Programme Specification Northern School of Contemporary Dance	
Programme Title:	Certificate of Higher Education in Dance
Teaching Institution:	Northern School of Contemporary Dance
Final Award:	Certificate of Higher Education in Dance
Alternative Exit Awards:	N/A
Credit Level:	Level 4
Credits/ECTS value:	120 (60 ECTS)
Modes of Delivery:	1 year full time
QAA Benchmarks:	QAA Subject Benchmark Statements for Dance, Drama and Performance (April 2024) The Frameworks for Higher Education (Feb 2024)
Validation Date:	May 2025 (revised June 2026)
Programme Start Date:	September 2027
Review Date:	May 2030

Programme Overview:

The Certificate of Higher Education in Dance is a course of study specifically designed as the first step in a student's education and training towards becoming a professional dance artist, performer or choreographer. As a programme of study, it encompasses the physical, technical, expressive, creative and artistic nature of dance performance informed by contextual and theoretical aspects of the discipline, including cultural perspectives.

One of the overarching aims for the programme is to give the student a scaffolded curriculum where re-occurring themes are transparent and overlap between modules. NSCD creates a learning environment where students can synthesise their technical, performative, creative and contextual skills in a way that supports the industry model. The intention of the programme is to create a strong foundation through a broad range of key subject specific and transferable skills to best equip graduates for further undergraduate study and/or professional training.

The range of dance practices undertaken during the programme are designed to create a clear foundation for the body within Contemporary Dance, supported by other styles as appropriate. This will involve the study of dance forms including contemporary and ballet, with other diverse styles (including styles such as Breaking, Afro-fusion and Hip-Hop) being studied as complementary practices, along with somatic based approaches, improvisation and body conditioning such as Yoga/Pilates.

Whilst developing artistic expression and an understanding of movement that enables the dancer to explore further the varied and changing demands of choreography from a breadth of expressive, aesthetic and cultural traditions. Classes offer a holistic approach to dance training where strength, stamina, musicality, flexibility, rhythm and co-ordination are introduced (specific to the styles studied), underpinned by a practical and theoretical study of how the body moves and of how to work safely in a variety of contexts. Students are encouraged to begin to explore the physical and expressive potential of the body through a range of diverse dance practices.

Both within and outside the core curriculum, it is intended that the programme be supported by its connections to the industry. This includes a number of visiting choreographers, guest teachers and industry professionals to augment the in-house training and delivery as well as draw direct links and contacts to the profession.

The course is written with the following progression routes in mind:

- As a stand-alone qualification where a student may complete one year of study to achieve the Certificate of Higher Education in Dance;
- Upon completion of the certificate apply and audition for the first year of a degree programme in one of the conservatoire schools
- Apply for a similar degree programme in another HEI

Programme Learning Outcomes:

Programme Learning Outcomes **On completion of this programme students will be able to:**	
Stage 1 - Level 4	
PLO-1	demonstrate an embodied understanding of craft and technique **(SB4.2.iii)**
PLO-2	identify the cultural context of practitioners and practices **(SB4.2.ii)**
PLO-3	apply technical skills in creative and interpretative modes of expression **(SB4.3.v)**
PLO-4	describe, interpret and evaluate performance scores and events from a range of perspectives and using appropriate subject specific vocabularies **(SB5.3.i)**
PLO-5	develop a repertoire of interpretative skills, practices and making techniques (physical/aural/spatial), applying them effectively to engage with an audience/performance **(SB5.2.ii)**

PLO-6	work effectively in group processes in the creation of work including, for example, working collectively, ensemble, co-creation and hierarchical and non-hierarchical structures **(SB4.3.vii)**
PLO-7	recognise knowledge of histories, forms and traditions of performance **(SB4.2.v)**

Programme Structure:

The module structure and blended learning ensure that technical training is never seen in isolation.

In particular, the Dance Practices modules integrate class work with understanding the self through reflective practice and enables students to focus their technical training within Contemporary Dance, supported by other styles and complementary practices as relevant.

Contextual studies support a student's ability to appraise professional work to see how the different elements of dance practice integrate together in performance outcomes relevant to current industry practice across a broad range of dance styles/genres.

Through creative strands of the curriculum - choreography, improvisation and movement composition, provide the students with the key tools, skills and understanding to create artistic work within a defined conceptual framework, whilst the manner in which students can interpret assignment briefs, allows them to develop individual areas of interest, as well as experience a thorough grounding in traditional theatre practice.

Throughout the programme of study, students will gradually increase in autonomy and self-sufficiency as they take greater levels of responsibility for the sharing and performance of their works.

Module Structure				
Stage 1 (level 4)				
Module Code	**Module Title**	**Credits**	**Core or Option**	**Pass Compulsory**
NS4_CPa	Creative Practice: Choreography & Composition	30	Core	No
NS4_DPFa	Dance Practices: Foundations of Movement	15	Core	No
NS4_DPDa	Dance Practices: Diverse Movement Forms	30	Core	No
NS4_RPa	Research Practice: Cultural Perspectives on Dance	15	Core	No

NS4_DRa	Dance Repertoire	15	Core	No
NS4_PPa	Performance Practice	15	Core	No
Exit Awards Award of credit for completed modules				

Programme Aims Mapping:

Programme Aims Module Mapping							
	PLO-1	PLO-2	PLO-3	PLO-4	PLO-5	PLO-6	PLO-7
NS4_CPa	X	X		X	X	X	X
NS4_DPFa	X		X				
NS4_DPDa	X		X				
NS4_RPa		X		X			X
NS4_DRa	X	X	X			X	X
NS4_PPa	X	X	X		X	X	X

Approach to Teaching:

This level 4 programme is built uniquely upon a 'scaffolded' curriculum model where common strands are explored in an interconnected manner across the modules. The core strands are dance practices, creative practice, performance practice and dance repertoire. All of these modules are connected and then placed in context with theoretical underpinning, through research practice. Core subject skills are developed as a result of this 'blended approach' to learning. These provide students with an essential subject toolkit for further study. These core skills involve physical and bodily awareness, performance skills, appreciation, choreography, reflexive practice and research.

All students follow the same programme of study which introduces the students to the different strands of the curriculum and creates a foundation for core skills development.

In Dance Practices modules student learning takes place through participation in tutor-led sessions. The classes focus on the training, expression and articulation of the body, and exercises/approaches are used to build the core skills of anatomical awareness, appropriate physical strength and muscular effort, range of motion, proprioception, coordination, stylistic and cultural expression, and performativity across the distinct practices studied. This training is necessarily repetitive building a spiral curriculum of continually refining the practice where the content is progressively developed throughout the three terms of study, in order to promote the development of 'imaginative and creative' performers.

In relation to the Dance Practices modules dance forms are integrated into 2 holistic modules where all forms are given equal value supporting student understanding and reinforcing the value in preparing the body and mind of a versatile dancer.

In choreography and performance practice modules, skills, knowledge and understanding is acquired through tutor directed practical dance activities and independent creative investigations. These activities promote the exploration and development of an expressive dance vocabulary which enables the student to create, interpret and perform dance based works showing an understanding of a range of dance genres. This is later supported by the dance repertoire module, where students are encouraged to transfer these skills through another context, and the study/performance of a broad range of dance works.

The performance practice and dance repertoire modules recreate professional dance company experiences. This process includes directed and independent learning, group work and the development of the interpersonal skills required to successfully work with professional choreographers, composers or designers. In all modules, students undertake a self-directed rehearsal process supported by tutorial milestones and formative feedback. During this time there is the option for students to present their choreographic work in an informal 'choreo-lab' where they can receive feedback from their peers.

All of the practical modules have theoretical underpinning where learning takes place through mixed mode learning, tutor directed and independent study and one to one tutorials. These combine theoretical study with practical activities and therefore learning outcomes are achieved through exposure to a wide range of teaching and learning methods as indicated above. Across the programme there is appropriate application of directed study to enable students the space to respond to set tasks as individuals or in groups in preparation for classes which follow. Whilst independent study will allow students opportunity to manage time and resources effectively towards assessment demands

Assessment Strategy:

Northern School of Contemporary Dance employs a wide variety of assessment methods including formative, continuous and summative assessment.

Assessment evidence is collected through:

- Continuous and summative assessments in dance practices and performance practice
- Assessed rehearsal processes in performance practice and dance repertoire
- Showings of solos and group choreographic work and improvisation within creative practice.
- Written essays in research practice
- Evaluations / reflections
- Individual and small group verbal presentations

Students receive ongoing feedback in practical classes and through the tutorial system in which professional and academic development are considered and evaluated.

Achievement is measured against module assessment criteria and in accordance with programme and module learning outcomes.

Students must meet the specific attendance requirements for the programme.

Work-Based Learning and Placements:

N/A

Student Support:

NSCD has comprehensive student support that 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). Student progress and wellbeing is monitored through a number of processes including student review board, with student learning enhanced through use of our Virtual Learning Environment (currently NSCD Moodle). NSCD also offers careers guidance and advice, alongside robust safeguarding procedures.

Entry Profile:

On entry the student will be able to demonstrate:

- Physical ability, experience and/or potential
- A degree of performance ability
- Creative ability and understanding
- Ability to describe and present facts which contextualise their artistic preferences and abilities
- Ability to respond to feedback and begin to be reflective of their practice

All of which have been assessed during the admissions process of being of a standard suitable for entry at undergraduate degree level.

This programme is designed to attract and be representative of a diverse student population.

It will recruit students who:

- Are looking for a one-year programme of study and are not yet ready for the depth and intensity of the 3-year undergraduate programme
- Are students from targeted communities who are presented in connection with NSCD's widening access strategy
- Are mature students who are coming to the programme with non-traditional entry qualifications
- Come to the school as talented 16-year-olds, beginning their undergraduate studies early
- Are International students who are interested in one year level 4 programme of study

The eclectic mix of students in this cohort offer a vibrant and rich resource, who contribute knowledge, values and experiences which are exciting and supportive of the School's inclusive cultures policy.

Usually candidates should have attained:

- Two A Level passes and five GCSE passes at grade C / grade 4 or above (including English language) or
- Other qualifications and/or experience equivalent to the above which suggests that the candidate has an equal opportunity of succeeding on the course. This is particularly relevant to talented 16-year-olds who are applying without a level 3 qualification and international students.

Other qualifications may include one of the following:

- Pass in a BTEC National Diploma
- 4 Scottish Higher passes
- Pass in a GNVQ, or a combination of Academic and/or Vocational Qualifications equivalent to 2 Advanced Level GCE passes
- Successfully complete the School's matriculation procedure. The School's Matriculation procedures require candidates to submit two pieces of work usually comprising of written assignments encompassing analytical and reflective writing.

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 5.5 with no less than 5.0 in each component skill.
- Language Cert International ESOL SELT with 33 – 38 score per skill.

Course Requirement

In order to qualify for admission to the programme of study candidates are required to pass an audition process, either in person or via video submission. Both in-house and remote auditions follow the same procedure.

Audition Procedure

- creative/Improvisation/Ice-breaker session
- dance practices classes; Contemporary, Ballet & Afro-fusion
- creative workshop
- group discussion

During the audition process candidates are scored on the following areas:

- physical ability, experience and/or potential
- performance ability
- creativity
- critical thinking
- reflective engagement
- suitability for the programme of study

There is procedure in place for candidates to ask for feedback in relation to the audition process and a complaints policy surrounding admissions. This information is available on the admissions page of the School's website. Students may be admitted to the programme with advanced standing in line with the University's standard RPEL requirements.