



**Access Agreement
(Revised version
September 2008 – July 2011)**

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Introduction

- 1 The Conservatoire for Dance and Drama exists to train artists who will match the world's best and, on entering their professions, shape the future of dance, drama and circus arts. Established in 2001, the Conservatoire is an higher education institution with a unique structure, comprising eight schools. All of these are small, specialist institutions with international reputations for high quality delivery in their respective fields:
 - Bristol Old Vic Theatre School (BOVTS) – joined 2003
 - Central School of Ballet (CSB) – joined 2003
 - The Circus Space (TCS) – joined 2004
 - The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) – joined 2004
 - London Contemporary Dance School (LCDS) – founding affiliate, 2001
 - Northern School of Contemporary Dance (NSCD) – joined 2003
 - Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance (RSBCD) – joined 2005
 - Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) – founding affiliate, 2001
- 2 Each of the Conservatoire schools is a separate and distinct institution that employs its own teaching staff and remains legally independent. Students are registered jointly with the Conservatoire and the individual school.
- 3 Conservatoire schools are small, specialist, vocational training institutions with international reputations for high quality delivery in their respective fields. Each affiliate has an established record of training its students to a professional standard with an excellent success rate in the number of its students gaining employment in the dance, drama or circus.
- 4 This Access Agreement sets out the Conservatoire's plans for charging additional fees from September 2008. It is a revised scheme from that published in 2005. The additional fee income generated is spent on learning and teaching which helps the Conservatoire maintain its standard of teaching and the quality of its resources which compete with other arts conservatoires around the world. The Conservatoire is committed to ensuring that talented students can benefit from high-level vocational training irrespective of their background or financial circumstances. The Conservatoire also allocates a proportion of its income to providing bursaries to students from lower-income backgrounds and for the provision of a scholarship and supplementary bursary scheme for those students not eligible for statutory support. In the first year of the scheme, approximately two fifths of the students eligible for bursary support received the Conservatoire's maximum bursary.
- 5 The revised agreement assumes that students already on Conservatoire courses and in receipt of bursaries will continue to receive the same bursaries as they would have done under the original access agreement.

Fee limits

- 6 From 2006/07, the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama has charged a home/EU student fee of £3,000 for all its full-time undergraduate courses (for new students). This has increased and will continue to increase in line with the inflationary rate provided for in the Higher Education Act 2004 and set by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and regulated by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA).
- 7 The example below shows an estimated cost to students starting in 2008/09. All the examples below assume inflation at a rate of 2.5% and account for any change in this Access Agreement in the period described.

Course	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Total
Three year BA/BA (Hons)/BPA programme	£3,145	£3,225	£3,305	£9,675
Two year Dip HE programme	£3,145	£3,225	-	£6,370

- 8 Students who started their courses before September 2006 are not charged the new variable tuition fee of £3,000. This includes students who opt to study for a third year to complete a BA (Hons) degree at Central School of Ballet, The Circus Space or Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance, provided they started their Foundation Degree before September 2006.

Amounts to be spent on access measures

- 9 By charging £3,145, the Conservatoire estimates that it will raise £1,797,000 of additional income in 2008/09. On current estimates, the Conservatoire will allocate at least £441,000 of the funds it raises to access measures. This represents 25% of the income raised. Around 20% of the additional income raised will be spent on the provision of bursaries to students from low-income backgrounds. The remaining funds will be allocated to supporting students not eligible for the Conservatoire's statutory bursary scheme.
- 10 The Conservatoire has decided to concentrate all the income allocated to access measures on providing bursaries for students from low-income backgrounds to contribute towards their living costs. As noted below (paragraphs 22-24), affiliate schools already engage in a variety of widening participation activities. We believe that offering bursaries is the best way of ensuring that students from lower-income backgrounds are not deterred from entering higher education programmes at its affiliate schools.

- 11 In summary the Conservatoire proposes to spend funds raised in the following way:

the Conservatoire bursaries: <i>for UK resident students only</i>	20%
Supplementary bursaries and reserve: <i>for eligible students (this may include UK students already holding degrees or EU students)</i>	5%
Additional income for learning and teaching <i>benefiting all students</i>	75%

Bursaries

- 12 The Conservatoire offers cash bursaries available to UK resident undergraduate students attending any affiliate school who meet the requirements for the scheme. These are called 'Conservatoire bursaries' and apply only to UK resident students new to higher education (ie those who have not previously completed a course of study at another institution). This is a new scheme offered in addition to any bursaries or other support currently offered by affiliate schools.
- 13 **Conservatoire bursaries**
In summary, the Conservatoire proposes to offer bursaries of £1,650 per year (to rise with inflation) to students from the lowest-income backgrounds. For students on two and three year programmes, an additional bursary up to a maximum of £400 will be paid in their final year of study. The minimum bursary any eligible student will receive will be £100. This means that for final year students the minimum anyone eligible for a bursary will receive is £500.
- 14 **Assessment**
Students' eligibility for bursaries will be assessed through the Higher Education Bursary Scheme for Students (HEBSS) mechanism, as in the current year. The Conservatoire provides HEBSS with the criteria and students are then assessed on the basis of their applications for maintenance support.
- 15 From 2008, the Conservatoire bursaries will adjust its bursary provision in so that the lower threshold will increase from £17,000 to £25,000 (ie the qualifying levels identified by DIUS in its

revision to grants announced in summer 2007). The upper limit for receipt of bursaries remains the same as in the 2006/07 Access Agreement, plus inflation (ie around £39,305).

Qualifying income	Standard Bursary	Final Year Bursary
£25,000 or less	£1,650	£1,650 + £400
£39,305 (upper limit)	£100	£100 + £400

Between the minimum and maximum bursaries, the Conservatoire will continue to offer students bursaries according to income in bands likely to be set at around £200 intervals. Detailed information about the income bands will be published in the Conservatoire's fee information leaflet (see paragraph 20 below).

16 Supplementary bursaries

The 6% of funding allocated to supplementary bursaries will be kept specifically to support students not eligible for the general the Conservatoire bursary scheme (for example EU students) or to assist the Conservatoire in targeting particularly talented students it wishes to support through training. The level of these bursaries and assessment criteria will be determined and information published during the 2007/08 academic year.

17 Example of the cost from 2008-09

The example below is for a UK student studying at an HE level for the first time, from a family with a household income of less than £25,000 and starting his or her course in September 2008. Such a student would be eligible for a full Conservatoire bursary. This example assumes that fee costs and maintenance support will increase by inflation of 2.5% each year. The maintenance support are based on 2007/08 figures with 2.5% inflation added on.

Student on a three year BA/BA (Hons)/BPA programme	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Total
Fees (to be repaid through loan payments, not up front)	£3,145	£3,225	£3,305	£9,675

The maintenance support available is as follows:

Higher Education Maintenance Grant	£2,830	£2,900	£2,975	£8,705
Conservatoire bursary	£1,650	£1,690	£1,730	£5,070
Conservatoire final year bursary	-	-	£ 400	£ 400
Total cash maintenance support receivable	£4,480	£4,590	£5,105	£14,175

In addition, students may borrow up to £5,085 through the Student Loan Company to support their living expenses. This loan will be repayable once the student has completed his or her programme. For the student example above, this would mean the following:

Bursaries and grants	£4,480	£4,590	£5,105	£13,626
Student loan (for a student living in London eligible for maximum loan)	£5,085	£5,210	£5,340	£15,635
Total maintenance support available	£9,565	£9,800	£10,445	£29,810

18 Repayment

Based on the current guidance issued by DIUS, students will start to repay their loans from the April after they complete their course. Students will have to earn at least £15,000 before they must make repayments. If there is any balance on the loan remaining after 25 years (from the

April that repayments become due), this will be written off. The government expects the average repayment period to be around 13 years.

Information for prospective students

- 19 The Conservatoire is keen to ensure that prospective students fully understand its proposed fees and the maintenance bursaries it can offer to support students. As the majority of its affiliate schools were, until recently, privately-funded institutions, they have acquired considerable experience in advising and supporting prospective students. With the introduction of variable fees across the HE sector, the Conservatoire will endeavour to ensure that all prospective students understand clearly the proposed fee rates, what the aggregate cost of their course will be, what bursary support is available and what they must do to secure such support.
- 20 Each year the Conservatoire has produced an information leaflet *Fees and bursaries at the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama*. This is sent to prospective students with the affiliate schools' individual prospectuses. Students or parents are welcome to speak to Conservatoire staff for advice and guidance. Further information, including updated details about changes to the income band levels, is regularly published on the Conservatoire's website. Financial support is clearly signposted on the website (www.cdd.ac.uk/student-info/financial-support/). We will continue to produce the leaflet and publish guidance. The information provided includes:
- clear information about the fees charged to UK and EU students;
 - examples of the aggregated cost of fees for students on one, two and three year programmes of study;
 - a description of the Conservatoire bursary scheme, with levels of support according to family income and instructions for assessment through the HEBSS scheme;
 - information about the Conservatoire supplementary bursary scheme;
 - information about the Higher Education Maintenance Grant with contacts for government student support websites;
 - brief contacts and addresses for further information about other student support.
- 21 **Review of information**
The Conservatoire will review the information provided as part of its monitoring arrangements.

Outreach work

- 22 The Conservatoire recruits students on the basis of talent and potential to benefit from vocational training in dance, drama and circus arts. Affiliates seek students who they believe will, once trained, be able to have successful careers as artists or technicians. Outreach work, aimed at locating, nurturing and supporting talented people, is central to what the Conservatoire schools do.
- 23 The Conservatoire schools engage in a range of outreach activities which range from participating in career days to running government-funded training programmes aimed at offering subsidised pre-vocational training to young people. All outreach activities fit within the following headings:
- short courses/summer schools;
 - student performance tours to primary and secondary schools;
 - subsidised classes for children and young people;
 - specific projects with primary and secondary schools;
 - promotional activity (for example careers fairs);
 - workshops and masterclasses;
 - youth performance groups or companies;
 - reduced interview and application fees;
 - other funded projects (for example Music and Dance Scheme projects);

- work with the validating university.
- 24 As affiliates already engage in some 25 different outreach programmes and activities, the Conservatoire has decided to concentrate 30% of the funds raised from additional fees to bursaries to support students. It is not proposing to fund any additional outreach activity at this time. The Conservatoire will, however, ensure that affiliates maintain the existing level of investment in outreach and access activities. The Conservatoire will also monitor affiliates' work in this area and may choose to allocate funding to specific initiatives if it is felt that these will significantly improve participation rates from groups currently under represented within the institution.

Milestones

- 25 The Conservatoire is not proposing to amend its milestones substantively in this agreement. We have evidence of only one year's intake of students and further change to the Conservatoire's student population is possible from 2008-09 as a result of government consultation about withdrawing any supported places for students who already hold a degree from another institution to complete a course at the same level.
- 26 In the original drafting of its Access Agreement, the Conservatoire looked at two sets of indicators. First was information obtained from analysis of Student Loans Company (SLC) data about fee remission to indicate the income of students or their families. Second was information collected and published by HESA on performance indicators in higher education (data for the 2003/04 academic year). As noted below in paragraph 30, the information available to the Conservatoire will need reviewing. For that reason, the milestones set are interim and are currently under review as part of our general review of the first year of the scheme.

27 Fee remission information

The Student Loans Company (SLC) supplied the Conservatoire with data on the numbers of students receiving fee remission. This indicated that approximately 39% of the Conservatoire students receive full or partial fee remission. However, this figure does not properly represent the Conservatoire because a substantial number of students at some schools are not eligible for fee remission because they already hold a degree and have therefore not been assessed. With adjustment to take account of these students, approximately 47% of the Conservatoire students new to higher education come from households with an income of less than £31,981.

- 28 The SLC and the DfES have supplied averages of student fee remission for England and Wales. According to their figures, approximately 46% of students receive some fee remission. The Conservatoire is, therefore, slightly above average in the number of students in receipt of fee remission. We have used this to establish the first milestone. The outcome in 2006-07 was 45.1%. We are not adjusting this milestone at this point.

Milestone: to maintain participation of students from income backgrounds of less than

£37,425 (or the new upper limit for maintenance support to increase with inflation) at 47% and not to drop more than 1% below that target during the five years of the agreement.

29 Performance indicators in Higher Education in the UK

A number of the performance indicators provide information about under-represented groups in higher education. The report on the Conservatoire's performance for 2002/03 does not provide benchmarks for all the available categories. It does, however, provide information on the following benchmarks:

- the number of young full-time first degree and other undergraduate entrants (the Conservatoire exceeds the benchmark);
- the number of young full-time first degree and undergraduate entrants from low-participation neighbourhoods (the Conservatoire is not yet meeting the benchmark);

- the number of mature full-time undergraduate entrants from low-participation neighbourhoods (the Conservatoire is not yet meeting the benchmark);
- the number of students in receipt of Disabled Student's Allowance as an indicator of the number of disabled students within the institution (the Conservatoire almost meets its benchmark).

Milestone: to meet all four relevant benchmarks by December 2008.

- 30 The Conservatoire now has a complete dataset from HESA for its full complement of affiliate schools. We need now to review this information and that produced as part of our own monitoring of the 2006-07 bursaries to identify more accurately information about student access and financial backgrounds.

Milestone: to obtain an accurate dataset by December 2007 and monitoring of this by March 2008.

Institutional monitoring arrangements

- 31 The Conservatoire's monitoring plans are to:
- collect detailed information about who applies for and receives either a the Conservatoire or supplementary bursary on an annual basis;
 - analyse the data collected to review how bursaries are allocated by programme (annually);
 - analyse information about students' background including family or household income, ethnicity, gender and disability (annually);
 - review the provision of information to prospective students;
 - report annually to the Principals' Management Group about the outcome of such analysis;
 - annually review the operation of the bursary scheme and the allocation of funds to the scheme;
 - annually review progress against the milestones;
 - report to OFFA, as required, through the HEFCE Annual Monitoring Statement;
 - review the provision of information to students following the first year of the scheme;
 - review plans for funding outreach work after the first two years of the scheme.