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MA Contemporary Dance Performance (VERVE)

Award:	MA Contemporary Dance Performance (VERVE), validated by the University of Kent
Duration:	1 year (full-time), September - August
Entry requirements:	<p>Entry is through a successful audition and interview. The course is open to graduates of two/three-year dance training courses at Higher Education level, or dance artists with professional experience and equivalent vocational dance training. Applicants are usually 21+ years of age.</p> <p>Students with English as a second language will need a 6.5 ESOL level (with a minimum of 6.0 in reading and 5.5 in speaking and listening)</p>

Course Overview

VERVE is the postgraduate company of Northern School of Contemporary Dance. This MA equips you with the professional performance skills as a member of a contemporary dance company. Each year the company commissions choreographers from all over the world to create an artistically distinct, physically daring and engaging programme of dance work.

The course offers you the opportunity to challenge and develop your skills across a varied repertoire of work, guided by teaching staff, alongside an exciting range of visiting artists. VERVE provides you with a safe and inspiring space to grow your individual artistry and rigorously challenge your physical skill. You will develop your identity as a performer, whilst building an understanding of the professional working environment to support your future career.

The company includes a tour to venues and festivals across the UK and seeks connections with partner institutions, industry professionals, choreographers and companies, to broaden and enrich the students' experience and understanding.

Choreographers who have previously worked with the company include Akram Khan, Maxine Doyle, Sita Ostheimer, Noa Zuk, Lali Ayguade, Ben Duke, Lenka Vagnerova, Douglas Thorpe, Joan Clevillé, Anton Lachky, Lea Anderson, Ben Wright, Mari Carrasco and Hannes Langolf.

Module Map

Each module has a credit value between 15 and 60 credits, including a final major research project worth 60 credits. Each credit taken equates to a total study time of around 10 hours. Total study time includes scheduled teaching, independent study, directed study. You will study a total of 180 credits for the MA.

LEVEL 7		
Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Technical Practice (30 credits)		Research Project (60 credits)
Company (60 credits)		
Performance Practice (30 credits) Default option module		

Timetables

Timetables are normally available one month before registration. Please note that while we make every effort to ensure that timetables are as student-friendly as possible, scheduled teaching can take place on any day of the week. There is usually one directed learning week in each term, with allocated vacations at Christmas and Easter.

Module Breakdown

Technical Practice

You will participate in daily classes/workshops as a method of developing your technical and performance skills in studio-based sessions. You will experience a range of sessions developed to extend your interpretive abilities, enhance your physical execution of technical material and also to provide strategies for movement observation and analysis.

Classes will be led by a range of tutors and will ensure that you experience relevant styles and approaches which are current in the dance community. There will be a focus on individual personal practice, enhancing skills of reflection to ensure that you are able to identify and apply your skills in a range of contexts.

Company

You will participate fully in the life of a contemporary dance company with exposure to a range of creative processes, rehearsals, teaching and/or touring periods. The module emphasises how all elements of company life combine and overlap to form a holistic process-based experience.

You will develop the skills needed to sustain creative engagement with work whilst on tour, the need to be flexible and responsive in order to cope with unpredictable situations, the need to throw yourself into new and unfamiliar circumstances, and the need to develop the interpersonal skills necessary to build and sustain relationships with a small group of people.

The module will emphasise the transferable skills needed by a professional dance artist in the current ecology, applying those skills across a range of challenging contexts.

Performance Practice

You will participate in live performance opportunities throughout your time on this MA programme and reflection on these experiences will provide a platform for continuing professional development. Emphasis is placed on adapting acquired skills to meet the demands of the company's performance repertoire.

In the development of performance skills, you will focus on the integration of your own definitive strengths and performance qualities, whilst continuing to realise the artistic vision of the choreographer. There will be a variety of performance opportunities, providing exposure to a broad range of dance audiences, and enabling you to experience the practicalities performance within the current dance sector.

Research Project

With this Module, all MA students come together and have a chance to work with one another across courses. You will undertake a series of lectures and workshops prior to working independently on a focused and original research project with a critical and systematic understanding of current knowledge.

Research outcomes may take a range of forms including performance, choreography, lecture demonstration or dissertation. You will be expected to draw on your experiences and expertise from earlier in the course. This module is seen as an opportunity to apply the specificity of your learning so far to a project directly relevant to your on-going professional development. The projects on this module will be presented in a final sharing/mini-festival of work.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching at NSCD is tailored to the nature of the modules being taken, often combining practical and theoretical learning to best prepare you for the demands of the industry. Teaching methods include practical classes and workshops, rehearsal and performance, placement activity, lectures, seminars and tutorials. All teaching takes place within industry-standard facilities.

Taught hours for each module reflect the nature of the module and current professional practice. For example, creation and rehearsal modules have intensive contact and studio time, whereas research projects combine lectures, workshops, tutorials with the independent study time needed to develop your research practice. Consequently, study time varies, but average contact time is normally between 16 and 24 hours per week during directed teaching activity.

Teaching Staff

Dance students at NSCD are taught by world-leading teaching staff whose expertise and knowledge closely matches the content of the modules they teach. The team includes senior academics who are dance artists and professional practitioners, with key links into the industry. Classes are supported by high quality accompaniment.

In addition to our in-house staff, NSCD attracts the best guest artists from all over the UK, Europe and around the world, allowing you to connect with established and emerging choreographers and dance artists. For more information on who will be teaching you, visit our staff biography pages:

nscd.ac.uk/people

Independent Learning

In addition to your timetabled sessions, independent learning and directed study form a crucial part of your learning at NSCD. This takes a range of formats, from tasks directly linked to your studies, to activities that enable you to place your dance studies within a wider arts and societal context.

You will have access to a range of resources, including studio time, academic journals, articles and books, library and computer facilities, video, audio and photo editing equipment, the bodywork studio, and NSCD's virtual learning environment.

Assessment and Feedback

NSCDs employs a wide variety of feedback and assessment methods, with the aim that each approach links the subject being studied to its application within the profession. Wherever possible a range of assessment options are included to ensure that each individual student's learning preferences are catered for. Assessment modes include:

- Continuous assessment, reflecting your development of individual practice and engagement in technical and creative processes
- Summative assessment, capturing achievement at a moment in time, such as in a performance work or choreographic projects
- Essays, proposals and verbal presentations
- Practice-based and written research projects
- Reflective practice, including written or verbal presentations

Students receive extensive ongoing feedback both embedded into the learning of the modules, and at fixed times related to specific assessment items. Feedback is designed to help student's ongoing growth and development into the profession.

Achievement is measured against module assessment criteria and in accordance with course and module learning outcomes. Students must also meet the specific attendance requirements for the programme.

Student Support

The School provides you with a comprehensive range of support mechanisms to help you with your studies and professional development. All students have access to academic support and guidance from tutors who maintain an overview of students' progress and development.

Our student support team and academic tutors help in the following areas:

- Study skills (including reading, note-taking and presentation skills)
- Written English (including punctuation and grammatical accuracy)
- Academic writing (including how to reference)
- Research skills
- Critical thinking and understanding arguments
- Pastoral care and counselling services
- Bodywork supervision including injury prevention and support
- Finance support

Our Student Support Services help students with needs resulting from disabilities, medical conditions or from neurodiverse learner profiles. Students also have access to module learning materials through the use of Moodle.

Costs and Financial Support

Latest course fees can be found here: nscd.ac.uk/postgrad-fees

Eligible postgraduate students can apply for a postgraduate loan from the Student Loans Company to help with tuition fees and living costs. Students are not expected to pay a student loan back until after graduation, and only then, once earning over the repayment threshold. Information about the variety of financial support available can be found at gov.uk/funding-for-postgraduate-study

Both home and international postgraduate students are also eligible for a number of bursaries and partial fee-waivers. More information can be found here: nscd.ac.uk/bursaries-scholarships

Students will be required to pay a one-off application fee of £20 (waivers are available). An Administration Fee of £100 is payable at the point of acceptance to offers made on all of our courses. A Course Fee Deposit of £1500 is payable by students paying overseas fees or those students not obtaining a course fee loan through Student Finance England or its equivalent. NSCD will require you to pay the deposit at the point of acceptance. The deposit is deducted from the final instalment of your course fees.

Overseas students will have the additional costs of:

- Student Visa (£363)
- Immigration Health Surcharge (£470/year)

The following course-related costs are not included in the fees:

- NSCD does not require any specific dance clothing or equipment to participate in the course but there may be dance clothing or footwear a student may wish to purchase
- The cost of any materials which you choose to use in your independent projects
- Additional printing over and above the £50 annual allowance
- The cost of books or IT equipment that you might wish to purchase

Accommodation and living costs not included in the fees, further information can be obtained from our admissions team or online at: nscd.ac.uk/accommodation

Health insurance

Whilst this is not mandatory, we encourage you to consider taking out private health insurance to support with any medical treatment that may be required. NSCD is unable to recommend insurance schemes, but One Dance UK provides a useful resource at:

onedanceuk.org/resource/health-insurance-dancers-companies

NSCD Value for Money

NSCD is about the time you spend with us embodying new creative and technical approaches to dance and making lifetime friendships, on the school's campus, on study placements, and in the vibrant city of Leeds.

Our tutors and guest artists are subject experts who challenge students' thinking. NSCD students develop transferable skills needed for a portfolio career – critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and creativity. We provide opportunities within the curriculum and beyond to help our students stand out in a crowded job market, including opportunities to network and collaborate, project-based curricular activity and enrichment, placements, learning from our alumni, and careers advice.

Our international approach to dance education means our students are ready to operate in a global environment when they graduate. We also work in partnership with local institutions and artists to support graduates to feed into a thriving Leeds dance ecology.

How we spend your fees

Like most universities that receive public funding, Northern School of Contemporary Dance is a charity, and raises income from a wide range of sources. This income is spent on day-to-day running costs, providing teaching and other student services, undertaking enterprise activities and engaging with arts organisations and local communities. Any surplus income is reinvested back into improving facilities.

