



The Essentials

for Excellence
in Vocational Training
for performing,
production and
technical careers

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School

Central
School
of Ballet

ENGLISH
NATIONAL
BALLET
SCHOOL

 **Guildhall**
SCHOOL
of Music & Drama

THE LONDON
ACADEMY OF
LAMDA
MUSIC AND
DRAMATIC ART

The Northern School of
Contemporary Dance

THE
OXFORD
SCHOOL
OF
DRAMA

RADA ROYAL
ACADEMY OF
DRAMATIC ART



THE
ROYAL BALLET SCHOOL

If you are serious about a career in the performing arts then you will expect that your training, just like your ambition, will take over your life. Dance and Drama training in the UK has always been rigorous, inspirational and the envy of the world. This is a tradition that we, the schools that have created this document, believe in and want to sustain and develop.

We urge you to make practical use of this leaflet during your application and your training. It applies whatever the length of course you are following, whether this is one, two or three years, and whether you are training for acting, musical theatre, dance or production work.

This Guide is in two sections:

entitlements for you, the applicant, and **signs of top quality** to look out for when you are deciding where to train.

1 Your entitlements

We believe you are entitled to:

- 1 a training that matches your ambition.** It needs to be your entire way of life for the duration of the course, not merely what you do only for part of each day. A student dancer was asked what she did. She replied "I am a dancer. That's what I am, not what I do." An acting student would make the same reply.
- 2 a minimum of thirty hours per week of "class contact time,"** that is, being taught by, and in direct contact with, a tutor for all of each working day (not having private study time). You should usually expect at least thirty weeks of tuition during an academic year. There may be some exceptions in some weeks but you will know if these are acceptable. In addition to the thirty hours you should expect private practice, tutorials and extra rehearsal time.
- 3 be taught by people who have been, or still are, working professionally in their specialist area of teaching and who you respect.** A school cannot train you to the highest vocational level unless its tutors have a thorough professional background and a passion for the future of the industry.
- 4 an intensive focus on each individual student.** One clear indication that your school is getting the staff/student ratio right is that your tutors will know you very well. Tutors will not be able to do this if class and year group sizes are too large or if they come and go without commitment to the school and its students.
- 5 a manageably-sized group of final-year students.** The size of the graduating year group is extremely important; if it is too large, it will be impossible for the school to use its links with practising professionals to help you get the job that you want.

Your entitlements

- 6 a range of public performance opportunities.** You need to experience a productive variety of roles, audiences and venues as a core part of your training. At the right times in your training, according to your tutors' judgements, you need to be part of good quality work in front of audiences.
- 7 be provided with an environment in which you will be able to take artistic risks** and be encouraged to contribute towards the development of the art form.
- 8 exposure to key professional "gate-keepers," such as agents, casting directors, choreographers, musical directors, production managers and designers.** Different schools will do this in different ways, but you need, via showcases or other performance opportunities, to show such people your professional work.
- 9 expert tuition to prepare you for life as an independent professional.** You need to be confident in running what will be, in effect, a one-person business.
- 10 an environment in which a high level of challenge is matched with a high level of support.** You need to be supported by tutors, directors, choreographers and production managers who work well together and encourage you to extend the boundaries of your art form.
- 11 expect that the first day of your training will be the first day of your career.** The rules and regulations, the working culture of the school, will echo as closely as possible what you will find in the profession.

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Signs of top quality training

To help you judge whether a school is right for you, you should ask to see the following information. Don't feel awkward about asking for these details. The schools that have created this document will welcome your questions, because we want you to insist on the excellent training you deserve.

Timetable

This should give you information on exactly how many taught hours you will get per week

Staffing List

This should make clear the balance between full-time, part-time and guest tutors, so you can get an accurate sense of the staff's professional background. Full-time staff provide understanding and continuity; part-time staff who are still working in the business keep everyone up-to-date. It is also important that there are sufficient senior managers in the school with direct professional experience that will guide their decisions.

Professional Links

A detailed account of the links between the school and significant professionals (performers, directors, company artistic directors, choreographers, musicians, etc).

Public Performances

A list of all public performances over the previous academic year, so you can see the range of venues, audiences and material performed.

Signs of top quality training

Employment Destinations

A list of the previous three years' employment destinations of graduating students, as far as they are known. Schools make considerable efforts to keep in touch with past students; it is very useful information for you as well as for the schools. You need to know the sort of jobs – range, quality – that students from the school have achieved.

Deposits

A clear policy on any deposits the school asks for from applicants; you should be told why the school charges a deposit, as well as how much it is and if/when it might be repaid to you.

Inspection reports

Copies of inspection and monitoring reports, e.g. from HEFCE, Ofsted/the Adult Learning Inspectorate, NCDT or other professional bodies.

Informal but important quality indicators you should watch out for.

The best schools will:

- have a very clear sense of a benchmark standard below which applicants will not be accepted on the course – that is, you will not be used merely to “make up numbers.” These schools will only take you if they think you can fulfil your ambition to be a professional performer.
- encourage you to have the freedom to choose which school you want to go to. They will be happy that you may receive offers from more than one school and will make clear to you the time period you have to make your final choice.



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