

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland submission of 6 November 2023

PE1982/E: Review funding arrangements for higher education to help ensure more funded places are available for Scottish ballet dancers at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Thank you for your letter of 25 September 2023 and the opportunity to respond to the Committee.

The Committee has requested unrounded annual figures for each of the last 10 years showing how many Scottish-domiciled ballet students:

- applied to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland;
- were offered places; and
- took up the places offered

You will find this information in the annexe below.

In addition, I thought it would also be helpful to respond on a point-by-point basis to the further points raised by the Committee in its letter.

- 1. The Committee reflected it was unclear as to the rationale for applying the HESA rounding methodology, expressing the view that using exact numbers 'didn't appear to carry any risk of allowing individuals to be identified'.*

As a Small Specialist Institution (SSI) the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland adheres to the HESA/JISC guidance regarding data rounding methodology. This guidance focuses on the 'Rounding Method' which applies the following processes to data or statistics relating to individuals:

- 0, 1, 2 are rounded to 0.
- All other numbers are rounded to the nearest multiple of 5.

- Halves are always rounded upwards (e.g. 2.5 is rounded to 5).
- Percentages based on fewer than 22.5 Individuals are suppressed.
- Averages based on 7 or fewer individuals are suppressed.
- The above requirements relate to headcounts, FPE and FTE data.
- Financial data is not required to be rounded

We use the HESA Rounding Method because as an SSI with small overall numbers and, within that, small cohorts of students, there are concerns regarding their identification and aligned concerns of privacy and GDPR.

We believe these concerns hold with specific regard to this data, due to the interconnectivity of the ballet community in Scotland at this level.

2. The Committee felt that the application of this methodology to the table in the Conservatoire's previous submission 'made it difficult to understand how many places have been awarded to Scottish-domiciled students, compared with students from the rest of the UK (rUK) and international students'.

On behalf of RCS, sincere apologies to the Committee for any difficulty they have had in understanding the data on awarding places on the BA Modern Ballet programme. For avoidance of doubt, Scots **do not** compete for places with either rUK or international students. Scots are viewed as an entirely separate category and audition only in a pool consisting of other Scottish applicants.

3. The Committee said it was 'unclear from the table whether the rounded figures apply to places on the BA Modern Ballet programme, or to dance more generally.'

To confirm to the Committee, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland offers only **one** dance degree programme, the BA in Modern

Ballet. There are no other dance degree programmes at RCS, so any and all figures presented apply **only** to the BA in Modern Ballet.

Further points:

We thought it helpful to offer the Committee the following additional points of information:

- The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland is pleased to note the increasing quality of Scottish applicants. We believe part of the reason for this is the development work undertaken by the conservatoire in partnership with Scottish Ballet. Over recent years, the focus on the development of the RCS Junior Conservatoire of Modern Ballet now allows us to offer weekly pre-vocational training in ballet for children from Primary 4 upwards in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Ayrshire. This complements the training delivered through Scottish Ballet's Associate programme. Alongside this, short intensive courses are now offered during the spring and summer holidays, to allow children to access specialist training to build the skills required for full-time training. There is good progress in the standards being achieved and recognition that this is a long-term investment in the training of young people who are aiming for a career as a professional dancer. These development pathways do not receive public funding and therefore rely on participants being able to self-fund. RCS has extremely limited bursary support available for individual students and is grateful to the Prince's Foundation which supports the delivery of an access programme in Ayrshire.
- As a result of the increasing quality of Scottish applicants, RCS has been able to make more offers to Scottish applicants
- Scottish applicants who have been declined at audition stage are declined because they have not yet reached the required standard. Declined Scottish applicants are encouraged to re-audition and some have been successful at second application. Tailored, individual support is offered to these students.

- The success of Scottish students who have graduated from the programme is wide-ranging, with graduates securing contracts with companies in the UK, Europe and beyond (including Scottish Ballet).

I hope this information is helpful to the Committee.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further information.

Annexe A

BA Modern Ballet Applications

Entry Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Applications										
Total	94	155	134	144	167	148	165	172	170	186
Scot	22	22	33	25	27	21	24	21	30	34
EU	19	31	23	22	34	28	36			
EUpB								18	4	4
RUK	36	85	64	66	72	67	78	92	93	103
IRpB								8	8	8
OS	15	17	12	30	32	30	27	32	32	34
Offers										
Total	18	23	32	31	41	41	52	50	41	41
Scot	5	2	9	9	7	6	8	9	4	9
EU	1	4	1	3	6	4	5			
EUpB										
RUK	8	10	13	8	18	17	27	29	22	21
IRpB								2		
OS	3	7	9	11	10	14	12	10	15	11
Acceptances										
Total	8	13	16	24	20	24	26	24	21	28
Scot	5	2	7	7	3	4	5	7	3	6
EU		3	1	3	4	3	3			
EUpB										
RUK	3	5	3	7	7	7	10	11	7	13
IRpB								2		
OS		3	5	7	6	10	8	4	11	9