

1 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

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1.1 Core Values

The core values of the strategy are that Learning, Teaching and Assessment should be -

- Active
- Responsive
- Reflective
- Confident
- Rigorous

The table below relates how aspects of Learning, teaching and assessment at Ballet West relate to these 5 core values and their implications to learners, teachers and assessors

	Learners	Teachers / Assessors
Active	Becoming active learners rather than passive students, challenging and enquiring and developing their skills for employment and lifelong learning.	Being fully engaged, challenging, and contributing to programme development. Actively engaged in current professional practice outside Ballet West, both pedagogic practices and those relating to professional skills and experience. Actively seeking professional development opportunities.
Responsive	Engaging positively with their course, peers and teachers and willing to try new approaches to learning and creativity. Responding actively to the assessment requirements of their course. Responding to course content and delivery methods by offering feedback through module evaluation and the student representatives to the course management committees.	Responding to the needs of the students gathered through module and course feedback Responding to new approaches to teaching and creativity. Responding to the changing needs of employers. Ensuring that students develop the skills necessary to undertake study in accord with their prior experience, education and skills set.

		Providing timely and effective feedback on assessments.
Reflective	<p>Being a reflective practitioner, critically aware of the work of self and others, and able to adapt learning to suit own strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>Constructive in helping to evaluate and improve the student learning experience.</p>	<p>Self-evaluative, reflecting on practice, learning from experience and sharing the results with colleagues; and contributing to the development of effective pedagogic methods and their dissemination.</p>
Confident	<p>Building self-confidence and self-esteem through recognition of existing strengths and achievable development needs</p> <p>Developing the skills and habits of independent learning and setting and achieving their own goals.</p> <p>Taking increasing responsibility for own learning as their academic career progresses.</p> <p>Recognising and achieving the intended learning outcomes of their programmes including those related to the development of their key skills and employability.</p>	<p>Building students' confidence and self-esteem through induction processes and teaching.</p> <p>Assisting students to become independent learners and reflect on their learning.</p> <p>Challenging and engaging students</p> <p>Becoming increasingly confident with blended learning techniques and being innovative.</p> <p>Able to articulate, explain and evaluate their teaching methods.</p>
Rigorous	<p>Thorough, critical learners setting high standards for themselves and others.</p> <p>Developing the skills of self-management, planning and evaluation in relation to time and resources.</p>	<p>Adopting appropriate academic standards and using relevant benchmarks; enhancing the quality of the student experience; developing their own scholarship and, where possible undertaking subject-related and/or pedagogical research.</p> <p>Ensuring all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment seek to enhance the quality of provision at Ballet West.</p>

1.2 Fundamentals of Dance Training

- 1.2.1 These generic core values should be considered with respect to dance training. The dancer exists as an individual artist within a collaborative process. The art form of dance has a strong historical tradition and is also constantly evolving. To make a significant contribution to that process and evolution, 21st century performers must be able to operate on several levels:

- 1.2.2 They must be skilled in the use of body, musicality and classical ballet technique and be able to combine these with the ability to draw on many different systems of dance (ACTIVE AND RESPONSIVE)
- 1.2.3 They must be able to reflect and analyse, and have a thorough understanding of theatrical form itself in the context of both historic and contemporary practice (REFLECTIVE)
- 1.2.4 They must have the ability and confidence to make creative contributions as choreographers in their own right. (CONFIDENT)
- 1.2.5 They must have the skills and confidence to manage their own careers. (CONFIDENT)
- 1.2.6 They must be rigorous in their approach to their vocational training, their academic studies and transferrable skills to maximise their employability. (RIGOROUS)

1.3 A Combined Approach to Learning

- 1.3.1 Teaching and learning at Ballet West is a blend of the conservatoire and standard higher education models. It is able to combine the intensity of the conservatoire approach to training, which is so suited to the ballet student, structured academic process and a creative, collaborative approach. This produces skilled, collaborative and imaginative dancers with the lifelong learning skills typical of a university graduate.
- 1.3.2 The Conservatoire Approach to teaching and learning in dance is characterised by the following principles;
 - An approach that encourages the student to be an exemplar of creative and professional practice.
 - Precision and the pursuit of excellence in the application of acquired skills
 - Vocational training which is always related to the career expectations of professional dancers
 - Experiential learning which enables incremental progress through Formative and individual focussed appraisal and feedback in a studio environment
 - Very close links between the methods of teaching and assessment, with both based on professional dance practice

These principles are applied through the following teaching methods -

- Intensively taught skills-based classes, with feedback given on an individual basis during the learning process
- The use of the theatrical process; devising, rehearsing and performing dance productions as a teaching, learning and assessment tool.
- Utilising a variety of complementary and contrasting systems of dance and performance to produce a well-rounded dancer.

1.3.3 The Collaborative Approach is characterised by the following principles;

- The application of taught skills in an collaborative learning context, both in class and performance activity
- The acquisition of an informed analysis of performance through an understanding of practical choreography, where each individual will develop their innate potential through having a creative environment supported by peers and tutors within which they feel safe to take creative risks.
- The development of the reflective performer as a questioning, creative and open artist who seeks best practice in process, production and technique

These principles are applied through the following methods -

- Group classes where students are encouraged to collaborate creatively with peers and tutor.
- Rehearsals and performances requiring students to work with fellow company members.
- Student-led creative projects
- Seminars and discussion groups

1.3.4 The Academic Approach is characterised by the following principles

- The understanding of historical and contemporary performance contexts, that can then be applied to current working practice
- Developing the imperative in the student to view learning as a lifelong process. It is crucial then that students must be equipped to enter the world of work and begin a journey of learning that continues throughout their lives.
- The development of independent learners, capable of researching, evaluating, synthesising and communicating the ideas of others and their own original thinking.
- Developing transferable skills useful in the world of work including, the management of people and time, research skills, communication skills, working with others and skills specific to gaining employment.

These principles are applied through the following methods -

- Lectures, seminars and discussion groups
- Written and oral presentation of ideas developed through research.
- Training in digital media and self-promotion skills

1.4 Learning and Teaching Methods

1.4.1 Combining these approaches develops skilled, creative, knowledgeable practitioners within a collaborative training environment. These approaches are delivered through the following learning and teaching methods

- Core skills classes - studio based practical classes in which students
 - develop techniques in a variety of dance forms
 - maintain and improve their fitness, flexibility and stamina
 - learn, rehearse and perfect new dance steps and combinations
- Tutorials - tutor led discussions in small groups
- Practical workshops - studio based practical classes in which students are guided by a tutor to
 - Reflect on past work
 - Create new work
- Group creative projects - Student led creative work
- Productions -
 - Choreographing tutor led and tutor/student collaborative work
 - Rehearsal
 - Public performance
- Individual academic research
- Lectures and seminars

1.5 The methods of assessment

- 1.5.1 As part of the conservatoire approach to teaching, learning and assessment, the professional practice of dancers informs the practical assessment methods employed. The academic approach informs those related to assessing the development of knowledgeable, reflective practitioners with an understanding of the historical, social and cultural contexts of their dance practice.
- 1.5.2 The methods of assessments are
- Coursework, for example:
 - Formative assessment in practical classes
 - Formative assessment in rehearsal and performance (live or mediated)
 - Performance as dancers in internal and public performances
 - Presentation of student created choreographic work
 - Essays
 - Critical evaluations
 - Personal promotional website
 - Oral presentation
 - viva voce

The table below shows the link between the principles of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy to the methods of teaching and assessment.

	Principles	Teaching method	Assessment method
<u>The Conservatoire Approach</u>	An approach that encourages the student to be an exemplar of creative and professional practice.	Core skills classes Productions creation of new work	Formative assessment in class and rehearsal Performance Presentation of Choreographic work
	Precision and the pursuit of excellence in the application of acquired skills	Core skills classes Productions	Formative assessment in class and rehearsal Performance
	Vocational training which is always related to the career expectations of professional dancers	Core skills classes Productions creation of new work	Formative assessment in class and rehearsal Performance Presentation of Choreographic work
	Experiential learning which enables incremental progress through Formative and individual focussed appraisal and feedback in a studio environment	Core skills classes Productions	Formative assessment in class and rehearsal Performance
	Very close links between the methods of teaching and assessment, with both based on professional dance practice	Core skills classes Productions creation of new work	Formative assessment in class and rehearsal Performance Presentation of Choreographic work
<u>The Collaborative Approach</u>	The application of taught skills in an collaborative learning context, both in class and performance activity	Core skills classes Productions Group creative projects	Formative assessment in class and rehearsal Performance Presentation of Choreographic work
	The acquisition of an informed analysis of performance through an understanding of practical choreography, where each individual will develop their innate potential through having a creative environment supported by peers and tutors within which they feel safe to take creative risks.	Group creative projects	Presentation of Choreographic work
	The development of the reflective performer as a questioning, creative and open artist who seeks best practice in process, production and technique	Seminars Workshops Tutorials	Essays Presentations Critical Evaluations
<u>The Academic Approach</u>	The understanding of historical and contemporary performance contexts, that can then be applied to current working practice	Lectures Seminars Workshops Tutorials	Essays Presentations Critical Evaluations

	<p>Developing the imperative in the student to view learning as a lifelong process. It is crucial then that students must be equipped to enter the world of work and begin a journey of learning that continues throughout their lives.</p>	<p>Lectures Seminars Workshops Tutorials</p>	<p>Presentations Website Critical Evaluations</p>
	<p>The development of independent learners, capable of researching, evaluating, synthesising and communicating the ideas of others and their own original thinking.</p>	<p>Lectures Seminars Workshops Independent study Tutorials</p>	<p>Essays Presentations Critical Evaluations</p>
	<p>Developing transferable skills useful in the world of work including, the management of people and time, research skills, communication skills, working with others and skills specific to gaining employment.</p>	<p>Lectures Seminars Workshops Rehearsals Tutorials</p>	<p>Productions Presentations Website Critical Evaluations</p>

1.6 Additional Student Support

- 1.6.1 **Before Programme** - Students new to Ballet West will attend for audition and interview which will include a tour of facilities. Students will receive information about the structure of the programme, financial support, accommodation, Student Services and Learning Services. All students will be interviewed in order to discuss their expectations and suitability for degree level study, as part of the longitudinal induction process. This will evaluate an individual student's requirement for additional support/training. If additional support is required, action will be taken by the student and Ballet West, as appropriate. This may involve intensive training in a particular dance style, language competency test or study skills course
- 1.6.2 **During Programme** - The induction programme includes:
- Welcome lecture,
 - Health and safety briefing
 - IT induction
 - GP registration
 - Nutritional information
 - Student Services induction talks/demonstrations.
- 1.6.3 **Academic induction** takes the form of group sessions led by Module Leaders, during which module handbooks are distributed and discussed. Prior to enrolment, students are required to sign the Ballet West terms and conditions concerning behaviour.
- 1.6.4 **Student Support and Guidance** - The nature of the practical study of dance ensures a high level of staff contact. As a result of this, personal and academic issues are usually quickly identified and resolved within the production process.
- 1.6.5 The Student Counsellor will deal with those problems that fall within their remit and expertise and otherwise refer students to local counselling and support agencies for further support or advice where necessary.
- 1.6.6 Following the identification of additional student needs at interview, induction or beyond a referral will be made to the Student Counsellor office for a full diagnostic assessment to be made. Following receipt of this guidance, special arrangements will be made wherever reasonable and achievable. This will be regularly reviewed and monitored by the programme leader.
- 1.6.7 Module leaders are the first point of contact for information or academic advice regarding their particular module.
- 1.6.8 Students receive tutorial academic input on a daily and informal basis throughout classes and projects. The nature of the contact between students and tutors in dance is such that tutors are receptive to changes in a student's behaviour and performance on a daily basis. Tutors will often discuss these changes with students in an informal way and take the necessary steps to alleviate concerns, whether they are personal or academic, or refer students to the programme leader, trained

student support staff or other appropriate agency.

- 1.6.9 Similarly, students are aware that they can discuss any issues with their tutors, the vice principal or the programme manager in an informal way.

1.7 Careers Advice

- 1.7.1 In this subject area, often the most important source of careers advice is the teaching staff, who are all active practitioners and will give advice freely whenever asked. In addition, the institution runs career seminars and lectures by industry professionals regarding career progression.
- 1.7.2 Near the end of the programme, students will review their overall progress with the vice principal. Appropriate guidance will be given to help students finalise and implement decisions about their future.