Programme Specification Validated by Northern School of Contemporary Dance	
Programme Title:	MA Black British Dance and Performance
Teaching Institution:	Serendipity Institute for Black Arts and Heritage
Final Award:	MA Black British Dance and Performance
Alternative Exit Awards:	PGDip Black British Dance and Performance PGCert Black British Dance and Performance
Credit Level:	Level 7
Credits/ECTS value:	180 (90ECTS)
Modes of Delivery:	3 years Part-time
QAA Benchmarks:	QAA Subject Benchmark Statements: Dance, Drama and Performance (Apr 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 and Overview

This pioneering MA programme centres Black British dance and performance as a critical, creative and intellectual field of study. Designed for artists, scholars, producers and curators, the course offers a unique space to explore the histories, legacies and contemporary practices of Black British dance in relation to global and diasporic contexts. Through a combination of practice, research, critical theory and case study exploration, students will engage with key movements, makers and methodologies shaping the sector.

The programme interrogates the framing of Black dance through the lens of impact, voice and gaze, asking how systems of power have influenced representation, visibility and value—and how these are being actively challenged, reshaped and reimagined by Black artists and thinkers today. Through a variety of modules, students explore the critical importance of language in framing Black dance and performance. Students will examine how terminology

shapes perception, policy and pedagogy/andragogy, and develop tools to shift dominant narratives through writing, advocacy and dialogue. Students will have the opportunity to undertake in-depth case study analyses of key institutions and events, critically analyse how platforms for Black dance operate, influence and evolve locally and internationally.

Students gain in-depth understanding of the role of curatorial practice and programming in shaping public engagement with Black dance. They will examine strategies of curation through festivals and platforms that centre African, Caribbean and Diasporic aesthetics, examining how power, access and authorship intersect in these contexts and will engage directly with festival infrastructure, artists and curators to critically reflect on innovation, legacy and leadership within Black dance presentation and practice.

Through a blended approach to theory and practice, students will explore alternative approaches to documentation, archiving and digital presence in Black British dance. At the same time, further developing critical and creative responses to how the form is seen, remembered and preserved, with emphasis on disrupting dominant archival practices.

During the course students will have attend a block period of study that brings together guest artists, scholars and industry leaders for workshops, lectures and sharing's. The intensive block period of study provides a dynamic environment for deepening knowledge and practice through embodied research, collaboration and experimentation.

In the stage 2 aspect of the programme, students will design and undertake a major research project or dissertation that reflects their area of interest within Black British dance and performance. This capstone module supports original inquiry, offering pathways into academic, curatorial or creative outputs.

Programme Learning Outcomes Upon successful completion of this programme students will be able to:	
Level 7 - Stage 1	
PLO1-1	Critically analyse the impact of Black British and Diasporic dance artists, demonstrating an understanding of their impact on practice, policy and access in Black British dance and beyond.
PLO 1-2	Evaluate the role of legislation and cultural policy in shaping opportunities and access for Black dance in the UK.
PLO1-3	Interrogate language, representation and media portrayals of Black dance to challenge dominant narratives and promote inclusive discourse.
PLO1-4	Design and curate Black dance programmes or events informed by historical, artistic and community research, that reflect cultural diversity and respond to UK and international festival contexts.
PLO1-5	Communicate original ideas and insights through written, digital, curatorial or performance-based outputs informed by critical and

	creative inquiry.
Level 7 - Stage 2	
PLO2-1	Organise, critically evaluate and synergise the relevant sources and critical thinking of a research area related to Black Dance and Performance
PLO2-2	Frame and articulate an area of research based on a comprehensive understanding of applicable techniques and theories appropriate to the genre.
PLO2-3	Utilise an appropriate research methodology to realise a research project with originality in the application of knowledge

Programme Structure

The MA Black British Dance and Performance is designed as a flexible, interdisciplinary programme delivered in a blended online format, with opportunities for in-person engagement through intensives and a final sharing event. It is coordinated and assessed in collaboration with leading scholars and practitioners in the field.

The programme is structured around six modules, each focusing on a key theme related to Black British dance and performance. These modules combine theoretical study with creative practice, encouraging students to develop original research and artistic responses throughout the course.

The stage 1 modules enable students to progress into the stage 2 module Research Project, where they will develop and evaluate an independently led piece of research as appropriate to level 7 MA work. This can take the form of practice as research, lecture demonstration or a dissertation reflective of their learning to date. Practical outcomes will be supported by contextualising information.

Module Structure				
Stage 1 (level 7) Year 1 Part-time				
Module Code	**Module Title**	**Credits**	**Core or Option**	**Pass Compulsory**
SD_7CG1a	Changing the Gaze: Shifting the Landscape Around Language, Terminology and Representation	30	Core	no
SD_7CS1a	Case Studies of Festivals	15	Core	no
SD_7BD1a	Black Dance Uncovered	15	Core	no

Module Structure				
Stage 1 (level 7) Year 2 Part-time				
Module Code	**Module Title**	**Credits**	**Core or Option**	**Pass Compulsory**
SD_7CP1a	Curated, Programmed Festivals	15	Core	no
SD_7LD1a	Let's Dance International Frontiers	15	Core	no
SD_7CL1a	Changing the Lens	30	Core	no

Module Structure				
Progression In order to progress onto stage 2, students must complete 120 credits from stage 1, made up of 120 credits of core modules.				
Stage 2 (Level 7) Year 3 Part-Time				
Module Code	**Module Title**	**Credits**	**Core or Option**	**Pass Compulsory**
SD7_RP1a	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	PLO2-1	PLO2-2	PLO2-3
SD_7CG1a	X	X	X	X	X			
SD_7CS1a		X	X					
SD_7CP1a	X		X	X				
SD_7LD1a	X			X	X			
SD_7CL1a	X	X	X	X	X			
SD_7BD1a					X			
NS7_RP1a						X	X	X

Approach to Teaching

Serendipity Institute for Black Arts and Heritage takes a values-driven, culturally responsive approach to teaching, grounded in the lived experiences, histories and future-facing practices of the African and African Caribbean Diaspora. Rooted in community, critical inquiry and creativity, our pedagogy/andragogy centres Black voices, decolonial thinking and inclusive methodologies.

Students are taught and mentored by leading practitioners and cultural leaders, and guest artists. This ensures the curriculum remains relevant, dynamic and connected to current practice.

Each module encourages students to interrogate cultural policy, representation, and the socio-political positioning of Black dance within the UK and global contexts. We explore how language, legislation and programming shape both perception and opportunity.

Modules are delivered online through structured weekly releases, enabling students to engage with materials at their own pace while participating in discussion, critique and collaborative learning. This is complemented by in-person opportunities such as the Black Dance Uncovered summer intensive and the final sharing event.

Serendipity values the interplay between critical theory and embodied knowledge. Students engage in both written and creative responses—developing podcasts, dance works, short films, and curated programmes that reflect rigorous research and personal perspective.

The course also equips students with practical tools in areas such as cultural policy, intellectual property and audience engagement—empowering emerging leaders in Black dance to advocate, programme and create with agency and confidence.

Through this approach, Serendipity fosters an environment that champions diversity, challenges conventional norms, and celebrates the innovation and resilience of Black British dance and performance.

Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategy for this course is designed to reflect the interdisciplinary nature of Black British dance and performance, combining critical analysis, creative response and professional practice. Assessments are aligned with the programme's learning outcomes and are intended to support students in developing their voice, research, and curatorial skills while engaging with real-world issues and platforms.

Students are assessed through a range of methods including written reports, comparative analyses, curated programme proposals, podcasts, short films, critical reviews, and choreographic work. This diversity allows students to engage with material in ways that reflect both academic and creative modes of expression.

The assessments are sequenced across the modules to build knowledge and deepen critical engagement. Earlier tasks focus on legislation, language and representation, while later assessments encourage the application of that knowledge in programming, reviewing, and performance.

Assessment tasks are modelled on industry-relevant practices, such as festival curation, artist interviews, and dance criticism, supporting students to develop skills transferable to careers in dance, academia, curation, and cultural leadership.

All assessments require evidence of independent research and critical reflection. Several also include practical or creative elements, encouraging students to integrate theory with practice and embody diasporic movement vocabularies.

Work-Based Learning and Placements:

There is no placement activity on this programme.

Student Support:

Serendipity Institute for Black Arts and Heritage provides a student support offer that complements NSCD's comprehensive provision across five key areas—health and wellbeing, academic and learner support (including English-language support). Serendipity adds a culturally responsive layer of care tailored to the lived experiences of its student community.

Serendipity offers:

- Culturally aware wellbeing and pastoral support
- Academic and research guidance from Black arts professionals
- Mentorship and industry engagement opportunities
- Access to online learning materials via Serendipity's platform, alongside NSCD Moodle
- Career-focused development through live projects and festival engagement

Student progress and wellbeing are monitored collaboratively, with safeguarding and support principles aligned to NSCD's guidelines. Together, both institutions ensure a supportive, inclusive and empowering learning environment.

Recruitment and entry profile:

This MA/Postgraduate Diploma is designed for emerging and mid-career practitioners, researchers, and educators who are ready to push the boundaries of performance and knowledge production. The selection process reflects this by prioritising:

- Creative and intellectual potential, as demonstrated through a portfolio, written statement, and interview.
- A readiness to critically engage with both theory and practice, contributing to a vibrant, multidisciplinary learning community.
- A commitment to equity, community, and cultural responsibility, values that underpin the ethos of Serendipity and its partners.

On entry the student will be able to demonstrate:

- a strong technical practice, with the potential to further refine and advance their technical skills
- developed performance and creative skills, with an awareness of performance paradigms
- an openness to further develop artistic and academic skills, knowledge and understanding and to apply them to their learning
- the ability to critically reflect upon, appraise and respond to performance practice
- an approach to working that is collaborative, creative, reflective and evaluative

While other programmes may focus primarily on technical training or community-based approaches, this MA/Postgraduate Diploma demands a higher level of scholarly and creative synthesis. It reflects the expectations of students already seeking more many of whom have previously turned to Serendipity for the richness, depth, and professional insight not available through other courses.

Recruitment for the MA/Postgraduate Diploma in Black British Dance and Performance is structured across a three-stage process designed to ensure a rigorous and inclusive approach to admissions. Entry onto the programme is selective. Places are offered to applicants who demonstrate the strongest potential to benefit from the course, assessed through a combination of creative ability, physical and technical understanding and their capacity for critical reflection and academic inquiry. The audition and interview process enable the panel to evaluate applicants' readiness to engage with the intellectual and creative demands of the programme.

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.