



# Subject Benchmark Statement

## Dance, Drama and Performance

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## How can I use this document?

This document is a Subject Benchmark Statement for dance, drama and performance that defines what can be expected of a graduate in the subject, in terms of what they might know, do and understand at the end of their studies.

You may want to read this document if you are:

- involved in the design, delivery and review of programmes of study in dance, drama and performance or related subjects
- a prospective student thinking about studying dance, drama and performance, or a current student of the subject, to find out what may be involved
- an employer, to find out about the knowledge and skills generally expected of a graduate in dance, drama and performance.

Explanations of unfamiliar terms used in this Subject Benchmark Statement can be found in the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's (QAA's) glossary.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The QAA glossary is available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary).

## About Subject Benchmark Statements

Subject Benchmark Statements form part of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) which sets out the Expectations that all providers of UK higher education reviewed by QAA are required to meet.<sup>2</sup> They are a component of Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards, which includes the Expectation that higher education providers 'consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements' in order to secure threshold academic standards.<sup>3</sup>

Subject Benchmark Statements describe the nature of study and the academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas, and in respect of particular qualifications. They provide a picture of what graduates in a particular subject might reasonably be expected to know, do and understand at the end of their programme of study.

Subject Benchmark Statements are used as reference points in the design, delivery and review of academic programmes. They provide general guidance for articulating the learning outcomes associated with the programme but are not intended to represent a national curriculum in a subject or to prescribe set approaches to teaching, learning or assessment. Instead, they allow for flexibility and innovation in programme design within a framework agreed by the subject community. Further guidance about programme design, development and approval, learning and teaching, assessment of students, and programme monitoring and review is available in Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality of the Quality Code in the following Chapters:<sup>4</sup>

- *Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval*
- *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*
- *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning*
- *Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review.*

For some subject areas, higher education providers may need to consider other reference points in addition to the Subject Benchmark Statement in designing, delivering and reviewing programmes. These may include requirements set out by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, national occupational standards and industry or employer expectations. In such cases, the Subject Benchmark Statement may provide additional guidance around academic standards not covered by these requirements.<sup>5</sup> The relationship between academic and professional or regulatory requirements is made clear within individual statements, but it is the responsibility of individual higher education providers to decide how they use this information. The responsibility for academic standards remains with the higher education provider who awards the degree.

Subject Benchmark Statements are written and maintained by subject specialists drawn from and acting on behalf of the subject community. The process is facilitated by QAA. In order to ensure the continuing currency of Subject Benchmark Statements, QAA initiates regular reviews of their content, five years after first publication, and every seven years subsequently.

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<sup>2</sup> The Quality Code, available at [www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code), aligns with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, available at: [www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/ESG\\_3edition-2.pdf](http://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/ESG_3edition-2.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards, available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-a](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-a).

<sup>4</sup> Individual Chapters are available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b).

<sup>5</sup> See further Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards, available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-a](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-a).

## **Relationship to legislation**

Higher education providers are responsible for meeting the requirements of legislation and any other regulatory requirements placed upon them, for example by funding bodies. The Quality Code does not interpret legislation nor does it incorporate statutory or regulatory requirements. Sources of information about other requirements and examples of guidance and good practice are signposted within the Subject Benchmark Statement where appropriate. Higher education providers are responsible for how they use these resources.<sup>6</sup>

## **Equality and diversity**

The Quality Code embeds consideration of equality and diversity matters throughout. Promoting equality involves treating everyone with equal dignity and worth, while also raising aspirations and supporting achievement for people with diverse requirements, entitlements and backgrounds. An inclusive environment for learning anticipates the varied requirements of learners, and aims to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities. Higher education providers, staff and students all have a role in, and responsibility for, promoting equality.

Equality of opportunity involves enabling access for people who have differing individual requirements as well as eliminating arbitrary and unnecessary barriers to learning. In addition, disabled students and non-disabled students are offered learning opportunities that are equally accessible to them, by means of inclusive design wherever possible and by means of reasonable individual adjustments wherever necessary.

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<sup>6</sup> See further the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education: General Introduction*, available at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=181](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=181).

## About this Subject Benchmark Statement

This Subject Benchmark Statement refers to bachelor's degrees with honours in dance, drama and performance.<sup>7</sup>

This version of the statement forms its third edition, following initial publication in 2000 and review and revision in 2007.<sup>8</sup>

### Note on alignment with higher education coding systems

Programmes of study which use this Subject Benchmark Statement as a reference point are generally classified under the following codes in the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS).<sup>9</sup>

W312	(Musical Theatre)
W410	(Acting)
W420	(Directing for Theatre)
W430	(Production for Theatre)
W440	(Theatre Studies)
W443	(Technical Arts and Special Effects for theatre)
W450	(Stage Management)
W451	(Theatrical Wardrobe Design)
W452	(Theatrical Make-Up)
W453	(Technical Stage Management)
W461	(Stage Design)
W490	(Drama elsewhere not classified)
W500	(Dance)
W510	(Choreography)
W520	(Body Awareness)
W531	(Dance and Culture)
W532	(Community Dance)
W540	(Types of Dance)
W542	(Dance Theatre)
W543	(Contemporary Dance)
W550	(Dance Performance)
W550	(History of Dance).

### Summary of changes from the previous Subject Benchmark Statement (2007)

Reports from our relevant subject associations and from contact with departments throughout the UK have suggested that the Subject Benchmark Statement for dance, drama and performance continues to be accessible, robust and useful in helping departments to articulate their programmes of study clearly and with an appropriate degree of comparability. However, some updating was needed to reflect developments in a dynamic and multi-modal discipline. In particular, the revised statement contains updates in the areas of digital technologies, applied, participatory and socially engaged arts and employability. Consultation with other Subject Benchmark Statements have identified increased

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<sup>7</sup> Bachelor's degrees are at level 6 in *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (2008) and level 10 in the *Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework* (2001).

<sup>8</sup> Further information is available in the *Recognition Scheme for Subject Benchmark Statements*, available at: [www.gaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=190](http://www.gaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=190).

<sup>9</sup> Further information about JACS is available at: [www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/1776/649](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/1776/649).

interdisciplinary connections to include: music, art and design, communication, media, film and cultural studies, general business and management.

# 1 Introduction

1.1 Fields of activity in the title of this Subject Benchmark Statement are characterised by both traditional and contemporary conceptions of dance, drama and performance, live and recorded, and by categories such as performance art, live art, participatory and applied arts, sited practices, media for screen, circus arts and by other modes to which nomenclature has yet to be ascribed. In this Statement, the term 'performance' is used to embrace this expanded and expanding field.

1.2 This Subject Benchmark Statement considers programmes of study that are taught in a range of higher education providers that have quite discrete missions and objectives for learning and teaching. The programmes of study reflect this breadth and diversity. There are, for example, academies and conservatoires of acting, dance and production, where the focus is on nurturing and training the professional practitioner. There are providers where practice and theory are taught in varying proportions and with varying purposes, and where the pursuit of scholarship and research, including practice as research, has a greater emphasis. The range and diversity of provision is therefore extremely wide and it has been our intention to create a Statement that can embody this range. Indeed it is this diversity of provision that accounts for the strength and popularity of dance, drama and performance. Accordingly, both the original benchmarking and review groups have tried to make this Statement sufficiently generic to allow for and indeed to celebrate our diversity, while at the same time giving a clear indication of the kinds of creativity, knowledge, understanding, skills and methods of learning appropriate to the field of study.

1.3 There is a traditional intersection between dance, drama and performance and other subject domains, and whose continuation acknowledges a general interdisciplinary focus in the arts and humanities. This further contributes to the considerable degree of choice that the student enjoys within higher education providers in the UK. For example, it is natural and proper that dramatic texts and their context of production may be studied in departments of literature and in departments of drama. The study and practice of film, video, media and digital arts, television, and radio may be considered to be a fundamental component of some departments of dance, drama and performance, while also being available in departments devoted to the study of communications and media. Departments of dance, drama and performance encourage this cross-fertilisation of subjects and believe that it contributes to a considerable enrichment of the students' learning experience. It is not the purpose of this Statement to articulate or facilitate the creation of subject boundaries, nor to lay down a curriculum for the field. It is understood, therefore, that the standards expressed by this statement will be achieved through the programmes as specified by the individual higher education provider.



## 2 Defining characteristics of dance, drama and performance

2.1 The purpose of this section is to outline a framework, which reflects the provision of the related subject areas of dance, drama and performance within higher education providers in the UK at the present time. The area of dance, drama and performance comprises the study of:

- discrete fields of activity, conventionally characterised as the 'disciplines' of dance, drama, theatre, performance and their production, within which each has its own intellectual/practical performance traditions, bodies of knowledge, skills and concept areas which combine these activities with video, film, television, radio and multidisciplinary performance
- work which integrates a variety of modes of performance and creation, including other media, digital arts and new technologies, and interdisciplinary and intermedia performance. It is in this arena, particularly, that the boundaries of the performing arts dissolve as new practices and processes challenge existing conceptions.

2.2 The practical and conceptual bases of the performing arts are, therefore, discrete, diverse and interrelated. While these disciplines embrace bodies of knowledge generated through (and beyond) performance making activities, they are not constrained by a fixed set of knowledge and skills but are characterised by changing social, political and artistic values and practices; it is the dynamic nature of these cultural practices and their frequently contested nature that sustains the vitality of the subject areas. Reciprocally, the activities of students and staff impact upon and change those practices.

2.3 Given the diversity and dynamism of the subject domain and the changing nature of student demographics it is vital that any definition of the subject does not constrain future innovation, nor should the continuation of well established methodologies and engagement with traditional subject matter be threatened.

2.4 This diversity and development is reflected in the provision of dance, drama and performance at bachelor's degree with honours level in the higher education sector of the UK. For example, higher education providers offer:

- Specialist vocational training and education
- single honours dance, drama, theatre or performance, or programmes with a similar nomenclature
- combined honours programmes bringing together dance, drama and performance or dance, drama and performance with subjects beyond this domain
- inter-disciplinary programmes in which no specific subject is named in the award (for example, contemporary arts). In these a blurring of categorical boundaries between art forms, and practices, has led to combinations of dance, drama and performance with, for example, visual arts, digital arts, music, writing, curating and arts management.

2.5 Professional bodies may have an influence on standards and awards within some departments in higher education providers. Particular skills are aligned to the requirements of professional bodies such as Drama UK, for example, whose accreditation specifications inform professional vocational training and education.

### 3 Nature and scope of dance, drama and performance

3.1 The subject domain comprises a grouping of methods, practices, disciplines and fields of study (as listed in Appendix 1). In broad terms, the field of study includes:

- i practical work in a range of contexts linked to a greater or lesser extent in the performance, creation, design and presentation of dance, drama and performance
- ii critical studies (for example analytic, theoretical, historical, textual or contextual) appropriate to the context of the award in dance, drama, theatre, performance and production, and related multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary areas
- iii technique and technical training for craft skills development
- iv integration of existing and emerging technologies into performance and production
- v preparation for employment within and beyond the dance, drama and performance industries.

The area embraces the study of the performance traditions of non-western cultures and the cultural pluralism that informs historical and contemporary performance practice. The subject area embraces its role in reflecting and engaging with the changing composition of British society and the need for greater knowledge and understanding of diverse cultural heritage.

3.2 The dance, drama and performance programme is characterised by the following common features:

- i knowledge and understanding of the ways in which performance originates, is constructed, circulated and received; this may include 'embodied knowledge' and 'practice as research'
- ii acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding through processes of research, action, reflection and evaluation of ethical practice and arts citizenship
- iii acquisition of discipline-specific skills and techniques
- iv acquisition of practice-based knowledge through physical engagement in technical exercises to develop skills in craft and technique
- v practical, workshop-based learning is normally a feature of all dance, drama and performance programmes
- vi practical learning can involve active participation in all, some or a combination of the following:
  - rehearsal/devising processes
  - craft skills/technique development
  - production
  - performance
  - digital media
  - production arts
- vii reflecting the public and community nature of performance practice, particular emphasis may be placed on collaborative learning and heuristic principles, on 'learning through doing' in group contexts
- viii study that may embrace analysis of theory and of performance texts, which may be written or notated. Equally, emphasis may be placed upon the study of the design and creation of performance as an event or process
- ix research - practical and/or theoretical - is seen as a necessary requirement for engagement with all facets of performance and production practice and theory
- x the location of practice within an appropriate framework of ideas, histories and skills.

3.3 Studies in dance, drama and performance are further informed by concepts and methods drawn from a wide and diverse range of other disciplines. In turn, dance, drama and performance offer their own distinct theories and practices to other fields of study.

3.4 Different skills and knowledge are called for in the different destinations of graduates in this area. Common destinations include the professional arts, commercial and non-profit performance industries, applied and community arts, education, scholarship and the creative and cultural industries. 'Graduate-ness' in this domain cannot be defined in the singular but will involve a range of both subject-specific and generic skills. Skills and attributes of dance, drama and performance graduates are highly sought after by non-cognate industries. These skills include those of communication (written, oral and performance), of research and analysis, the ability to work independently, interpersonally and in groups, to deadlines and under pressure, with flexibility, imagination, self-motivation and organisation.

## 4 Subject knowledge and understanding

4.1 The broad, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of dance, drama and performance makes it inappropriate to identify prescriptively the knowledge and understanding, which are to be expected of a graduate in these subjects. Higher education providers will differ in their emphases and approaches, particularly in the proportion and kinds of practices undertaken and in the extent to which their programmes make use of the traditions of performer training, research, practice and scholarship. Typically, programmes will incorporate several areas listed in paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 focusing on some as identifying features.

4.2 Graduates of programmes in dance, drama and performance should be able to demonstrate, where appropriate, knowledge and understanding in a range of the following areas: (In this and the following section, the term 'performance' is used inclusively, to cover activity in all the areas of dance, drama and performance studies outlined in the introduction to this document).

- i Practitioners and practices.
- ii Cultural contexts of practitioners and practices.
- iii Craft and technique.
- iv Critical perspectives on relevant theories and debates in relation to performance.
- v Histories, forms and traditions of performance.
- vi Performance contexts in terms of production and reception.
- vii Processes by which performance is created, realised, managed, distributed and documented.
- viii A range of key components of performance within the disciplines to include, for example: ideational sources, body, space, image, sound, text, movement, environment.
- ix Critical awareness of research methodologies and methods used to investigate the fields of study.
- x Applications of performance in educational, community and social contexts and pedagogical perspectives as appropriate to drama/dance/performance education.

4.3 Graduates of programmes in dance, drama and performance should also be able to demonstrate understanding in a range of the following areas:

- i the interplay between creative and critical modes of enquiry in the discipline
- ii the influence of legacy and tradition in terms of current and future practices
- iii the use of written texts, media notations and/or scores to create performance
- iv critical analysis, documentation and/or interpretation of performance
- v the use of technical skills in creative and critical modes of expression
- vi the use of performance and production skills to facilitate audience engagement and participation
- vii the use of group processes in the creation of work including, for example, working collectively, ensemble, co-creation and hierarchical and non hierarchical structures
- viii the interrelationships within and between different areas and aspects of dance, drama and performance
- ix the interdisciplinary elements of dance, drama and performance, and how to apply appropriate knowledge, concepts and skills from other disciplines
- x applications of dance, drama and performance within a diverse range of contexts.

4.4 The range of study offered by any one degree programme includes selections from the list of topics in Appendix 1 (others not named may also be included).

## 5 Skills

### Subject-specific skills

5.1 Graduates in dance, drama and performance acquire a range of critical, creative, performance and production skills. Some degree programmes will have a single discipline focus while others will offer a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary programme of study. Programme specifications indicate the emphases of course providers within this disciplinary diversity, so that individual institutions clearly articulate the specific skills expected to be acquired by a graduate from their dance, drama and performance programme. However, graduates within the broad subject area of dance, drama and performance will have practised many of the following, and focused on some of them.

#### Making, creating and performing

5.2 Students will be able to demonstrate the following:

- i engaging in performance and production, based on acquisition and understanding of appropriate performance and production vocabularies, skills, structures, working methods and research paradigms
- ii developing a repertoire of interpretative skills, practices and making techniques (physical/aural/spatial) and applying them effectively to engage with an audience/performance
- iii contributing to the production of performance, for example through direction, choreography, dramaturgy, stage management, scenography, sound and lighting production, media, promotion, administration and funding
- iv realising the performance possibilities of a script, score and other textual and documentary sources and/or creating new work using the skills and crafts of performance making/writing
- v developing techniques informed by or derived from particular cultural forms/histories/contexts and/or practitioners
- vi making records of performance, using skills and technologies in notation and/or documentation
- vii taking responsibility as an individual artist whether working independently or within a group for creative decision making
- viii developing a repertoire of interpretative skills, practices and techniques (physical/aural/spatial) and applying them effectively to engage with an audience.
- ix using technologies such as computer aided design, television and sound editing, sampling and composition, digital and media arts in the realisation and execution of performance.

#### Critical response/analysis

5.3 Students will be able to demonstrate the following:

- i describing, theorising, interpreting and evaluating performance texts and events from a range of critical and technical perspectives and using appropriate subject specific vocabularies
- ii developing skills of observation and visual, aural and spatial awareness
- iii identifying and discriminating between primary and secondary sources
- iv accessing and analysing historical source materials to identify the original conditions and contexts for production
- v investigating performance environments to determine how place, site and space shape the events they accommodate.

## **Applications and participation**

- 5.4 Students will be able to demonstrate the following:
- i analysing the role which dance, drama and performance, in all its forms, may play in contributing to cultural debate and active citizenship
  - ii planning, facilitating, delivering and evaluating projects that apply dance, drama, participatory and performance subject expertise in social, educational, community and other socially engaged settings
  - iii questioning the ethical implications and appropriateness of performance work to ensure activities are undertaken in safe and supported environments for specific audiences/participants.

## **Generic and graduate skills**

5.5 In addition to the subject-specific skills outlined above, graduates will have acquired a further range of general abilities and capacities, qualities of mind and transferable skills. While the potential range of generic skills a graduate might acquire would include many of the following, it is the particular interaction between the various investigative, critical, analytical and expressive skills, which will especially characterise graduates in dance, drama and performance.

## **Self-management**

- 5.6 Students will have the ability to:
- i work independently, set goals and manage their own workloads
  - ii work effectively under pressure and to deadlines
  - iii understand how to manage risk, health, safety and employ ethical working practices to ensure safe working contexts
  - iv work in planned and improvisatory ways, to anticipate and accommodate change, ambiguity, creative risk taking, uncertainty and unfamiliarity
  - v identify personal strengths and needs, and reflect on personal development and opportunities for life-long learning.

## **Critical engagement**

- 5.7 Students will have the ability to:
- i operate and think reflexively, creatively, critically and technically to develop ideas and construct arguments
  - ii research and examine information, materials and experiences, formulate independent judgements, and articulate reasoned arguments through reflection, review and evaluation
  - iii formulate reasoned responses to the critical judgements of others
  - iv engage interdisciplinary approaches and understand different theories or paradigms of knowledge.

## **Group/team working and social skills**

5.8 Students will have the ability to:

- i effectively lead, facilitate, participate and problem solve within team working contexts
- ii understand group dynamics to operate collaboratively within collective, creative and professional contexts to generate and pursue shared goals
- iii recognise situational and interpersonal factors and how these can be effectively accommodated to facilitate productive working relationships
- iv negotiate and manage conflict
- v consider, acknowledge and respect diverse opinions and the social, cultural and ideological positions from which they arise.

## **Skills in communication and presentation**

5.9 Students will have the ability to:

- i articulate ideas and communicate information comprehensibly in visual, physical, oral and textual forms
- ii produce written work with appropriate scholarly and professional registers/conventions
- iii create and present in forms appropriate to content and in a range of contexts
- iv demonstrate literacy in digital vocabularies.

5.10 Students will have the ability to:

- i critically use information retrieval skills, involving the ability to gather, sift, manipulate, synthesise, evaluate and organise material
- ii appropriately select, employ and adapt digital media and information technologies
- iii use project management skills, involving the ability to investigate, organise, curate and realise activities.

## **6 Teaching, learning and assessment**

6.1 Dance, drama and performance may be studied as single, joint or combined honours, major-minor programmes or within general degrees. Modules or elective routes may be open to students whose principal area of study lies elsewhere. Whatever the nature of the programme, similar learning outcomes are expected of those students undertaking the modules/routes.

6.2 All students engaging in the study of dance, drama and performance will develop subject-specific knowledge and/or skills and a commensurate degree of experience. The study of dance, drama and performance within any programme of study will facilitate progression in terms of subject-specific expertise, personal and social development and intellectual maturity through engagement with appropriate ways of thinking and doing. Some highly specialised modules may not be available to students for whom dance, drama and performance is not their principal area of study; therefore for such students the same level of progression in terms of in-depth knowledge and/or technical skill may not be expected.

6.3 Teaching, learning and assessment will be underpinned by a commitment to inclusive practice. Curriculum design and delivery and assessment activities will enable reasonable adjustments to be made as appropriate, in recognition of individual learning needs.

### **Teaching and learning**

6.4 Within dance, drama and performance, teaching and learning will be closely related, through a variety of approaches that facilitate students' artistic, creative and scholarly development and cohere, to a greater or lesser degree, around the integration of practice and theory. The relative contribution of each approach is likely to vary from programme to programme, as new conceptual frameworks emerge, exploring relations between creative and critical modes of enquiry which, in turn, inform the development of new training frameworks, pedagogies, research methods and methodologies.

6.5 In dance, drama and performance, experiential learning is a key principle of study.

6.6 Teaching and learning activities will be contextually specific, informed by practices that are typical of, and relevant to, the diverse disciplines that constitute dance, drama and performance.

6.7 Students will usually experience work in or related to practical and professional performance contexts (both live and recorded), undertaking a variety of roles as appropriate to their subject area and participating in a range of processes including initial research, rehearsal, production, performance, and so on.

6.8 Throughout the degree, students will normally experience both tutor-led learning, including the participation of professional practitioners, and self-directed methods of learning. The learning trajectory moves towards increased independence and autonomy in learning, encouraging positive attitudes towards lifelong learning.



6.9 Teaching and learning will normally take place in a variety of continually evolving contexts, including an appropriate balance of workshops, rehearsals, productions, practical classes, laboratory/studio-based practice, screenings, lectures, seminars, tutorials and web-based interactions between students and teachers. These interactions between student and teacher will often be characterised by some or all of the following:

- group and individual learning
- work-based learning of varying types (professional placements or independent industry study)
- tutor-led, student-led, self-directed study
- use of subject-specific and generic technologies
- resource-based learning (studio, workshop, laboratory, library, archive, internet)
- technique and skills-based learning through intensive studio based activity and individual or group practice
- experience of relevant events (performances, installations, masterclasses, auditions, screenings, exhibitions).

## Assessment

6.10 Assessment within dance, drama and performance enables students to demonstrate their level of attainment and the full range of abilities and skills. A diverse range of assessment types are used in dance, drama and performance as reflects the discipline and curriculum design ensures that students are appropriately prepared. Modes of assessment and related feedback strategies are designed to be part of the learning experience and ensure that the learning outcomes identified by programme components can be met. Forms of assessment recognise the opportunities presented by a wide spectrum of learning needs and abilities.

6.11 Opportunities for formative and summative assessment are provided in a variety of modes, which assess critical understanding, knowledge, ability, technique, creativity, artistry, and application, such as:

- coursework, for example:
  - practical activities (group and/or individual)
  - oral presentations
  - performance (live or mediated)
  - production and/or technical outputs (for example model boxes, prompt copies)
  - digital platforms and formats
  - essays
  - critical evaluations
  - journals/portfolios
  - project reports
  - dissertations
  - research projects
  - performance texts/scores/plays
  - storyboards
  - scenographies
- examination, for example:
  - practical (for example, internal(restricted) and/or public performances)
  - written (for example, timed, take-away)
  - oral (for example presentation and/or viva voce).

Opportunities may be provided for self and peer assessment which may be of value to the learning process.

6.12 In all cases, assessment is valid and reliable, supported by clear criteria for marking and grading, which are provided to students.

6.13 Information regarding feedback rationale, mechanisms and timeframes is provided alongside assessment information.

6.14 Students are provided with programme documentation that comprises: aims and objectives, structure and content, learning outcomes, assessment procedures and criteria, expected study approaches, time for guided and independent study and credit awards. Details regarding the provision of feedback, tutorial support, online resources and access, and required and indicative bibliographies are also included. This programme information is designed to be read by students in relation to the individual institution's degree programme regulations.

6.15 Programme and/or module handbooks typically advise students on academic issues such as assessment criteria, unacceptable academic practice and on ways to access study skills and learning support. Other related information is added as appropriate, for example, attendance requirements, health and safety issues for classes, teaching and performing environments, and professional placements.

## **7 Benchmark standards**

7.1 Benchmark standards are expressed in terms of learning outcomes. The following threshold standards are set alongside levels of attainment that are the focus or goal for students on dance, drama and performance programmes.

7.2 Students graduate at the threshold level if they have achieved, as appropriate to their programme of study, knowledge, performance ability, creativity, skills and understanding sufficient to provide a basic presentation of performance and/or information or arguments with respect to particular skills or material.

7.3 However, the typical goal of dance, drama and performance programmes is to produce students with the capacity to develop abilities and skills as creative and critical artists and thinkers, capable of independently evaluating and engaging practically and conceptually with performance and, as appropriate, being capable of demonstrating performance, technical and artistic skills, and critical analysis.

7.4 It is important that students are made aware of this distinction and inspired and guided to reach beyond the threshold.

7.5 Excellent students will tend to transcend the learning outcomes and display originality, insight and a selection or combination of the qualities of artistic profundity, technical excellence and the highest standards of achievement and research proper to the field of study.

7.6 The list of standards provides indicative learning outcomes. It is expected that they will be read in conjunction with individual programme information, which will be determined by each higher education provider. Given that this Subject Benchmark Statement considers the work of both the professional, conservatoire and the traditional university or college, there is no sense in which these standards provide a curriculum of achievements.

7.7 The standards expressed are for single honours programmes. The stated learning outcomes are indicative and do not form a checklist. It is not expected that all programmes will necessarily lead to the attainment of all the stated learning outcomes.

7.8 The word 'performance' is used inclusively throughout this section, and may be understood to cover activity in all areas of dance, drama and performance.

### **Threshold standard**

#### **Subject knowledge, understanding and abilities**

7.9 It is expected that on completion of a bachelor's degree with honours in dance, drama and performance or associated programmes, subject to individual programme specifications, graduates should be able to demonstrate some:

- i knowledge of forms, practices, techniques, traditions, histories and applications of performance
- ii knowledge of the key components of performance and the processes by which it is created, realised, managed, distributed and documented
- iii knowledge of critical and theoretical perspectives appropriate to the study of performance
- iv knowledge of key practitioners and practices and/or theorists and their cultural and/or historical contexts

- v knowledge of the role and function of performance in social, educational, community and other participatory settings
- vi understanding of the interplay between critical and creative modes of enquiry within the field of study
- vii understanding of how to read and interpret texts, media, dance notations and/or scores to create performance
- viii understanding of group and collective processes
- ix understanding of key components of performance within the disciplines such as the role and function of ideational sources, performers, space, sound, text, movement and environment
- x understanding of appropriate interdisciplinary elements of dance, drama and performance and how to apply them
- xi knowledge, practices, concepts and skills from other disciplines
- xii understanding of the responsibilities of performance practitioners to facilitate safe and ethical working practices.

### **Subject-specific skills**

7.10 It is expected that on completion of a bachelor's degree with honours in dance, drama and performance or associated programmes, subject to individual programme information, graduates should be:

- i able to engage in the creation and/or production of performance through an understanding of appropriate performance vocabularies, techniques, crafts, technologies, structures, contexts, working methods and research paradigms
- ii able to understand the possibilities for performance implied by a text, media, dance notation or score and, as appropriate, realise these sources through design, technology and performance
- iii able to make records of performance using skills and technologies in notation and/or documentation
- iv to describe, theorise, interpret and evaluate performances and events
- v able to engage in independent research, whether investigating past or present performances or as part of the process of creating and/or critically responding to performance
- vi able to identify the cultural and contextual frameworks of performance
- vii able to investigate performance environments to determine the influence of spatial relationships.

### **Generic and graduate skills**

7.11 It is expected that on completion of a bachelor's degree with honours in dance, drama and performance or associated programmes, subject to individual programme information, graduates should:

- i have developed skills in self-management, demonstrating the ability to set goals, manage workloads, work under pressure and meet deadlines
- ii be able to assess and manage risk, health and safety and to employ ethical working practices
- iii have developed skills in critical engagement, demonstrating the ability to operate and think reflexively, creatively and critically, to develop ideas and to construct and present arguments in appropriate ways
- iv be able to work in a group or team and to have the skills needed for the realisation of collaborative project-based work
- v have an ability to manage creative, personal and interpersonal issues

- vi have acquired skills in communication and presentation with the ability to articulate and communicate ideas and information in a variety of forms, as appropriate to content
- vii have developed information skills and be able to critically retrieve information, and to gather, sift, manipulate, synthesise, evaluate and organise material
- viii have an ability to select, employ and adapt digital media and information technologies
- ix be able to use project management skills involving the ability to investigate, organise, curate and realise activities.

## **Typical standard**

### **Subject knowledge, understanding and abilities**

7.12 It is expected that on completion of a bachelor's degree with honours in dance, drama and performance or associated programmes, subject to individual programme specifications, graduates should be able to demonstrate comprehension and:

- i creative and intelligent engagement with forms, practices, techniques, traditions, histories and applications of performance
- ii creative and intelligent engagement with the key components of performance and the processes by which it is created, realised, managed, distributed and documented
- iii intelligent engagement with critical and theoretical perspectives appropriate to the study of performance
- iv intelligent engagement with key practitioners and practices and/or theorists and their cultural and/or historical contexts
- v creative and intelligent engagement with the role and function of performance in social, educational, community and other participatory settings
- vi intelligent understanding of the interplay between critical and creative modes of enquiry within the field of study
- vii intelligent understanding of how to read and interpret texts, media, dance notations and/or scores to create performance
- viii creative and intelligent understanding of group and collective processes
- ix creative and intelligent understanding of key components of performance within the disciplines such as the role and function of ideational sources, performers, body, space, sound, text, movement and environment
- x creative and intelligent understanding of appropriate interdisciplinary elements of dance, drama and performance and how to apply knowledge, practices, concepts and skills from other disciplines
- xi intelligent understanding of the responsibilities of performance practitioners to facilitate safe, environmentally sensitive, sustainable and ethical working practices.

## **Subject-specific skills**

7.13 It is expected that on completion of a bachelor's degree with honours in dance, drama and performance or associated programmes, subject to individual programme specifications, graduates should be able to:

- i engage creatively and critically with the skills and processes of performance and production, and have an ability to select, refine and present these in performance
- ii engage creatively and critically with the possibilities for performance implied by a text, dance notation or score and, as appropriate, to realise these sources sensitively through design and performance
- iii engage creatively and critically with the creation and/or production of performance through a developed and sensitive understanding of appropriate performance vocabularies, techniques, crafts, structures and working methods
- iv engage creatively and critically in appropriate independent research, whether investigating past or present performances or as part of the process of creating new performance
- v identify and interpret critically the cultural frameworks that surround performance events and on which these events impinge.

## **Generic and graduate skills**

7.14 It is expected that on completion of a bachelor's degree with honours in dance, drama and performance or associated programmes, subject to individual programme specifications, graduates should:

- i have critical and analytical skills in developing ideas and constructing arguments and the capacity to evaluate and present them in a range of ways
- ii have a developed capacity to analyse and critically examine and evaluate forms of discourse and their effects on representation in the arts, media and public life
- iii be able to work creatively and imaginatively in a group and have the developed creative skills needed for the realisation of practice-based work
- iv be able to manage personal workloads efficiently and effectively, meet deadlines, and negotiate and pursue goals with others
- v have developed the ability to constructively and effectively manage creative, personal and interpersonal issues
- vi have acquired information retrieval skills needed to gather, sift, synthesise and organise material independently and to critically evaluate its significance
- vii have acquired and developed appropriate information technology skills, and have developed considerable awareness of their application and potential within the field of study.

## Appendix 1: List of areas of study

The range of study offered by any one degree programme include selections from the following list of topics, which are commonly taught within UK dance, drama and performance departments. This is not intended to be an exhaustive or prescriptive list and will be subject to individual programme specifications. Programmes may include various combinations and particular versions of these and/or other areas, studied in relation to dance, drama and performance.

### A

- activism
- acting, voice and body training
- adaptation
- aerial practice and theory
- aesthetics
- anthropology of performance
- analysis
- applied practice, community practice
- art history
- arts management
- audience studies
- autobiographical performance
- authorship
- animatronics

### B

- body practices, for example performer training, yoga, Alexander technique, Body-Mind Centering, Skinner Releasing Technique

### C

- choreography
- choreology
- circus skills
- contemporary and new circus
- collaboration, co-creation, collectivity
- costume
- creativity
- critical 'textual' analysis
- culture, society, economics and politics
- cultural policy, funding and administration
- curation

### D

- dance science
- dance movement therapy
- drama movement therapy
- dance technique
- dialogue
- design
- devising
- diction
- digital performance

- directing
- disability studies
- documentary
- documentation, interpretation, identity
- dramaturgy

## E

- education theory and practice
- ecology
- ethics

## F

- festivals
- fusion

## G

- gender and sexuality
- genre

## H

- health and well-being
- history, historiography

## I

- image-based performance
- identity and agency gender, sexuality
- intermedial performance
- intellectual property
- interactive, immersive
- improvisation, performance improvisation
- intercultural theatre

## L

- live art
- lighting

## M

- management and production
- make up
- media
- mask
- movement techniques and training
- music
- music theatre
- musical theatre

## N

- new writing - stage and screen
- object theatre

## P

- participatory performance
- pedagogy



- performance art
- performance studies
- performance apps
- performance theory, and analysis
- performance and digital practices
- performance, society, and popular culture
- performance practice
- physical therapy
- physical theatre
- philosophy
- play studies
- playwriting, writing for performance
- politics
- post-dramatic performance
- popular performance
- practice-based and self-led research
- props and prop making
- psycho-physical acting approaches
- puppetry

## R

- race, ethnicity and critical race studies
- reflective and reflexive practice
- 
- reconstruction, restage, re-vision, retrieve
- research methods

## S

- social media - communications and cultural industry
- studio methods
- safe practice and fitness
- scenography
- screen drama/theatre and screen/dance on-screen
- sound
- site specific, sensitive, responsive, place/non-place, location
- song, singing
- somatics
- spectatorship
- stage management

## T

- technical production
- time, image, space
- translation

## U

- urban practices

## V

- voice training

W

- web-based performance, digital content generation
- world arts and performance
- writing for performance

## **Appendix 2: Membership of the review groups for the Subject Benchmark Statement for dance, drama and performance**

### **Membership of the review group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for dance, drama and performance (2014)**

Professor Nicola Shaughnessy (Chair)      University of Kent

#### **Higher education provider representatives**

Helen Angove	Conservatoire for Dance and Drama
Dr Fiona Bannon	University of Leeds
Professor Paul Kleiman	Middlesex University
Professor Stephen Lacey	University of South Wales
Professor Vida Midgelow	Middlesex University
Ms Deborah Richardson-Webb	Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
Dr Kurt Taroff	Queen's University Belfast

#### **Professional body and employer representatives**

Liz Dale	Council for Dance Education and Training
Dr Paul Sutton	C & T (based at University of Worcester)

#### **Student reader**

Roanna Mitchell	University of Kent
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#### **QAA Officer**

Phil Markey	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
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### **Membership of the review group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for dance, drama and performance (2007)**

Details provided below are as published in the second edition of the Subject Benchmark Statement (2007).

Professor Christopher Baugh (Chair)	University of Leeds
Paul Clements	Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts
Dr Nicola Shaughnessy	University of Kent
Professor Joan White	Royal Academy of Dance

## **Membership of the original benchmarking group for dance, drama and performance (2002)**

Details below appear as published in the original Subject Benchmark Statement for dance, drama and performance (2002).

Dr Frances Babbage	University of Leeds
Professor Christopher Baugh (Chair)	University of Kent at Canterbury
Dr Barbara Bell	Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh
Dr Alexandra Carter	Middlesex University
Mr Paul Clements	Mountview Theatre School, London
Professor Viv Gardner	University of Manchester
Mr Greg Gieseckam	University of Glasgow
Dr Angela Kane	University of Surrey
Professor Mick Mangan	University of Wales, Aberystwyth
Professor Robin Nelson	Manchester Metropolitan University
Professor Alison Oddey	Loughborough University
Ms Sarah Stevens	De Montfort University
Professor Joan White	Royal Academy of Dance, London

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