Programme Specification Validated by Northern School of Contemporary Dance	
Programme Title:	MA Classical Ballet Performance
Teaching Institution:	The Academy of Northern Ballet
Final Award:	MA Classical Ballet Performance (180 credits)
Alternative Exit Awards:	Postgraduate Diploma Classical Ballet Performance (120 credits) Postgraduate Certificate Classical Ballet Performance (60 Credits)
Credit Level:	Level 7
Credits/ECTS value:	180 (90 ECTS)
Modes of Delivery:	1 year full-time
QAA Benchmarks:	QAA Subject Benchmark Statements: Dance, Drama and Performance (April 2024) Master's Degree Characteristics Statement (Feb 2020) The Frameworks for Higher Education (Feb 2024) – section 4.17 Descriptor for Level 7 (FHEQ)
Validation Date:	September 2025
Programme Start Date:	September 2026
Review Date:	September 2030

Programme Aims & Overview:

The MA Classical Ballet Performance course is designed specifically for classical dancers seeking to refine their artistry at a high level and prepare for the rigorous demands of professional company life. With a core curriculum encompassing classical ballet technique, repertoire, contemporary dance choreography and a strength and conditioning module to support dancers' wellbeing, the programme fosters technical precision and physical versatility.

Emphasis is placed on cultivating healthy minds and bodies, leveraging in-depth scientific insights into the effects of dance on the human body. Through preventative conditioning, a

nuanced understanding of individual strengths and limitations, and detailed exploration of dance technique, dancers are equipped to manage the physical and emotional demands of their craft while sustaining long-term performance careers. Performing classical ballet repertoire is a cornerstone of the course, evolving progressively to challenge and enhance the dancers' technical and artistic abilities.

Throughout the course the technical, creative and performative opportunities enable students to focus on mastering foundational roles, refining precision, musicality, and stylistic authenticity. At this level of training, students will engage in increasingly complex repertoire, including ensemble and soloist roles, to deepen their understanding of narrative expression, stage presence, and the collaborative demands of company work.

Embedded into the curriculum are the expectations of dancers in professional ballet companies, instilling skills such as adaptability, role preparation, stamina, and the ability to embody diverse choreographic styles. By the end of the course, dancers are equipped with the confidence, discipline, and professional readiness to excel in the ballet world.

Students are guided in the preparation of individualised showreels and CV's which demonstrate the required skills for audition application. Mentoring ensures variation choices and all supporting material is appropriate, and encourages students apply to companies and roles suitable to their skills. Exposure to company class and rehearsals prepare students for the speed and rigour of company auditions and time off to attend company auditions is integrated into the programme. Students have the option to complete their studies and exit the programme with a Postgraduate Diploma or progress to stage 2 for the full MA qualification.

Programme Learning Outcomes	
Level 7 - Stage 1 (PG Dip)	
PLO1-1	Students will refine and elevate classical ballet technique, ensuring they achieve an advanced standard of execution, artistry, and versatility through their bodies in performance.
PLO1-2	Students will deepen their ability to critically interpret and embody diverse classical choreographic styles and roles with authenticity, expression, and nuanced artistry.
PLO1-3	Students will foster holistic dancer health through a focus on preventative conditioning, injury management, and mental resilience, and will demonstrate an advanced understanding of how to prepare themselves on a daily basis for the demands of a professional ballet career.
PLO1-4	Students will gain the skills needed in classical ballet repertoire, enhancing stagecraft, musicality, and adaptability, and developing the professional skills required for company life.
PLO1-5	Students will bridge the gap between artistic practice and scholarly inquiry, demonstrating the ability to research and critically reflect on their own practice, framed by historical, and cultural aspects of ballet and its impact on the individual and the field.

PLO1-6	Students will engage with experiences which analyse career preparedness and development for the transition into professional environments by developing career management skills, collaboration techniques, and a professional mindset essential for long-term success in the industry.
Level 7 - Stage 2 (MA only)	
PLO2-1	Students will be prepared to design and conduct an independent action research project, contributing to the field of classical ballet with insights that support evidence-based practices and innovation in creativity and performance.
PLO2-2	Students will demonstrate the ability to uphold professional and ethical standards in arts education, exhibiting sensitivity to cultural, ethical, and individual differences in their artistic practice.

Programme Structure

This programme is structured to provide a comprehensive blend of practical training, theoretical components embedded into studio practice that directly support real-world application, and professional practice and preparation. The MA is delivered over a full year, September to August, with an option for students to end their studies at Postgraduate Diploma level after completion of stage 1. It consists of core modules that cover advanced ballet technique, repertoire contemporary dance, and strength and conditioning, ensuring a robust foundation in technical and artistic development. Practical classes are complemented by performances, workshops in injury prevention, nutrition, body conditioning, and mental resilience, designed to optimize performance and support dancers' holistic well-being.

The curriculum is designed to advance progressively, with students engaging in increasingly challenging repertoire and performance in class and on stage. Across the course, there is a focus on refining core techniques and exploring ensemble roles, with opportunities to perform in studio showcases and company productions by invitation. In subsequent terms, students take on more complex repertoire, including company specific roles, and may participate in fully staged performances with the Company of Northern Ballet. These experiences are enriched by interdisciplinary collaborations, offering exposure to lighting, production processes, and stage management practice.

Alongside practical training, students engage in academic modules that examine the scientific, historical, and cultural aspects of ballet. They conduct independent research, develop self-reflective writing skills, and participate in seminars that encourage critical reflection on the art form. The MA programme culminates in a final project or dissertation, allowing students to synthesise their learning through a research-based inquiry. By balancing rigorous practice with scholarly exploration, the programme equips students with the expertise and adaptability needed for success in the professional ballet world.

Module Structure				
Stage 1 (level 7)				
Module Code	**Module Title**	**Credits**	**Core or Option**	**Pass Compulsory**
NB7BT1a	Classical Ballet Technique 1	30	Core	No
NB7BT2a	Classical Ballet Technique 2	30	Core	No
NB7BRa	Ballet Repertoire	30	Core	No
NB7CTa	Contemporary Technique	15	Core	No
NB7SCa	Strength and Conditioning for classical dancers- Pilates, body conditioning & gym	15	Core	No
Progression In order to progress onto stage 2, students need to complete 120 credits from stage 1, made up of 120 credits of core modules				
Stage 2 (Level 7)				
Module Code	**Module Title**	**Credits**	**Core or Option**	**Pass Compulsory**
NB7CRa	Independent Choreographic Research Project	60	Core	Yes
Awards To be eligible for the award of MA, students need to complete 60 credits from stage 2, made up of 60 credits of core modules. **Exit Awards** Upon successful completion of 60 credits from any stage the student is eligible for the exit award of PGCert. Upon successful completion of 120 credits from any stage the student is eligible for the exit award of PGDip.				

Programme Learning Outcomes Module Mapping								
	PLO1-1	PLO1-2	PLO1-3	PLO1-4	PLO1-5	PLO1-6	PLO2-1	PLO2-2
NB7BT1a	X		X		X	X		
NB7BT2a	X	X	X	X				
NB7BRa	X	X		X	X	X		
NB7CTa	X	X	X					
NB7SCa			X			X		
NB7CRa	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Approach to Teaching

The MA Classical Ballet Performance programme takes a thoughtful, practice-based approach tailored for the intensity of study over one year full-time. Its structure combines core performance theories, professional practice, artistic research, and technical refinement, equipping students to excel as performers and contributors to the classical ballet discipline. Delivery methods include practical classes/workshops, tutorials, structured mentored observations, and formative feedback during studio and rehearsal practice.

The programme integrates theoretical and practical elements, allowing students to explore diverse approaches to classical ballet training, repertoire interpretation, and performance preparation. Each module emphasises in studio reflective practice, enabling students to connect theoretical knowledge with real-world artistic and performance applications.

A key feature of the programme is its focus on professional skills and performance practice, embedded as an essential part of the curriculum. This design enables students to apply and test concepts learned in the studio directly within their professional or company settings, such as performances, rehearsals, or collaborative projects.

Independent study is a key component designed to support students' growth as performers and reflective practitioners. Students are expected to engage in self-directed research, technical practice, written reflective analysis, and artistic exploration outside of scheduled class hours. This includes repertoire study, technique refinement, developing performance concepts, completing assignments, and reflecting on their artistic progression.

The programme encourages students to take ownership of their learning by setting goals, managing their time effectively, and seeking resources to deepen their understanding of classical ballet theory and performance practices. This approach supports their development into informed, adaptable, and innovative contributors to the field of classical ballet.

Assessment Strategy

The MA Classical Ballet Performance course employs a comprehensive assessment strategy designed to evaluate students' technical skills, artistic expression, theoretical understanding, and reflective practice. Key assessment methods include studio and theatre-based performance assessments, reflective writing, and in class summative assessment through observation of practice. This multifaceted approach ensures a holistic evaluation of students' ability to integrate contextual frameworks with advanced practical skills while fostering critical thinking and artistic development.

Studio-based assessments are central to the programme, providing students with opportunities to demonstrate their mastery of classical ballet technique and performance artistry. These assessments evaluate technical precision, musicality, and interpretative skills, alongside the ability to convey narrative and emotion through movement. Through continuous assessment, students will also be assessed on their ability to adapt and respond to feedback during rehearsals and live performance settings.

Students will be asked to undertake reflective writing tasks that encourage students to critically analyse their training, rehearsals, and performance experiences. By articulating their learning processes, decision-making, and creative interpretations, students develop a deeper understanding of their practice and cultivate a mindset of continuous improvement and self-awareness.

For those students who remain to complete the MA, a final practice based, or traditional written research project provides opportunity for students to explore some historical, theoretical, and cultural contexts of classical ballet. These assignments enable students to connect their practical experiences with academic inquiry, examining issues such as choreography, pedagogy, and the evolution of ballet as an art form.

The diverse assessment methods are designed to prepare graduates for the multifaceted demands of professional ballet performance. Through a combination of practical, reflective, and academic assessments, students acquire a robust skill set that includes technical proficiency, artistic integrity, critical analysis, and adaptability. This comprehensive approach ensures that graduates are not only prepared to excel as classical ballet performers but are also equipped to navigate the dynamic challenges of the contemporary dance industry.

Work-Based Learning and Placements:

Teaching the MA Classical Ballet Performance course through a professional company work-based model provides students with an immersive, real-world training environment that bridges the gap between academic study and professional practice. By engaging directly with the day-to-day operations of a professional ballet company, students gain firsthand experience in the rigorous demands of a dancer's career. They participate in rehearsals, performances, and creative processes in the same environment as experienced professionals in Northern Ballet, which fosters a deep understanding of company etiquette, discipline, and collaborative dynamics.

This model allows students to refine their technical and artistic skills through exposure to a range of repertoire and choreographic styles while receiving feedback from industry experts. It also hones their adaptability, as they learn to navigate the fast-paced and evolving nature of professional productions. Furthermore, working within a company context enhances their

understanding of performance preparation, including the importance of physical conditioning, injury prevention, and mental resilience.

Beyond performance, the work-based approach develops professional skills such as communication, time management, and the ability to work effectively in a team—key attributes for thriving in a professional environment. This integrated learning experience ensures that graduates are not only technically proficient and artistically expressive but also industry-savvy and prepared to meet the challenges of a competitive classical ballet career.

Student Support:

The Academy of Northern Ballet boasts comprehensive student support which covers 5 key elements: health and wellbeing support, academic support (including learner support provision), English-language support, financial assistance, and bodywork provision (including injury support & rehabilitation). This is also supported by its validator NSCD. Student progress and wellbeing is monitored through several processes, including informal and formal continued discussion with a mentor. Student learning is enhanced through use of our Virtual Learning Environment (currently NSCD Moodle). Northern Ballet also offers careers guidance and advice, alongside robust safeguarding procedures.

Entry Profile:

Entry is through a successful application and interview. The programme is aimed at graduates of two/three-year dance training programmes at Higher Education level, or dance artists with professional experience and equivalent vocational dance training.

Applicants for the course should usually be graduates of three-year arts or related course delivered in the University or Conservatoire sector at level 6, or where applicants do not hold this entry qualification, and may be applying with a similar degree of professional training or scholarship, may apply for entry by demonstrating their relevant experience via a portfolio.

Applicants must apply through application form and attend an audition and interview to be considered for entry onto the course – this is available via the academy's remote application process

Candidates for whom English is not their native language will need to demonstrate a proficiency in written and spoken English relevant to the demands of the programme of study. This would normally be at least one of the following:

- IELTS for UKVI with an overall band of 6.0 with no less than 6 in Reading and Writing and no less than 5.5 in Speaking and Listening.

- Language Cert International ESOL SELT with 33– 37 per skill for Reading and Writing, 25-32 per skill for Speaking and Listening. 38 – 50 per skill to achieve 6.5 across all skills.

There is procedure in place for candidates to ask for feedback in relation to the application process and a complaints policy surrounding admissions. This information is available on the admissions page of Northern Ballet's website.

On entry the student will be able to:

- Demonstrate a high level of physical ability, technical proficiency, and/or the potential for advanced development in classical ballet technique and artistry.
- Articulate and contextualise their artistic preferences, influences, and career aspirations, showcasing a thoughtful understanding of classical ballet as an evolving art form.
- Respond constructively to feedback and begin to integrate reflective responses into their training and performance development through participation in the audition processes.
- Exhibit the potential to refine and advance their artistic awareness and interpretative skills through previous experience and meaningful engagement in performances or collaborative creative processes.
- Engage fully and imaginatively with the course's intentions, showing practical and intellectual curiosity and commitment to personal and professional growth.
- A high degree of commitment and approach to work in a professional environment, in the way they present themselves for entry to the programme.