



COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Practical Lessons
in Dance, Drama and Music

Restarting the Sector



Contents

Introduction	03
The Sector	04
The Challenges	06
The Recommendations	08
The Benefits	10

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CDMT

Old Brewer's Yard
17-19 Neal Street

Covent Garden
London WC2H 9UY

0207 240 5703
info@cdmt.org.uk

Introduction

Awarding organisations offering graded examinations promote progression and achievement in dance, drama, music and musical theatre by supporting the work of private teachers, and delivering world class assessments.

These organisations represent the interests of a large number of practitioners both at home and overseas, along with 'UK plc' internationally, and together they have significant concerns about the support needed to restart the sector for business. The financial impacts on them, and their networks, due to the Covid-19 conditions are of a major order.

We ask that the authorities address more directly and urgently the needs, both professional and financial, of private teachers working across the performing arts, and that they grasp opportunities better to bridge the gap between private and statutory provision.



Annual combined turnover
of more than £175m

The Sector

Awarding organisations offering graded examinations operate in 100+ countries globally and have an approximate combined:

- **turnover of more than £175M** each year, of which £120M is directly related to examinations activity in the performing arts. The proportion of income generated in the UK compared to overseas is in the order of 55% to 45% respectively.
- **annual examination entries in the UK of 1.1M*** and **0.75M overseas**. Out of a total 1.85M, 925,000 entries are in music (50%), 725,000 in dance (39%), and 200,000 in drama (11%).
- **number of examination venues approaching 12,000 in the UK and 17,000 overseas**.
- **engagement with 80,000 teachers in the UK and 100,000 overseas**.
- **UK staff of over 1,000 along with 2,500 examiners**.

* The figures above include regulated and non-regulated provision. Ofqual-regulated graded examination certifications in 2019 stood at 0.5M in England. By comparison, in the same subject areas and year, there were 110,000 candidate entries at GCSE and 17,500 for A levels.



Preparation for graded examinations develops high standards of performance, perception, creativity, knowledge and understanding. They provide a scheme of clear incremental standards by which students, teachers, parents/guardians and employers can measure progress in acquiring genuine command of the skills required in each discipline, whether for educational, vocational or social purposes.

The range of specialisms awarded encompasses an extensive list of musical instruments and styles, dance genres, drama disciplines and musical theatre, catering for, and drawing in, a diverse group of learners.

The qualifications are included in Ofqual's Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), as below, and appear in the UCAS Tariff for the purposes of facilitating entry to Higher Education.

Qualifications	RQF
Grades 1 to 3 in music, dance, drama and musical theatre	Level 1
Grades 4 and 5 in music, dance, drama and musical theatre Vocational Grade - Intermediate Foundation in dance	Level 2
Grades 6 to 8 in music, dance, drama and musical theatre Vocational Grades - Intermediate and Advanced Foundation in dance	Level 3
Vocational Grades–Advanced 1 and 2 in dance	Level 4

Annual combined examination entries of 1.85m

The Challenges

Practical lessons in dance, drama, music and musical theatre, which are usually conducted face to face with individuals, pairs and groups, have been significantly disrupted, and in many cases curtailed, by Covid-19.

Private teachers are:

- **impacted by the inability to access their venues.** For instance, some hire premises are restricted from opening. Teachers who own studios are also unsure about how to safely unlock their doors to students. Some have moved to online delivery, though this approach presents appreciable challenges in performing arts education.
- **concerned about how to regain public confidence in the safety of their venues,** with factors such as social distancing, hygiene, cleaning and future class management weighing heavily on them.
- **experiencing financial difficulties.** A few are able to apply for government support, whilst others, due to the nature of their employment arrangements, are not eligible, and have had little or no income since March 2020.

Students, when ready, are assessed in face to face situations by examiners who are recruited, trained and standardised by awarding organisations. UK-based examiners travel overseas to conduct examinations. Covid-19 and the restrictions on international travel has stopped these activities, presenting serious risks to businesses.

Some awarding organisations have opted to:

- **introduce remote assessments,** either via pre-recorded videos or live online examinations where examiners conduct their work through standard conferencing software or bespoke technological platforms. However, for dance, where health and safety is a paramount concern, this approach is considered challenging by many, especially if no suitable venues are open to candidates.
- **suspend examinations,** either to dedicate more time to developing alternative assessment models, or to consider how to re-introduce face to face assessments once venues re-open.



*Engagement with 180,000
teachers globally*

The Recommendations

Specific, medically informed, direction is required from the authorities on the ways in which venues hosting dance, drama, music and musical theatre lessons can open again safely and successfully.

Private teachers need:

- **guidance on how to apply social distancing, cleanliness, hygiene and other health and safety considerations** in the developing context. For dance, where many studios are situated within leisure centres and indoor sports premises, there are concerns about when these will be permitted to re-open.

With many teachers operating as freelancers in support of other work, they often fall between different financial incentives offered by government. This is due to the nature of the sector's employment profile and contracts.

Private teachers would benefit from:

- **enhanced awareness and understanding, when making applications for support, of the ways in which they operate as freelancers** along with their atypical working patterns, involving periods of employment and unemployment.
- **a measure of tax relief** for their work as individuals or small businesses.



The wealth of professional expertise fostered within awarding organisations' networks of teachers should be utilised to nurture a more productive working relationship between them and mainstream schools and colleges, particularly in a context where resources may be limited.

Grant support to networks of private teachers would promote:

- **stronger links with the maintained sector** to ensure more efficient and effective delivery of education in dance, drama, musical theatre and music. This would help alleviate pressure on schools by outsourcing provision to specialist arts education practitioners, further increasing accessibility of the performing arts to learners of diverse backgrounds.
- **best practice across teacher networks**, through promoting access to coherent programmes of continuing professional development delivered by awarding organisations within existing operational structures, and encouraging achievement of their Ofqual-regulated teaching qualifications.

Over 1,000 UK staff together
with 2,500 examiners

The Benefits

Appreciation of, and engagement in, the performing arts together make an essential contribution to supporting the happiness and wellbeing of individuals and society more widely. This is especially important in the current context.

The benefits of investing directly in networks of private teachers through awarding organisations include:

- **immediate potential to reach large numbers of practitioners and students** across the performing arts in both private and public settings, complementing mainstream provision.
- **existing support to practitioners** through online resources, printed materials, workshops, conferences and specialist teaching qualifications. Further, more than 25,000 dance teachers operate within formal membership structures run by these institutions.
- **world-class syllabi** used in delivering lessons to students, and evidencing candidate outcomes in examinations. Graded exams are exported as a global brand, generating significant revenue for the UK economy. As a model of assessment, they have remained stable and successful for decades.

- **the formal aspect of public accountability to regulatory bodies** such as Ofqual. Awarding organisations are subject to scrutiny through audit activities, recognition processes, data provision and formal submissions of annual Statements of Compliance to the authorities.
- **involvement of the CDMT**, which provides industry quality assurance, quarterly membership meetings to discuss common practices, annual review of standards, and preparation of joint publications such as *Graded Exams: The Definitive Guide*, the sector report *Graded Exams in Music, Dance & Drama and the Educational Regulatory Landscape in the UK and Internationally*, and the annual *UK Guide to Professional Training, Education and Assessment in the Performing Arts*.

CDMT validates many of the world's leading awarding organisations offering graded, vocational and diploma examinations in the performing arts, including :



Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM)
British Association of Teachers of Dancing (BATD)
bbodance
British Theatre Dance Association (BTDA)
Graded Qualifications Alliance (GQAL)
Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD)
International Dance Teachers' Association (IDTA)
National Association of Teachers of Dancing (NATD)
New Era Academy (NEA)

Professional Teachers of Dancing (PTD)
RSL Awards
Royal Academy of Dance (RAD)
Russian Ballet Society (RBS)
Scottish Dance Teachers Alliance (SDTA)
Trinity College London (TCL)
United Kingdom Alliance (UKA)
United Teachers of Dance (UTD)

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Photo credit: TIAN WILLIAMS