

Degree Outcomes Statement 2022

1. Institutional degree classification profile

Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance is a specialist and highly selective performing arts institution currently offering five degree programmes at FHEQ level 6:

- BMus (Hons) Performance/ Composition/Jazz/Performer-Composer;
- BA (Hons) Contemporary Dance;
- BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance;
- BSc (Hons) Dance Science; and
- BA (Hons) Music Performance and Industry (started in September 2021).

We have two faculties, the Faculty of Music and the Faculty of Dance. BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance is hosted by the Faculty of Music.

Our teaching model is based on high numbers of contact hours and one-to-one teaching whereby students get continuous feedback on their progress. All students on our BMus (Hons), BA Contemporary Dance and BA (Hons) Musical Theatre programmes go through a rigorous audition and application process before they are accepted onto the programmes.

		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Dance	First	29%	29%	46%	44%	60%
	Upper second	62%	57%	46%	45%	39%
	Lower second	9%	11%	8%	9%	1%
	Third/Pass	0%	2%	0%	1%	0%
Music	First	31%	35%	32%	42%	56%
	Upper second	56%	50%	46%	48%	32%
	Lower second	12%	11%	19%	9%	11%
	Third/Pass	1%	4%	3%	1%	2%
All	First	30%	32%	37%	43%	58%
	Upper second	58%	54%	46%	47%	35%
	Lower second	11%	11%	15%	9%	6%
	Third/Pass	1%	3%	2%	1%	1%

Trinity Laban has analysed classifications data at subject level, with a particular focus on ethnicity and disability, and the impact of the Covid pandemic. We admit students mainly on the basis of competitive audition, therefore entry tariff data was not considered.

In the process of reviewing our degree outcomes between 2018-19 and 2020-21, we have identified the following notable trends:

- In comparison to the baseline pre-pandemic year of 2018-19, the number of first-class degrees rose by 21 %points in 2020-2. However, the number of upper second class degrees reduced by 11 %points, meaning that the total number of “good degrees” rose by 10 %points. The rise in first-class degrees is explained by the implementation of our Emergency Assessment Regulations that were put in place in to lessen the impact of the Covid 19-pandemic on our students’ outcomes, especially in the academic year 2020-21. As our teaching model and subject disciplines are so heavily reliant on face-to-face teaching and

learning, and high levels of contact time, we were acutely aware of the impact remote learning had on our students. The Emergency Assessment Regulations we used in the pandemic are available in Appendix 2 of our [Academic Regulations](#).

- We expect the number of first-class degrees to return to the 2018-19 levels by 2022-23 as we have been implementing our standard Assessment Regulations and practices since the academic year 2021-22. While some Covid-related disruption was still present in 2021-22, we have returned to face-to-face teaching after the pandemic on our undergraduate programmes.
- We have reached and exceeded our target of reducing the attainment gap between students with no declared disability and students with a declared disability. The attainment gap was closed in the 2020-21 degree outcomes data, with students with a declared disability achieving slightly better outcomes than their peers with no declared disability.
- The proportion of first and upper second class degrees awarded to students from ethnic minority groups (other than white minorities) in comparison to their peers from white ethnic groups also increased in 2020-21, with the attainment gap having reduced to 5 %p as an aggregate score in the three years leading up to 2020-21.
- Our Learning and Teaching Board and Board of Governors continue to monitor our progress against the targets in our Access and Participation Plan annually.
- A higher proportion than usual of first class degrees in the Faculty of Dance in 2018-19. However, the graduating cohort size in that year was significantly smaller than in previous years (28% down on the preceding year) as a result of unusually high attrition. The number of first-class degrees decreased slightly in 2019-2020 even with the Emergency Assessment Regulations in place, indicating an anomaly in the usual classification profile of the Faculty in relation to the 2018-19 cohort.

2. Assessment and marking practices

The institution outlines expectations for assessment and marking practices in its [Academic Quality Handbook](#) and its [Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes](#). These governing documents are based on the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and the Quality Code for Higher Education. In 2018/19 a mapping process was undertaken to ensure that all processes and practices are aligned to the guiding principles set out in the Quality Code. A number of potential enhancements were identified and an action plan was established and is regularly monitored at institutional level.

Trinity Laban has established generic marking criteria that are aligned with sector reference points such as the FHEQ, qualifications characteristics statements and subject benchmark statements. All marking criteria used for taught programmes within the institution from level 0 to level 7 are mapped to these criteria.

In accordance with the Quality Code advice and guidance on External Expertise, Trinity Laban appoints External Examiners for each of its degree programmes to ensure that the academic standards evident within the institution are comparable with those observed across the sector. External professionals are also engaged to contribute to assessing performance projects and as specialist advisors to assessment panels in the Faculty of Music.

Trinity Laban was an early adopter of the Advance HE Professional Development Course for External Examiners.¹ We deliver the course at least once a year for our own teaching staff who act or who are interested in acting as external examiners at other institutions. Our involvement in this national initiative has prompted discussion within the institution about calibration of standards and resulted in a number of activities within marking teams to ensure that marking criteria are applied consistently.

3. Academic Governance

The Academic Governance structure plays a key role in providing assurance that the value of Trinity Laban's degrees is maintained over time. The institution's Academic Board assures itself that academic processes operate fairly and effectively by appointing assessment boards, which include

¹ A [case study](#) summarising our experience of the Degree Standards Project is available on the Advance HE website.

external examiners and quality assurance specialists in addition to senior academic staff. Academic Board and its sub-committees, including the Academic Standards and Quality Board, also have responsibility for approving and reviewing academic regulations, annual monitoring processes (including consideration of degree outcomes), programme validation and periodic review.

Academic Board compiles an annual report for the Board of Governors, which includes a summary of any issues and good practice identified in External Examiner reports and through the annual monitoring process. An independent governor also attends Academic Board meetings in order to provide additional assurance to the governing body.

4. Classification algorithms

Trinity Laban uses different degree algorithms for different types of award due to the differences in length and focus of our programmes.

Award	Year 1 (level 4)	Year 2 (level 5)	Year 3 (level 6)	Year 4 (level 6)
Bachelor of Music	0%	10%	30%	60%
Bachelor of Arts	0%	20%	80%	N/A
Bachelor of Science	0%	40%	60%	N/A

The weightings are published on our website within the [Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes](#) and within each programme specification. Assessment arrangements for each module are outlined in programme handbooks and on dedicated student-facing pages within our virtual learning environment. Aggregate marks are rounded to the nearest whole number for classification purposes.

Most of our programmes are heavily weighted towards level 6, as they are practice-based and involve the development of executant skills over a number of years. These skills are integrated with academic learning and research skills, culminating in major creative projects and/or performances in the final year. The BSc Dance Science programme is structured somewhat differently and does not aim to develop performance skills, therefore the degree is more evenly weighted across levels 5 and 6.

Degree algorithms have been reviewed in recent years through periodic programme review and as part of a review of academic regulations after Trinity Laban became a degree-awarding body in 2016. This has included the harmonisation of weightings for all programmes leading to the same award (such as BA (Hons) Contemporary Dance and BA (Hons) Musical Theatre Performance) and adjustments to the BMus algorithm in order to bring it in line with regulations in place at other similar institutions in the UK and the classification algorithms of other undergraduate qualifications within Trinity Laban.

One resit per assessment is normally permitted, with the possibility of a further resit or retake attempt (a maximum of three attempts). Registry staff are members of national networks of specialist assessment practitioners and quality assurance professionals, and we are confident that these arrangements are in line with sector norms.

5. Teaching practices and learning resources

Our teaching model is based on high staff to student ratios and students receive continual feedback on their progress. Assessment literacy amongst students and good assessment and feedback practice amongst teaching staff have been the focus of recent initiatives. Working groups have been set up within faculties to establish consistent practice and guidance has been issued to all staff and students on providing and using feedback effectively.

In addition to major enhancements to our physical spaces and resources over the past few years, the development of our online resources has been a significant area of focus. In spite of their practical nature, Trinity Laban's virtual learning environment is now central to the delivery of all programmes and many teachers are beginning to adopt a blended learning approach on postgraduate and professional development programmes. In recent years, we have successfully developed blended and distance learning programmes (including one in partnership with the Open University) and this has enabled us to build expertise in delivering learning online.

Trinity Laban's professional development programme for teachers and leaders was accredited by Advance HE in 2017 and leads to HEA Fellowship at one of three levels. We have also introduced our own fellowship awards and a scheme for the conferment of academic titles, which includes a learning and teaching route. These developments have helped to promote a culture of reflection and development amongst teaching staff.

6. Identifying good practice and actions

External examiners regularly praise the quality of feedback provided by our teachers and the diversity of approaches to learning and teaching used within our programmes. The breadth of professional expertise imparted to students by teaching staff active in their professions, and by visiting practitioners, enables them to reach high standards and to achieve excellent outcomes. As the contact hours on all our undergraduate programmes are so high and students receive most of their teaching and learning in one-to-one settings or small groups, they are robustly supported throughout all our undergraduate programmes to achieve their fullest potential. Our students are ambitious and aware that they need to work hard in order to succeed as professionals in the ever-competitive performing arts industry. The outcomes they achieve are a testament to that.

Through our annual monitoring processes we have identified institutional actions relating to assessment and feedback, namely ensuring that there is no overassessment on any of programmes and that feedback is consistently provided to students within the institutionally-stipulated timeframe. We have not identified unexplained grade inflation based on our analysis of the most recent degree outcomes data.

7. Risks and challenges

A key risk for us is a lack of exposure of young people to our artforms. We have our own junior programmes and undertake a broad range of outreach activities, however a reduction in the delivery of arts teaching in schools is a challenge in terms of attracting potential students from low-participation neighbourhoods and underrepresented groups. Targets for closing the attainment gap between students from ethnic minority groups and students from white backgrounds are outlined in our Access and Participation plan.

As a small specialist institution, the capacity and resource available to monitor, review and implement enhancements is limited. As such, even though our processes are relatively streamlined, developments are sometimes slower to emerge than anticipated. In this respect it is important for us to take a strategic approach to enabling student achievement and protecting the value of our degrees.