

## **Response to the Periodic Programme Review of the Northern School of Contemporary Dance HE programmes, validated by the University of Kent, August 2018**

Northern School of Contemporary Dance (NSCD) welcomes the report from the University of Kent's Periodic Programme Review. The School is grateful to the University for its confidence in its Higher Education provision, validated by the University, and for a very constructive review process, effectively administered by the University's Quality Assurance Office and conjointly with the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama (CDD).

NSCD's leadership team, academic staff and student services found the preparation for the Periodic Programme Review (PPR) and the two day review process to be an extremely rigorous, positive and constructive experience.

The report highlights areas of good practice and makes a number of advisable and desirable recommendations. The recommendations are addressed in an action plan, at the end of this document.

NSCD would like to thank the Panel for its open-handed approach to the Review process, which it conducted very efficiently and in a considered manner. The School appreciated the depth of awareness and understanding shown by the Chair and Panel members, and the quality of engagement with staff and students, as well as the insightful, thorough and encouraging feedback which was received. As a School we take pride in the fact that the Panel was impressed by the School, and the way in which it had developed as an institution during the period since its last review. We were pleased that they acknowledged the Principal's clear leadership within the School, and that as a result of this the School Directors and management team have been able to define direction and vision for the School's future.

It is especially pleasing through the process and the report that the Panel identified and endorsed all of the developments which have taken place since the last review, (when the School was in a period of transition) by identifying a clear vision permeating the student body and staff, and also innovations in the curriculum and how this is delivered, as areas of good practice. Of particular significance are the Panel's number of commendations for good practice, which focus upon:

- i. The School's inclusive culture which is reflected in our curriculum and the well-developed, holistic approach to student well-being at the School. **(9.7.1/11.4.1)** We were encouraged that the students commended our approach to
- ii. The detail and depth of our induction process and of our support for student representatives and inclusion of student body, in the development and management of our programmes **(12.3.1/13.4.2)**
- iii. The positive impact that programme revisions have made towards a 'personalised' curriculum, which allows our students to be outward and forward thinking, acting as ambassadors for the School. **(9.7.3/11.4.2)** The inclusion of placement activities which have been embedded into the curriculum, also support this.
- iv. The manner in which NSCD is supporting staff research through a workload allocation model. **(12.3.2)** Where staff and student research facilitates currency of its curriculum and where we

have been able to provide platforms through research cafes to support staff coming together to talk about their research, often engaging with students as 'co-authors'. **(9.7.6)**

- v. That the introduction of a VLE (NSCD-Moodle) is supporting all aspects of teaching, learning, assessment and academic administration. **(9.7.4/9.2.3)** The introduction of this VLE has indeed created a shared space to enhance delivery, and enable students to conveniently access relevant course related materials, including video. **(9.1.3)**

We are particularly pleased that the Panel noted the stringent assessment and moderation practice in place within the School, which it considered not only met, but exceeded the requirements of the Credit Framework **(13.2.1)**

Since the last periodic review, the School has focused its energies of systems, processes and enhancements to the curriculum, student support and leadership. It was pleasing to hear that all previous recommendations from the last review had been met and that there were no essential recommendations made, during this latest inspection.

In addressing the advisable recommendations, NSCD has embedded a number of 'focus upon feedback' sessions into the timetable (beginning at induction), so that students are more aware of the importance of formal and informal methods of feeding back on programme and the overall student experience. Formal structures introduced through the VLE for module evaluation, end of year surveys will be promoted in 2018/19, alongside timetabled access for the library IT suite to encourage better engagement in feedback. **(13.3.5/ 15.1.2a)**. Student representatives and the staff student liaison committee (SSLC) will also contribute to the management and analysis of this feedback. 'Focus on feedback' sessions will also help the students to understand how formal and informal feedback can be received, to support our 'feeding forward' strategy for learning and development. **(9.2.3/15.1.2b)**

In recent years, the School has introduced a number of positive communication channels between its staff and students. We appreciate the Panel's desirable recommendation **(15.1.3b)** that we continue to maintain these as they are.

NSCD values the contribution that placement opportunities make to the enhancement of the curriculum and its mode of delivery. We will continue to work on strategies to ensure that the range of placement activities are accurately reflected and promoted in the programme specifications and other documentation **(13.1.2/13.1.3/15.1.2c)**. In 2018, NSCD submitted for approval a professional practice placement module worth 60 credits of the level 6 undergraduate programme. The School is confident that this will enable students to engage more with professional opportunities as they arise and provide an alternative route to the achievement of programme learning outcomes. The School recognizes the positive impact this development will have on retention and employability. **(13.1.4/15.1.2d)**

Through annual monitoring and reporting, NSCD is proud to report that NSS scores (since the low scores received in 2016/17) have improved by +9% - +24% in all areas of the survey. In particular we noted that areas of assessment and feedback have increased by 24% (from 48% to 72%). Overall satisfaction has also increased by 19% (to 89% on par with the excellent scores of previous years) **(9.2.2/15.1.2f)**

As part of a longer term development strategy around the expansion of its buildings and portfolio of programmes, the School will ensure that numerous strands of consultation and feedback loops with staff, students and external partners take place. These will measure feasibility and impact on physical and human resources, to ensure that we are able to maintain the quality of education and student experience we have to date, with potential to further improve some of this, in certain areas. **(9.2.2/15.1.2e)**

NSCD values the generous support and guidance from the University of Kent in allowing the School the scope to pursue its vision and shape its programmes to best prepare students for the challenges of the professional working environment. The School is also highly appreciative of the University of Kent's role in ensuring the quality and standards of NSCDs programmes and looks forward to a continuing collaborative relationship with the University.

Darren Carr  
Director of Studies  
July 2018

**NORTHERN SCHOOL OF CONTEMPORARY DANCE  
PERIODIC PROGRAMME REVIEW ACTION PLAN  
July 2018**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>By when</b>
Advisable	a) To ensure that students are aware of the importance of formal, as well as informal, methods of feeding back to the School on their programme and student experience, and that students engage as fully as possible with formal feedback mechanisms such as surveys, and end of module feedback. (13.3.5)	Introduce 'focus on feedback sessions' into the timetable at strategic points in the year to promote the formal and informal mechanisms for giving feedback	Head of Academic Registry Heads of Faculty September 2018 completed
		Timetable unsupervised feedback sessions, so that students can have time and IT resources, to complete surveys in the Library	Head of Academic Registry January 2019
		Create online surveys through Moodle	Director of Studies October 2018 completed
Advisable	b) To ensure that students are aware of the importance of formal, as well as informal, methods of receiving feedback on their work and that students engage as fully as possible with both types of feedback. (9.2.3)	Introduce 'focus on feedback sessions' into the timetable at strategic points in the year to promote the formal and informal mechanisms for giving feedback	Head of Academic Registry Heads of Faculty September 2018 completed
		Tutors to provide additional tutorials so that students can seek further guidance and support in their understanding of the formal feedback and receive more in-formal feedback	Academic tutors Learner support coordinator English Language Support tutor September 2018 completed

<b>Recommendation</b>		<b>Action</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>By when</b>
Advisable	c) To ensure that the placement framework for the undergraduate programme fits fully with University requirements, including ensuring that the programme specification reflects all of the different types of placement (i.e. teaching, professional placement opportunities, and Erasmus placements if they are to continue) available to students. (13.1.2/13.1.3)	Revise BAH & MA programme specifications as part of programme re-validation process  Submit to the University of Kent for approval	Director of Studies	Completed August 2018  November 2018
Advisable	d) To develop a professional placement module on the undergraduate programme, which will enable students on placement to demonstrate within the programme structure where they have met required learning outcomes and credit requirements. (13.1.4)	Write a new placement module to be submitted as part of a major revision of the BAH programme  Submit to the University of Kent for approval	Director of Studies	Completed August 2018  November 2018
Advisable	e) To consider fully the implications for both physical and human resources when making expansion plans, in order to ensure that the expansion of programmes does not impact negatively on the student experience. (12.2.2)	Introduce consultation strands and focus groups with staff, students and external partners as part of the buildings expansion feasibility exercise	Leadership team	July 2019
Advisable	f) To specifically assess within their next Annual Monitoring Report submission, the NSS Assessment and Feedback scores, against the low scores received in 2016/17 (9.2.2)	Analyze and evaluate the 2018 NSS scores as part of the APMR process.	Director of Studies	September 2018 Complete

Desirable	a) That in line with student feedback received by the Panel, NSCD consider the benefits and implications for employing an in-house physiotherapist. (11.1.9)	Continue to discuss this at management level to ensure that the balance of bodywork intervention, injury support and external referral system is suitably analysed and appropriate system implemented.	Principal Director of studies Heads of Faculty Head of Academic Registry Bodywork supervisor	July 2019 Completed for 18/19 then ongoing
Desirable	b) That in line with student feedback received by the Panel the School ensures it maintains the positive communication channels in place between staff and students. (13.4.2)	Head of Academic registry to continue to implement and monitor communication channels to ensure that this remains positive as a mechanism.	Head of Academic Registry	July 2019 then ongoing
	c) That NSCD consider moving to student / staff co-chairing of their Student Staff Liaison Committee. (13.3.6)	Introduce strands of co-chairing for student representative on SSLC	Head of Academic Registry	March 2019