

Research & Scholarly Activity (RSA)
Strategic Summary and Action Plan 2022-2027

Name of Policy Writer/Amendments	Date Written & agreed / Amended	Approved by	Review Date
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Northern School of Contemporary Dance (NSCD)

Research & Scholarly Activity (RSA) Strategic Summary and Action Plan 2022-2027

1.0 Introduction

As we move into the next period of our development the school is embracing the challenges of building upon the best practice of its staff, their subject expertise, industry connections and passion for making this practice even better as a result of professional self-development and scholarly activity. We are committed to developing dance artists of the future who will be able to shape the art form in all its possibilities. We aim to do this through the currency of a curriculum and pedagogical approaches that are both informed and enhanced by research and development.

Creating a community of Scholarship: Our School embraces the creation of a community of scholarship in two distinctive ways. The first is the community of scholarship within the faculties, including staff and student collaborations; the second, the community of scholarship we are part of within our broader external communities, including local partnerships.

Research outputs: We define our research efforts as successful when they reflect meaningfully on broader questions relating to the impact art work has on others, creation of cohesive and valued communities, promotion of academic success for all students, addressing social issues, and an increased awareness of mutual concerns within the international artists community.

2.0 Connection to the School strategic plan 2017-22

Research and Scholarship intersect with Learning, Teaching and Artistic Practice and are an essential part of the School's communities of practice. Research and scholarly activity can be recognised as being a means in an end of itself, and as a means to support high quality and inspirational pedagogy/artistry, skills development, external engagement with other partners and knowledge transfer. NSCD will identify areas of practice research and action research, that within the art form and teaching could be world leading. We recognise that to enhance our research standing more work needs to be done to ensure that these benefits are realised across the school as a whole. We encourage staff to engage in research and/or scholarship that supports the development of future artists and the art form. Our aim going forward is to recognise that staff making connections to research and scholarly activity is crucial to subject and art form currency, the curricula, our students learning journey, staff development and their potential to shape the future direction and leadership of the industry.

3.0 Approach

In order to meet its strategic aims and maintain its position as a leading research informed UK dance-training environment, the School will ensure we:

- Secure Time and opportunities for developing researchers from undergraduates through to established staff, to undertake innovative and impactful research
- Enhance quality through mentoring and research support
- Identify and pursue that pathways to partnerships development
- Supporting local, regional, national and international collaboration
- Prioritising support for emerging disciplinary and thematic areas of research within the best practice of the school, with the best chance of success in terms of research excellence and impact, whilst continuing to focus on distinctive strengths in all avenues of our discipline

- Developing our profile with **focused thematic approach**. The three key areas of focus are: **Performance and Creative practice, Learning and Teaching, and Health & Well-being**, increasing external representation and influence, working towards demonstrating our civic role, addressing societal challenges and delivering public benefit

4.0 Research Areas

The research activity at the school is centered on three key areas of focus, which we will continue to develop and prioritise. These three areas are:

- **Performance & Creative Practice:** intersecting with the wider dance and performance sector, this area of inquiry examines an array of research topics related to the creation of dance, performance and wider art works. The research pursued and produced is practice centred, interdisciplinary and often drawing on wider social, cultural and political discourses.
- **Learning & Teaching in Higher Education:** developed out of NSCD's rigorous learning and training culture, this research area is about developing best practices in teaching and learning for world leading HE dance training and covers a range of subjects such as curriculum design, teaching methods, assessment, student support and inclusive and accessible learning
- **Health & Well Being:** a key pillar of our Learning, Teaching and Assessment support centres on students support, as such we are engaged in continuous and consistent research to identify and develop best practices approaches to this area of our institutional offer.

5.0 Research & Scholarly Activity Overview

Aim 1: Develop excellence through research and scholarship

- Objective 1: Raise quality and ambition through choice of content and dissemination.
- Objective 2: Integrate research with teaching through our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.
- Objective 3: Provide a mentoring system for to facilitate engagement and offer advice. Connect to 'early' and 'Mid' career research networks to encourage development of research communities of practice
- Objective 4: Ensure that the School's Workload Allocation Model (WAM) properly reflects research & scholarship and research impact activities

Aim 2: Connect with Students and subject partners as collaborators and co-authors in the research process

- Objective 1: Promote joint staff-student research and scholarly activity
- Objective 2: Provide our staff and students with opportunities for networking, showcasing their work and sharing their experiences in research
- Objective 3: Seek out discipline-connected partnerships with world-leading institutions to help NSCD to further develop our research quality and capability
- Objective 4: Explore opportunities for facilities and resource sharing by working with regional partners to develop common interests in research

Aim 3: Measure Impact and Visibility

- Objective 1: Identify where research is having impact beyond academic boundaries to support cultural and social benefit
- Objective 2: Showcase research processes, outcomes and impact through appropriate platforms.
- Objective 3: Develop a presence so that our research is promoted nationally and internationally as part of the school's communications strategy.

Aim 1: Develop excellence in research and scholarship

NSCD recognises the importance of research and scholarship as an important element in maintaining our world leading excellence in dance and arts education. The school's teaching staff base are active scholars and professional artists, and so this strategy aims to further develop existing activity, while identifying new avenues and directions for research, scholarship and practice. We recognise that raising the ambition, value and impact of these activities, requires support, resources and funding. As we enter this next stage as our own institution we aim to build a foundation for a rich and rigorous research culture at NSCD.

Key Performance indicators (used to Measure Aim 1 over the 5 years. To be updated annually)

- Monitoring staff engagement in knowledge exchange activities (Objectives 1, 2, 4)
- Quantity and quality of outputs, including published texts and public performances (Objective 1, 2, 3, 4)
- Staff engagement in minimum once a year mentoring sessions (Objective 1, 3)
- Number of active research projects (Objective 1, 2, 3, 4)
- Annual Staff Appraisals (Objective 1, 2, 3, 4)
- Development of clear research support systems (1, 3)
- Staff engagement with continuing professional development activities (Objective 1, 3)
- Staff and student engagement with the research section for the website and/or NSCD research journal (Objective 1, 2)

Aim 2: Connect with students and subject partners as collaborators and co-authors in the research process

We recognise the importance of knowledge/practice exchange as a pillar of a rich institutional research culture, as such we aim to develop collaborative partnerships both internally and externally. Our teaching is research informed and as a small institution we work closely with our students to foster a sense of curiosity and to embed inquiry as essential part of dance training and education. Research and scholarship is integrated into the curriculum across all of our courses. Within the curriculum there is a rich program of public activities with staff and guest artists. Beyond the curriculum there are consistent staff and student initiative projects. As a leading UK dance conservatoire, and the only conservatoire outside of London in England and Wales, we are uniquely positioned. We work closely with a variety of external partners, including local, regional, national and international, creating consistent opportunities for staff and students.

Key Performance indicators (used to Measure Aim 2 over the 5 years. To be updated annually)

- Monitoring staff engagement in knowledge exchange activities (Objectives 1, 2)
- Quantity and quality of outputs, including published texts and public performances (Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4)
- Number of new local or regional partners (Objectives 2, 3, 4)
- Number of new national or international partners (Objectives 2, 3)
- Number of NSCD supported or produced research exchange activities and events: conferences, seminars or professional development opportunities (Objectives 1,2,3,4)
- Staff engagement with continuing professional development activities (Objective 1, 2, 4)
- Staff and student engagement with research section of the website or NSCD research journal (Objective 1, 2)
- Successful NSCD supported funding bids (Objectives 2, 3)

Aim 3: Measure Impact and Visibility

As an institution we recognise the importance of developing our staff and students, not just as as dance artists but as people. We recognise the cultural and social benefit of research to support this. Our rich history as small concentrated institution demonstrates the potential of the cultural and social impact of our activities. As we progress plans to engage with the Knowledge Exchange Framework, we will identify routes for these activities to feed and enhance the impact of our research and scholarship.

<p>Key Performance indicators (used to Measure Aim 3 over the 5 years. To be updated annually)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quantity and quality of outputs, including published texts and public performances (1, 2, 3) - Termly promotion of NSCD staff research activities (1, 3) - Staff and student engagement with research section of the website or NSCD research journal (Objective 1, 2, 3) - Number of NSCD supported or produced research exchange activities and events: conferences, seminars or professional development opportunities (Objectives 1,2,3) - Monitoring external engagement with the research section of the website and/or research journal (Objectives 1,2,3) - Number of Knowledge Exchange Framework activities (Objectives 1,2,3)
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