

05 September 2019

Dear

I am contacting you on behalf of One Dance UK, the sector support organisation for dance in the UK. We support all those working in the sector and advocate for the increased profile and importance of dance in all its diverse forms and settings.

As an organisation we fully endorse the Russell Group's decision to 'scrap' the list of 'facilitating' subjects. We agree that the list has been misinterpreted and resulted in students being pushed away from arts subjects, which in turn has led to a decline in entries. In dance qualifications alone there has been a 53% reduction in A Level entries and 45% drop in GCSE uptake over the last eight years.

Whilst we are pleased that the list will no longer exist and steps are being taken to offer more personalised advice, we are disappointed to see dance has not been cited as a 'useful' A Level on the new *Informed Choices* website. We acknowledge that dance has been included on the new website in some capacity, with the subject being mentioned as part of Creative Arts in the *which degree* section, and as a subject that can be taken in combination with other A Levels. We are also aware that Russell Group universities do not currently offer any dance courses, and therefore A Level dance would not be listed as an 'essential' A Level for any degree courses. However, some universities within the group offer courses which look at a range of performance arts & physical theatre (University of Warwick, King's College London).

Dance has a natural overlap with degree subjects such as drama, physical education, sport science and education studies. We believe it is highly likely that students who have studied A Level dance as one of their post-16 choices will be looking to the new website for guidance. The fact that dance does not appear as a useful subject for the degree subjects listed above really does diminish the importance and value of the subject and could inflict further damage on the uptake of dance at GCSE and A Level. Outlined below are the ways in which A Level dance would benefit students applying for several degrees listed on the website;

- *Education/ Education Studies* – dance in its nature is a tool for creative play and development. Evidenced by our growing requests for dance CPD, more and more teachers are being asked to deliver dance in primary schools. We can only envisage this demand increasing given the requirements of the new Ofsted framework for schools to provide additional opportunities for students to be active, develop resilience and character through foundations including creating and performing, and increase cultural capital.
- *Drama* – there is a clear overlap within the performance arts, as both dance and drama students learn about technical and expressive skills, physical theatre as a genre and production elements such as stage, lighting, sound and costume. Many drama degrees feature units solely based on physical theatre, which can also be identified as a style of dance. Students studying A Level dance can learn about physical theatre companies that are currently contributing to the British dance scene. When exploring the *Informed Choices*, both Religious

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Studies and Latin are suggested as useful A Levels for a student applying to a drama degree. We believe that dance is a much more relevant subject to the further study of drama.

- *Sport Science/Physical Education* – in reference to the earlier discussion points made about the new Ofsted framework, many sports coaches/teachers/leaders are required to teach dance. There is also an overlap of knowledge for sport and dance in terms of safe practice, warm up, cool down, elements of biology regarding the cardiovascular and musculoskeletal systems, and exploring how dance-specific training can be included as part of athletic training programmes.

In addition to the links established between dance and other subjects, the A Level develops a range of transferable skills that would be beneficial for virtually every degree course suggested on the site. The practical components of the A Level course develop teamwork, communication skills and problem solving through the task of choreographing solo and group work in response to a stimulus. The theoretical work enables students to refine their ability to research and collate historical information, developing an understanding of practitioners, companies and dance works within the context of a genre or time period.

As the sector support organisation for dance, One Dance UK would embrace any opportunity to support, assist or contribute to any future developments of the website. We strive to provide high quality dance that is accessible to all and demonstrate that dance is as valuable as all other subjects currently listed. We have spoken to the Russell Group via their enquiries office and understand that it will require the support of at least half of the 24 universities to prompt any changes to be made to the website.

We would be happy to discuss the matter further and can be contacted at amy.williams@onedanceuk.org or on 0121 6677388. If this letter has arrived at the wrong department, please forward to your university admissions team. We hope we can count on your support to give dance a stronger profile in Further and Higher Education and look forward to receiving your response.

Best wishes,

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