Programme Specification

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she passes the programme. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the programme handbook. The accuracy of the information contained in this specification is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Postgraduate Diploma / MA in Contemporary Dance

1. Awarding Institution/Body  
   University of Kent

2. Teaching Institution  
   Northern School of Contemporary Dance

3. School responsible for management of the programme  
   Northern School of Contemporary Dance

4. Teaching Site  
   Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Leeds

5. Mode of Delivery  
   Full-time

6. Programme accredited by  
   Not Applicable

7. Final Award  
   Postgraduate Diploma / MA (optional)

8. Programme  
   Contemporary Dance

9. UCAS Code (or other code)  
   Not Applicable

10. Credits/ECTS value  
    120/180 credits

11. Study Level  
    Postgraduate

12. Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s)  
    Dance, Drama and Performing Arts - 2007

   This benchmarking statement is for undergraduate degrees only, and has been used here for guidance purposes with adjustments appropriate to MA and Postgraduate level study

13. Date of creation/revision  
    February 2013/May 2013

14. Intended Start Date of Delivery of this Programme  
    From September 2013

15. Educational Aims of the Programme

   The programme aims to:
The programme aims to:

1. Provide an excellent quality of Higher Education provision in the field of contemporary dance to prepare students for employment and further study

2. promote knowledge and understanding of professional contemporary dance practice and the aesthetic, artistic and cultural values informing the way in which dances are made, performed, viewed and shared amongst a variety of recipients and audiences

3. provide a professional level learning environment where students can refine their own contemporary dance performance practice, exploring and developing their own distinctive strengths and qualities as emergent professional dance artists

4. provide extensive opportunities for students to reflect upon and critically examine their practice, promoting significant individual personal and professional development

5. provide opportunities for students to develop the wide range of skills needed to meet the challenges presented by the current professional dance environment

6. enable students to initiate, self-direct and maintain independent approaches to their own learning and to develop their analytical, critical and interpretive skills, appropriate to postgraduate work

7. develop students’ ability to undertake and articulate independent research and investigation into their own development as a dance artist, through sustained engagement with contemporary dance performance practice

8. provide an interface with the contemporary dance profession through which students can both be informed by and potentially impact on the development of contemporary dance practice

**16 Programme Outcomes**

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the subject benchmarking statement for Dance, Drama and Performance (2007).

This benchmarking statement is for undergraduate degrees only, and has been used here for guidance purposes with adjustments appropriate to MA/Postgraduate level study.

**A. Knowledge and Understanding of:**

1. contemporary dance practice and professional competences essential to the field of study

2. a range of processes by which contemporary dance performance practice is created, realised and presented

3. research methodologies and critical perspectives on contemporary dance practice, encompassing relevant theories, issues and debates within the discipline
4. the interplay of theory and practice within the field of contemporary dance practice

5. a range of dance techniques and movement forms and their application towards working at a professional level, in complex and unpredictable contexts

Teaching/learning and assessment methods and strategies used to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated

Teaching and Learning Strategies
Tutor and / or mentor led sessions, working with professional choreographers / dance practitioners, directed and independent study, group work, practical workshops, lectures, seminars, rehearsals, performances, placement learning (Postgraduate Apprenticeship Scheme) professional performance schedule (Postgraduate Company), professional practice (simulated and actual) and experiential learning.

The training offers a range and variety of dance techniques and movement forms, including ballet and formal contemporary classes, in which the content develops refined precision, artistry and safe, sophisticated practice (all pathways). On placement (Postgraduate Apprenticeship Scheme) students work as a member of a professional dance company taking company class and participating in the development of the company’s repertory. They may have the opportunity to perform and/or contribute to the company’s’ educational / community programme. The Postgraduate Company pathway provides an in-house simulated company experience where students work with a company artistic and rehearsal director to gain a realistic appreciation and understanding of the demands of working in a professional environment. This includes working with leading professional choreographers, fully participating in rehearsal and production processes and company technique classes. This is followed by a tour performing across the UK and in some European venues during which they experience the challenges of a professional performance schedule. In the Advanced Training Scheme pathway, in addition to technique classes, students take a range of practical classes underpinned by theoretical study focused towards physical development and the enhancement of performance practice. All students examine contemporary dance performance practice and the aesthetic, artistic, creative and cultural values informing the ways in which dances are made and performed and the arising implications for their own professional, artistic and creative development.

Assessment Methods
Formative, continuous and summative assessments including assessment of studio practice, dance technique, rehearsals, professional practice, working processes, performance, reflective practice, lecture demonstration and viva voce.

Skills and Other Attributes
B. Intellectual Skills:

1. the ability to adopt independent, flexible and innovative approaches in advancing knowledge and understanding

2. the ability to communicate the outcomes of qualitative and experiential learning through the process of reflective practice

3. the ability to deal with complex issues creatively and systematically and make informed judgements and conclusions which are communicated clearly
4. the ability to demonstrate conceptual understanding of the discipline that enables critique of contemporary dance practice

5. the ability to undertake independent research in the field of contemporary dance practice and disseminate this to the wider public

Teaching/learning and assessment methods and strategies used to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated

See Section A

C. Subject-specific Skills:

1. the ability to communicate artistic ideas and intentions with an embodied understanding of technical, creative and interpretive skill

2. highly informed, analytical and creative approaches to working within training and/or professional dance environments

3. the ability to maintain working practices at a level equivalent to the expected norms and standards of the dance profession

4. the capacity to engage imaginatively with creative practice, promoting substantial artistic and personal growth

Teaching/learning and assessment methods and strategies used to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated

See Section A

D. Transferable Skills:

1. the ability to exercise initiative and to take personal responsibility within training and professional situations

2. the ability to communicate information, ideas and creative responses in a variety of ways and to a variety of audiences

3. the ability to make appropriate and effective decisions within complex and/or unpredictable situations

4. the ability to apply reflective and independent thinking to the articulation of personal and professional experience

5. the ability to sustain concentration and focus for extended periods

6. the ability to work effectively and productively in groups to negotiate and pursue goals with others in practical contexts

7. the ability to make informed critical evaluations of own work and/or the work of others
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8. the ability to develop ideas and construct arguments and to present them in appropriate ways

Teaching/learning and assessment methods and strategies used to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated

See Section A

For information on which modules provide which skills, see the module mapping

17 Programme Structures and Requirements, Levels, Modules, Credits and Awards

The Postgraduate Diploma / MA in Contemporary Dance is divided into two stages. The Postgraduate Diploma in Contemporary Dance programme is normally taken in one year, over three terms of full-time study. This programme comprises modules to a total of 120 credits. Successful completion of the modules comprising the postgraduate diploma are a pre-requisite for progression onto 60 credit Research Project module. This module is taken over the equivalent of one term of full-time study. On successful completion of this module students will achieve 180 credits and be awarded the MA in Contemporary Dance.

For the award of Postgraduate Diploma in Contemporary Dance students must have achieved 120 credits at level M. Students are eligible for the Postgraduate Diploma, stage one, or they can progress on to stage two. On successful completion of stage two, and the award of 180 level M credits, students are eligible for the MA in Contemporary Dance.

All modules are compulsory and students must successfully complete each module in order to be awarded the specified number of credits for that module. One credit corresponds to approximately ten hours of ‘learning time’ (including all classes and all private study and research). Thus obtaining 180 credits in an academic year requires 1,800 hours of overall learning time.

Where a student fails a module(s) due to illness or other mitigating circumstances, such failure may be condoned, subject to the requirements of the Credit Framework and provided that the student has achieved the programme learning outcomes. For further information refer to the Credit Framework at http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/creditinfo.html.

Where a student fails a module(s), but has marks for such modules within 10 percentage points of the pass mark, the Board of Examiners may nevertheless award the credits for the module(s), subject to the requirements of the Credit Framework and provided that the student has achieved the programme learning outcomes. For further information refer to the Credit Framework.

Stage 1 – Postgraduate Diploma in Contemporary Dance

The Postgraduate Diploma in Contemporary Dance offers three programme pathways: the Postgraduate Company (Verve), the Postgraduate Apprenticeship Scheme and the Advanced Training Scheme.

Postgraduate Company

This pathway operates as an in-house simulated professional company, called Verve. Students experience the creation and rehearsal of a dance performance programme and
undertake a tour to professional venues throughout the UK and in Europe. Throughout the pathway they are in contact with professional practitioners in the studio and at venues. Students are expected to work at a level commensurate with the expectations of those with whom they come into contact. The College arranges accommodation and travel for the tour and Verve’s Artistic Director, who is a member of the teaching staff, accompanies students on tour. The Artistic Director has a professional role as rehearsal director and responsibility for pastoral support, student progress and assessment. All assessments will undergo moderation by an internal moderator who is independent of the marking and module delivery and reviewed by the External Examiner. Further support is provided from the College’s academic, administration and support staff as required.

**Postgraduate Apprenticeship Scheme**

On this pathway study is divided between time in-house and on a professional company placement. The College sources accommodation, through local agencies or the placement company, when students are on placement. Each student is supported whilst on placement by a member of the company who acts as a mentor and by Postgraduate Apprenticeship Scheme Coordinator who visits students at least twice during placement. There is an induction scheme for company mentors who are supported by the Postgraduate Apprenticeship Scheme Coordinator. The Postgraduate Apprenticeship Coordinator has overall responsibility for pastoral support, progress assessment of students on placement and maintains contact with the students through visits, the placement companies directorship and/or administration, the company mentors and directly with the students via email and phone calls.

**Advanced Training Scheme**

This pathway comprises in-house delivery. It takes advantage of the wide range of training and professional level opportunities available in the College with the enhancement of extra-curricular activities and relationships the College has with external professional dance practitioners and artists, organisations and bodies. Students access the full range of student support systems provided by the College, including pastoral, academic and wellbeing.

**Stage 2 – MA in Contemporary Dance Research Project**

This module follows on from successful completion of one of the postgraduate diploma pathways. In it students undertake a substantial piece of independent research, in which they are given the opportunity to work at an advanced level of scholarly activity relative to the field of study. Students are guided through the process by tutor / mentor support. Students have access to College resources and take advantage of the full range of student support systems provided by the College, including pastoral, academic and wellbeing.
### Stage 1

#### Compulsory Modules: All Pathways

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<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Term(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>PGCD1</td>
<td>Perspectives on Dance Performance</td>
<td>M</td>
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#### Compulsory Modules: Postgraduate Company Pathway

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#### Compulsory Modules: Postgraduate Apprenticeship Scheme

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#### Compulsory Modules: Advanced Training Scheme

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<td>PGCD6</td>
<td>Performance Enhancement</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>PGCD7</td>
<td>Live Performance</td>
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<td>3</td>
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Award of Postgraduate Diploma 120 Credits

### Stage 2

#### Compulsory Modules

<table>
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<td>Research Project</td>
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</table>

Award of MA in Contemporary Dance 180 Credits

### 18 Work-Based Learning

Disability Statement: Where disabled students are due to undertake a work placement as part of this programme of study, a representative of the College will meet with the work placement provider in advance to ensure the provision of anticipatory and reasonable adjustments in line with legal requirements.

Where relevant to the programme of study, provide details of any work-based learning element, inclusive of employer details, delivery, assessment and support for students.

See Section 17

### 19 Support for Students and their Learning

- Induction programme
- Student handbook
- Programme handbook
- Library and library induction/skills package
- Small group intensive teaching
- Professional artists
- High quality specialist learning resources including a theatre equipped to professional standards, industry standard dance studios and equipment, technical support from professional practitioners.

**Academic support**

- Module tutors
- A personal tutor / mentor
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- One to one feedback
- Individual and group tutorials
- Academic support system

Central support services
- Support for students with a disability or a specific learning difficulty including a specialist learner support tutor
- Support for students whose first language is not English
- Injury treatment and rehabilitation including individual injury management support and osteopathy and physiotherapy referrals
- Welfare and Counselling service support
- Careers advice and guidance

20 Entry Profile
The minimum age to study a degree programme at the university is normally at least 17 years old by 20 September in the year the course begins. There is no upper age limit.

20.1 Entry Route
For fuller information, please refer to the University prospectus

- Candidates for the programme must be graduates of three year dance training programmes delivered in the University or Conservatoire sector at H level (in the case of universities) or professional level (in the case of conservatoires).
- Candidates not holding one of these entry qualifications may apply for accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL).
- Candidates must audition in order to be considered for entry onto the programme.
- Additionally candidates for the Postgraduate Apprenticeship Scheme must audition successfully for a placement with a professional dance company. College staff, in consultation with the representative of the placement dance company in will be responsible for the selection of Postgraduate Apprentices.
- To be accepted onto the MA component student must have successfully completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Contemporary Dance.
- ESOL candidates must have an average 6.5 in IELTs test, minimum 6.0 in reading and writing to enrol on the programme.

20.2 What does this programme have to offer?
The Postgraduate Diploma in Contemporary Dance is designed to offer professional-level experience for graduates from vocational dance training programmes through one of three distinct programme pathways:

- the Postgraduate Company Pathway, which operates as a touring dance company
- the Postgraduate Apprenticeship Scheme Pathway, which includes a work placement with a professional dance company
- the Advanced Training Scheme Pathway, which provides students with a further year of intensive technical training and performance opportunities.

The programme is designed to support students in making the transition from vocational training to professional practice through the enhancement and deeper investigation of the technical, creative and professional skills required for working as a professional dance artist. The Postgraduate Company and Postgraduate Apprenticeship Scheme pathways are a direct response to an identified lack within the industry of young dancers with company experience, a mature professional attitude and an informed view of the role and responsibilities of a professional dancer. With its emphasis on professional practice, the programme aims not only to function as a framework in which graduates can further develop as professional dance artists
but also one that increases their employability and career opportunities within the dance profession.

All pathways provide opportunities for students to develop their ability to articulate, contextualise and communicate their artistic understanding through practice, as well as through traditional academic activities.

**Postgraduate Company Pathway**

The distinctiveness of this pathway lies in the experience students gain through working as members of a touring dance company through which they acquire a realistic appreciation and full understanding of the demands of working in a professional environment. This includes the experience of collaborating with leading choreographers, fully participating in rehearsal and production processes and meeting the challenges of a professional performance schedule. The programme also facilitates the development of the interpersonal skills required for company members to work successfully with other dance artists, directors, composers, musicians, designers and in environments where practice is being taught and shared.

The company performs in a diverse range of venues both nationally and internationally, providing exposure to UK and European dance audiences, professional directors, agents and dance commentators and the practicalities of middle scale touring. These include on-going rehearsal and adaptation of the performance programme to new spaces, maintaining health and fitness whilst on tour and contributing to related educational activities such as open rehearsals, lecture demonstrations and company workshops. This invaluable introduction to the professional context may also be useful as a model for those who aspire to create their own companies in the future. In addition to the development of work for performance, the students will take part in a rigorous in-house programme, with a regular company class in a range of dance techniques and movement forms.

Throughout the creative process and preparation for the tour, emphasis is placed on nurturing a confident and versatile dance artist with advanced technical competence and a high level of artistry.

On completion, students will have gained a critical awareness of the contemporary dance profession and have recognised the particular transferable skills developed through the experience of professional touring. Furthermore they will have substantially increased their ability to work successfully in a professional context.

**Postgraduate Apprenticeship Scheme Pathway**

The distinctiveness of this pathway lies in the opportunity for professional development through a work placement ranging from approximately four to nine months with a professional dance company as a Postgraduate Apprentice. This opportunity offers an invaluable first-hand experience of the working life of a professional dance company. Through both participation and observation, students experience the processes involved in creating, rehearsing, producing and touring a performance programme, including any related education and community outreach work.

A programme of intensive technical training and performance opportunities delivered in-house at Northern School of Contemporary Dance supports the placement.

On completion of this pathway students will have gained a critical awareness of the specific ethos and artistic direction of their host company and will understand how this relates to the contemporary dance profession as a whole. They will also have recognised the particular transferable skills developed through engagement with the company’s day-to-day working practices and will have substantially increased their ability to work successfully in a professional environment. This invaluable introduction to the professional context may also be useful as a model for those who aspire to create their own companies in the future.
Advanced Training Scheme Pathway
The distinctiveness of this pathway lies in the opportunity provided for intensive training focused on the advancement of students’ physical, technical and performance skills. It is designed to equip students who have previously undertaken contemporary dance training to diploma/degree level, in a non-conservatoire environment, with the skills needed to enhance their employability in the field of professional contemporary dance performance. Individuals who have worked professionally or semi-professionally in a related art form (e.g. classical ballet, physical theatre) would also benefit from the intensive training and contemporary dance performance focus of the pathway. As well as undertaking advanced training in contemporary dance and ballet techniques and related physical practices students will work with tutors to devise an individually tailored physical development programme and independently develop the skills, knowledge and understanding to support their professional development as dance artists.

Research Project
The module facilitates the focusing of ongoing practice into specific areas of discourse. It is anticipated that each student’s research be drawn from the learning encountered in the programme pathway, of the postgraduate diploma, undertaken.

Students undertake a full-time research project during a fourth term of study investigating an aspect of contemporary dance practice in depth and addressing current research and scholarship within the discipline. The project is characterised by self-directed research, with the guidance of a supervising tutor or mentor.

20.3 Personal Profile
On entry the student will be able to demonstrate:
- the potential to further refine and advance their acquired technical skill and deepen their artistic awareness
- the potential to further develop other dance-related skills, knowledge and understanding and to apply them to a professional contemporary dance context
- the capacity to gain the maximum benefit from the programme of study through an imaginative and intelligent involvement with all aspects of the learning experience
- the ability to critically reflect upon, appraise and respond to professional contemporary dance performance practice
- an approach to working professionally that is typically creative, reflective and evaluative.

21 Methods for Evaluating and Enhancing the Quality and Standards of Teaching and Learning
21.1 Mechanisms for review and evaluation of teaching, learning, assessment, the curriculum and outcome standards

Student evaluations and feedback
- Annual Programme Monitoring Report, University of Kent template
- Affiliate Annual Programme Monitoring Report (APMR) Conservatoire for Dance and Drama (CDD) template
- External Examiners' reports and responses to reports
- Periodic Programme Review (held November 2012)
- Annual staff appraisal including observation, analysis and approval of teaching
- Induction programme for new staff including an identified mentor
- Internal moderation of assessed work
- Staff feedback
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- Employer feedback
- Feedback from professional partner organisations
- Collection and evaluation of recruitment and retention data, progression and achievement data, postgraduate destination data, data relating to student support
- Fixed agenda items relating to quality assurance at meetings of the NSCD Academic Board and the Learning and Teaching Committee
- Monitoring and evaluation of equality and disability provision
- Critical reviews and audience feedback.

21.2 Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards

- NSCD Academic Board
- University of Kent Board of Examiners
- NSCD Learning and Teaching Committee
- Faculty meetings
- Programme team meetings
- Student Communications Committee
- CDD Academic Board
- CDD Learning and Teaching Committee
- CDD Quality Assurance Forum

21.3 Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience

- Student module surveys, programme surveys, exit surveys and exit interviews
- Student group module evaluations
- National Student Survey
- Staff / Student Communications Committee
- Student representation on College committees (Academic Board and the Learning and Teaching Committee)
- Principal, Vice Principal and Coordinator meetings with student cohorts

21.4 Staff Development priorities include:

- Financial support for staff wishing to undertake Higher Education Academy recognised teaching qualifications
- Financial support for staff with course/curriculum responsibilities to undertake courses that develop leadership and management skills.
- Financial support for administrative and support staff to undertake appropriate professional/skills development
- Triennial job evaluation system
- Staff appraisal scheme
- In-house staff training
- Professional body requirements
- Programme team meetings
- Research seminars, short courses and conferences
- Assessment training for new staff

22 Indicators of Quality and Standards

- Annual Programme Monitoring Reports drawing on:
  - statistical indicators in relation to recruitment and enrolment, retention rates, withdrawals and reasons for withdrawals, progression and qualification rates
  - student surveys at module and programme level
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- student group module evaluation meetings
- feedback from the Student Communications Committee
- graduate destinations
- tutor discussion at Faculty meetings and Teaching Staff meetings
- formal discussions and recommendations of the Learning and Teaching Committee and Academic Board
- External Examiner's report
- Peer review of APMR at CDD level, through its Learning, Teaching Committee and Academic Board
  - Report of the QAA Institutional Audit of the CDD in 2005
  - University of Kent Validation Report 2006
  - University of Kent Periodic Review visit and report 2012

22.1 The following reference points were used in creating these specifications:

- NSCD Learning and Teaching Strategy 2012/13
- NSCD Assessment Regulations 2012/13
- NSCD Human Resource Strategy and Extended Investment Plan 2007/08
- NSCD Critical Evaluation Document for the University of Kent Periodic Review November 2012
- NSCD Programme Review and Annual Monitoring Reports 2011/12
- Conservatoire for Dance and Drama Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
- Graduate Diploma in Contemporary Dance Programme and Module Specifications (validated in 2006)
- Employer feedback
- Current professional choreographic and performance practice
- Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education
- Subject benchmark statements for Dance, Drama and Performing Arts