant evidence to support this thesis as it develops through the work</p> <p>An elegant way of incorporating research</p> <p>An outstanding ability to link seamlessly each section of the paper</p> <p>A mastery of sentence structure and the deployment of a suitable vocabulary</p>	<p>A high level of critical analysis in respect of text or performance</p> <p>A fully developed ability to 'read' texts and productions</p>	<p>Highly imaginative response to the assignment</p> <p>A clearly demonstrated ability to plan original research and to take 'ownership' of the work</p>

<p><b>B+/B/B-</b></p>	<p>Some originality in argument and a reasonably developed understanding of how to handle conceptual thought</p> <p>An understanding of the importance of discussing texts from the perspective of the social, cultural and political background of the period in which they were written and first performed</p> <p>A clear understanding of course work</p>	<p>A proper thesis for a paper</p> <p>A well-developed ability to support logical argument with evidence</p> <p>An ability to write plain coherent English and to develop a suitable critical vocabulary that leads the reader through the written work with a measure of ease</p>	<p>A firm sense of how to analyse text</p> <p>A well-developed knowledge of how to 'read' texts and productions</p>	<p>A superior response to the assignment as set and an ability to take 'ownership' of it</p> <p>Evidence of having undertaken an organised programme of research which has been deployed with the written work.</p>
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<p><b>C+/C/C-</b></p>	<p>A measure of consistency handling an argument and conceptual thought</p> <p>A basic knowledge of the historical social, cultural and political background that informs a text on the page or in performance</p> <p>An intermittent understanding of course work</p>	<p>An under developed thesis that is poorly argued and inadequately supported by chosen evidence</p> <p>Poor use of written English that often falls back on slang and cliché and definitions wholly borrowed from standard dictionaries</p> <p>A tendency to offer the reader unsupported generalisations</p> <p>A failure to identify sources adequately and to understand them</p>	<p>A barely adequate grasp of textual analysis</p> <p>A limited knowledge of how to analyse text</p> <p>Scant knowledge of how exactly to 'read' a text</p>	<p>A basic response to the assignment as set that takes it literally.</p> <p>Basic and unfocused research</p>
<p><b>F</b></p>	<p>In respect of written work this grade is reserved for students who have failed to submit required work or it is incomplete</p>			

## 6. Essay Writing

There are no hard and fast rules about how to write an academic paper. So the following guidelines are just that, suggestions about how to set about working on a paper. Individual Members of the Faculty will clearly offer their own advice.

- (i) An academic essay should have a clear thesis and the reader must not be left in any doubt about what that thesis is and how clearly the paper supports it
- (ii) There should be a logical flow to a paper as the argument develops
- (iii) Arguments should be supported with evidence and you should consider counter arguments also supported by the same evidence
- (iv) The paper should be concise and to the point, each part of your argument flowing on what that which preceded it
- (v) Terms used in the paper need to be clear and where necessary defined
- (vi) Students are encouraged to share their own enthusiasm for a play or production but must not mistake subjectivity for an appropriate academic distance
- (vii) While the opinions of literary and theatre critics can be helpful in arriving at a conclusion about a work, they should never be a substitute for the student's own arguments and 'reading' of a text or production
- (viii) Write simply, directly and clearly. Good grammar, proper syntax, spelling and punctuation will help the reader to a proper understanding of the paper
- (ix) Sources used in writing a paper should be indicated in footnotes and in a bibliography at the end of the paper. Failure to identify your sources may be construed as plagiarism which in turn could lead to an F grade
- (x) Always proof read work carefully before submitting it
- (xi) Make sure that your name is on every page of the paper and details of the topic that you have chosen to write about

Assignments must be handed in as printed copy on the day stated and by email (as a PDF or word document) on the same day.

Late submissions will result in deducted marks and a lower final grade (B+ will drop to B; B to B- and so on). Failure to submit work completely will result in an automatic C for that course.

Students may apply for an extension if they have good and proper reason (illness, for example). If you are struggling in any way with your assignment - with the content, with the form or with outside pressures - please do discuss this well in advance of the deadline with your teacher. It is much better to seek help and guidance than to submit late.

## **7. Feedback**

Group and individual feedback is given at the end of both parts of the semester. This may be verbal or in writing depending on the course, so essays are returned with comments. All written work will be returned to students within a week of it being submitted.

BADA does not mark work anonymously. It believes that feedback is more effective and useful if the student knows the marker and vice versa. Thus, a single piece of written work can be reviewed in the context of the class participation, alertness and preparation. As with all assessment at BADA its chief purpose is to help the student raise their academic game.

### **Faculty**

Every Member of the Faculty receives a blank grade and assessment form for each student that they have taught in a semester. These will be sent out in the sixth week of the semester.

Faculty will enter both a final grade and an evaluation addressed to each student individually. These forms are emailed to Faculty as Word documents and should be completed and returned to BADA as an e-mail attachment within three weeks of the end of teaching.

The Dean reviews all grades and evaluations. Should concerns be raised about either, the Dean will contact the appropriate Member of Faculty for clarification before they are submitted to Sarah Lawrence College.

### **Students**

Once a student has received their grade and evaluation should they wish to challenge any or all of them they may make an appeal to the Dean who will firstly contact the Member(s) of Faculty and explain the student's concerns. The Faculty Member will be asked whether she or he would wish to reconsider her or his decision in the light of these concerns.

There is no obligation on any Faculty Member to revise their original decision and nor will BADA bring any kind of pressure on them to do so.

If a student continues to contest BADA's decision then they may appeal in writing to the BADA Grading Appeals Committee which consists of the Dean, a senior Member of Faculty and the Programs Manager as secretary to the committee. The committee will take evidence either in person or in writing from both sides in the dispute. The Appeals Committee will reach a judgement on the matter and its decision will be final and binding.

### *Student Feedback Evaluations*

At the end of each semester, every BADA student is asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire in which they evaluate the Faculty who have taught them, their classes, the master-classes, their directors, accommodation and the BADA administration. There is also an opportunity to record any other observations that they think may be relevant to their time on the program. BADA endeavours to compile an accurate picture of the student experience while studying with the Academy.

Once these surveys are completed, the Programs Manager will collate the information, and circulate summaries to the Dean and Managing Director. enabling the Dean to access individual concerns as necessary and discuss them with the Faculty Member in order to arrive at an appropriate course of action.

The Dean and BADA's management team promote and operate an 'open door' policy in order that students should feel able to discuss specific issues that they feel need to be addressed outside of our quality review process openly and frankly.

### *Visiting Professors*

Given that BADA works in partnership with American academic institutions, the Academy believes that it is right that our teaching practices should be observed by peers from the American educational system. Therefore it invites representatives of universities & colleges in the States (Directors of Study Abroad Programs, heads of Theatre and English departments, etc.) to visit BADA and observe the quality of our work for themselves.

In this way it is hoped those educational establishments will be able to make a better informed decision as to whether their students would benefit from studying at BADA. Where necessary BADA contributes to the cost of bringing such visitors to the UK.

In return BADA asks for feedback in writing from all visiting professors, on their return to America.

## **Evaluation**

### **Faculty Meetings**

BADA ensures that the Faculty will have a formal meeting once a semester during the first part of the eight week teaching block, to discuss any issues they are experiencing with any aspect of their work in relation to the students' performance with the Dean and Programs Manager. Prior to this meeting all Faculty Members are asked to submit a brief progress report on the individual students they are teaching that term. This then forms the basis of discussion at the Faculty meeting and helps highlight students that are causing concern.

Minutes of this meeting should be kept and circulated to all Faculty after the event to enable those not able to attend the meeting to note and if necessary to comment on any aspects discussed. Any additional notes will be added and kept on file. The Dean will take up any issues that require attention.

Additionally, the Dean and BADA staff operate an 'open door' policy which ensures that all Faculty Members feel confident in their ability to talk openly and frankly about their own experiences throughout the term.

### **Faculty Reviews**

Faculty should feel free to be able to contact the Dean at any time should they have any concerns.

Formal Faculty Reviews, where necessary, are designed to establish a dialogue between the Dean and Faculty Members so as to be of mutual benefit to both. During these review meetings, the Dean will bear in mind the following topics

- The course outline and evaluate how it compares to what happened in the class room
- Where relevant the class review report or moderation of written work undertaken throughout the term
- The student feedback given on the classes and Faculty
- Any issues which were initially raised at the Faculty meeting
- Faculty Members are free to raise any other topics that they feel that the Dean should be aware of.

The review meetings will be documented by the Dean with the notes being sent electronically to the Faculty Member for confirmation that the report is an accurate reflection of the review meeting or phone call. BADA accepts an email from the Faculty Member in response. This would constitute a confirmation of approval in the absence of a signature.

In line with BADA's confidentiality policy the issues raised in a review meeting and the information documented in the review minutes will be kept private and confidential. This material will only ever be made available to Members of the management team



to whom it is relevant and to the Faculty Member being reviewed. All Faculty Members have the right to reply and appeal as outlined in the BADA grievance procedure.

At the end of the first part of the semester, each Faculty Member will review their teaching experience over the past weeks on the Faculty Class Review form. Should there be any concerns, either from the Class Review or from the student feedback, The Dean will meet with the Faculty Member individually in person or by telephone to discuss them.

A general summary of the educational quality review process and the subsequent findings should be covered in the Dean's regular presentations to the BADA Board of Trustees.