

Northern School of Contemporary Dance

Summary of 2022-23 to 2026-27 access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

Access and participation plans set out how higher education providers will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education. It specifically relates to UK undergraduate students.

You can see the full access and participation plan for NSCD at <https://www.nscd.ac.uk/higher-education/access-participation/>

Key points

Based in Chapeltown, Leeds, the Northern School of Contemporary Dance (NSCD) is a leading centre for contemporary dance in the UK and is currently the only institution to offer conservatoire-level professional dance training in the North of England. As a small institution, with just over 200 undergraduate students, the student experience is highly personalised, providing rich learning experiences.

We have identified that students from areas of social and economic disadvantage, from areas where not many people go to higher education, and students from the global majority are under-represented at NSCD. Our access and participation plan describes how we will ensure more students from these backgrounds have access to dance education and are able to study with us in future.

Fees we charge

Our undergraduate fees for 2022 entry are:

- £8,000 per year for Certificate of Higher Education Courses (Cert HE)
- £9,250 per year for BA (Hons) degree programmes

Financial help available

We offer financial support to students through:

- **An annual scholarship** of between £500-1,000 per year of study to UK undergraduate students with a household income below £42,875. This can be taken as a fee discount or cash bursary.
- An additional bursary of £1,000 per year of study for **care leavers and students who are estranged from their parents**.
- A fund for current students who are experiencing **hardship**, which can be applied for during your course and is allocated based on financial need.

More details are on page 29 of our full access and participation plan.

Information for students

Prospective students can find out about our financial support, fees and courses on our **website**, at our **open days** and through a variety of **online sessions** run by academic departments, admissions and the marketing and communications teams.

Current students receive updated information about fees and financial support through our virtual learning environment and via email.

The most up-to-date information about our fees and financial support is available at <https://www.nscd.ac.uk/study/fees-finance/>

What we are aiming to achieve

NSCD aims to provide an inspirational learning experience, from when potential students first contact us, through our programmes and into the profession and other graduate destinations. We aim to enable aspiring dance artists, and dance professionals, regardless of background, to shape the future of dance. We want to create and open doors to dance at all levels.

In our access and participation plan, we have set targets to improve access to dance education and to NSCD, particularly for individuals who are:

- From areas where few people go on to higher education
- From areas of social and economic deprivation
- People of the global majority

Full details of our targets and how we identified these are in pages 6-7 of our full access and participation plan.

As dance training and skills development starts early for many, we have developed dance education and outreach activity that provides long-term and consistent pathways for young people to experience dance and develop their skills. We want to develop this further, working with schools, creative organisations and communities to deliver dance education that is accessible and inspiring.

We want to work as a Northern advocate for access to dance education and its impact on transforming lives.

In our courses and our approach to teaching, we aim to nurture diversity and work with our students as partners.

What we are doing to achieve our aims

- Improving our use of **data and research** so we can better understand the needs of our students.
- **Diversifying and expanding our courses**, including new courses at different levels.
- Increasing support for students throughout the **audition and admissions** process, with more flexible options for how students demonstrate their skills and capabilities.
- Providing high quality **dance education from age 5+** with **bursaries** for our target groups and those in financial need. This includes weekly classes, advanced training, summer schools and youth company performance groups.
- Providing **dance activities in 'hubs'** within schools and communities, so potential students can experience dance training in their local area.
- **Targeting** our activity at schools in areas where there is limited dance provision, and few people go on to higher education, to deliver dance workshops and support dance teachers.
- Engaging potential students with dance across the UK, through **skills workshops and performances**, including those led by our current and former students.
- **Building partnerships** with local and national organisations to deliver shared projects, like Kick Off Boys Youth Dance Project (in collaboration with Dance Action Zone Leeds, Phoenix Dance Theatre and Leeds City College) or NSCD+ dance training and workshops (in collaboration with Gateway Studios, Gateshead)
- Providing **varied and flexible approaches to assessment** so students are able to demonstrate their skills in ways that support personal and diverse expression.

- **Involving students** in the design of their courses and assessments and consulting with students regularly on how NSCD can support their development.
- Providing **financial support**, through bursaries and scholarships at the point of entry and throughout the course.

How students can get involved

All our courses elect student representatives who provide feedback and input on our courses and have been part of the development of our access and participation plan. Students also contribute as members of our community through sitting on committees, in student representative sessions, in the Student Voice Forum and through student surveys. We work with both student representatives and our Students' Union in delivering this plan.

In our student consultation for developing our access and participation plan, students noted that the relationships and collaboration between staff and students is professional, casual, open and inclusive. We are committed to maintaining this. More details about how we work with current students are on pages 30-31 of our access and participation plan.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

We use a 'theory of change' approach to design and evaluate our activity. This means that we look at why we do activities, what we want to achieve and how we can measure this. As a small institution, we use surveys, interviews and focus groups to get an in-depth picture of outcomes of our activities and to understand the experiences of our students, alongside numerical data about student characteristics, attainment and engagement. For each of our priority areas, we have identified measures that will indicate whether we have been successful and help us to identify where we can improve. These are at the end of each section in our access and participation plan.

We are also members of the SEER (Specialist Evidence, Evaluation and Research) service. This includes ongoing training, advice and support to improve our evaluation practice, as well as independent data analysis, evaluation and research. Through the SEER service and our membership of networks such as GuildHE, Advance HE and One Dance UK, we share findings from our evaluations so we can support the development of successful activities to promote access to dance education.

More information about our evaluation activity can be found on pages 32-33 of our access and participation plan.

Contact details for further information

To find out more about our access and participation work, please contact Philippa Ranger, Access and Participation Manager – philippa.ranger@nscd.ac.uk