

Introduction to The National Professional Performing Arts Qualifications

Overview

Trinity College London's National Professional Performing Arts Qualifications have been developed, with the British government's support, to ensure that students can demonstrate the vocational competency required for employment in the professional world of theatre and the entertainment business. Any Course Provider wishing to deliver a course leading to these National Professional Diplomas and Certificates must obtain validation from Trinity College London. These qualifications are unique in providing eligibility for the English Dance and Drama Awards funding.

The following qualifications are accredited at Level 6 on the National Qualifications Framework:

- National Diploma in Professional Acting
- National Diploma in Professional Dance
- National Diploma in Professional Musical Theatre
- National Diploma in Professional Production Skills.

The following qualifications are accredited at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework:

- National Certificate in Professional Acting
- National Certificate in Professional Dance (Classical Ballet or Contemporary Dance).

The Trinity College London website at www.trinitycollege.co.uk contains reference to the formal name and reference number of qualifications approved within the National Qualifications Framework*.

The primary aim of each qualification

Objectives

The National Professional Diplomas and Certificates require the candidate to attain a high level of imaginative, expressive and technical skills, combined with strong analytical and critical skills, which must be applied creatively. Candidates are required to appreciate relationships across a broad range of complex contexts, and apply their skills, knowledge and understanding in order to achieve maximum effect in performance. They are also required to demonstrate their ability to respond flexibly across a range of conditions and styles, translating original intentions into persuasive performance.

The National Diploma in Professional Acting

This qualification is typically studied over three years. The emphasis of the course is on the artistic, creative, technical and professional skills that an actor needs in order to prepare fully for a varied, sustainable and high level performing career. Course work includes acting in both live and recorded media, voice, movement, integrated studies and professional development. Candidates must be accepted onto a course that has been validated to provide the Diploma by Trinity College London. Each validated course has its own unique identity and provides the Diploma within its own curriculum.

The National Diploma in Professional Dance

This qualification is typically studied over three years. The emphasis of the course is on the artistic, creative, technical and professional skills that a dancer needs in order to prepare fully for a varied, sustainable and high level performing career. Course work includes a minimum of three dance disciplines and/or choreography plus supporting studies. Candidates must be accepted onto a course that has been validated to provide the Diploma by Trinity College London. Each validated course has its own unique identity and provides the Diploma within its own curriculum.

* The NQF is being superseded by the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) during 2010. Trinity College London qualifications will be included within this Framework.

The National Diploma in Professional Musical Theatre

This qualification is typically studied over three years. The emphasis of the course is on the artistic, creative, technical and professional skills that a performing artist needs in order to prepare fully for a varied, sustainable and high level performing career in musical theatre. Course work includes singing, acting, dance and supporting professional studies. Candidates must be accepted onto a course that has been validated to provide the Diploma by Trinity College London. Each validated course has its own unique identity and provides the Diploma within its own curriculum.

The National Certificate in Professional Acting

This qualification is typically studied over one year. The emphasis of the course is on the artistic, creative, technical and professional skills that an actor needs in order to prepare fully for a varied and sustainable performing career. Course work will include acting in both live and recorded media, voice, movement, integrated studies and professional development. Candidates must be accepted onto a course that has been validated to provide the Certificate by Trinity College London. Each validated course has its own unique identity and provides the Certificate within its own curriculum.

The National Certificate in Professional Dance (Classical Ballet or Contemporary Dance)

This qualification is typically studied over two years. The emphasis of the course is on the artistic, creative, technical and professional skills that a ballet or contemporary dancer needs to prepare fully for a varied and sustainable performing career in professional dance. Course work will aim for a highly skilled level in either classical ballet or contemporary dance and at least one other dance discipline, with choreography and other supporting professional studies. Candidates must be accepted onto a course that has been validated to provide the Certificate by Trinity College London. Each validated course has its own unique identity and provides the Certificate within its own curriculum.

The National Diploma in Professional Production Skills

This qualification is typically studied over two years. The emphasis of the course on the creative, technical and professional skills that are needed in order to prepare fully for a varied, sustainable and high level production career in performing arts. Course work includes stage management, prop making, sound, electronics, scenic construction, stagecraft and professional practice. Candidates must be accepted onto a course that has been validated to provide the Diploma by Trinity College London. Each validated course has its own unique identity and provides the Diploma within its own curriculum.

Qualification structure

Each National Professional Diploma contains four compulsory units comprising a number of components. Candidates must achieve a pass in every unit to obtain the qualification.

Each National Professional Certificate contains three compulsory units comprising a number of components. Candidates must achieve a pass in every unit to obtain the qualification.

The components of both Diplomas and Certificates cover the skills and knowledge required to facilitate entry to, and sustain employment in, the performing arts and entertainment industry. Additionally, each unit is described in terms of learning outcomes and a number of assessment objectives supported by attainment descriptors. Learning outcomes are indicative of required standards to pass the unit, while assessment objectives describe the breadth and depth of study necessary to achieve the outcomes.

The Diplomas are accredited by the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual) at Level 6 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The Certificates are also Ofqual-accredited and are recognised at Level 5 on the NQF.

Funding and progression routes

These National Professional Diplomas and Certificates are the only qualifications attached to the English Dance and Drama Awards Scheme, administered and managed through the Learning and Skills Council. Students may be able to access financial help towards the cost of their training through this scheme. More information can be found at www.direct.gov.uk/danceanddrama.

These qualifications are designed primarily for students wishing to progress directly into professional performing careers or into professional performance production. The National Professional Diplomas provide an APEL (Approved Prior Experience and Learning) route into some MA programmes, and also give access to the BA (Hons) Professional Practice (BAPP) a 120-credit course designed by Middlesex University. The National Professional Certificates provide an APEL route onto the BAPP. The BAPP gives participants the opportunity to study for a BA (Hons) while continuing with their professional performing activities.

Information for Course Providers

Course Providers

Course Providers are validated to provide these qualifications in their entirety to candidates registered with Trinity College London. These Course Providers undergo a validation process to ensure qualifications are delivered at the appropriate standard and Trinity maintains ongoing scrutiny of Course Providers to ensure students are achieving at appropriate levels. For more information on becoming a Validated Course Provider please contact dada@trinitycollege.co.uk

Validation, course delivery and the Course Provider's Handbook

Any Course Provider wishing to deliver a course leading to the award of any National Professional Diploma or Certificate must obtain validation from Trinity College London. Trinity College London will provide every Validated Course Provider with a Course Provider's Handbook, which contains information and guidance on the content and delivery of validated courses. Course Providers will need to follow the guidelines laid down in the handbook carefully in order to ensure courses are administered and delivered correctly.

Entry requirements and APEL (Accredited Prior Experience and Learning)

Candidates applying to study for a National Professional Diploma or Certificate must be able to demonstrate talent and potential for future employment in the performing arts, and the curiosity, intelligence and stamina required to benefit from intensive training.

Although there are no formal qualification requirements for entry, typically, in the UK for example, this qualification could provide a progression route for students who have undertaken GCSE, A Level, BTEC or graded examinations in Drama, Dance, Music or the Performing Arts. Potential will be assessed by audition and interview by the chosen Course Provider. In the UK these must be conducted in line with the guidance document describing auditioning and interviewing practice for Dance and Drama courses produced by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), the Council for Dance Education and Training (CDET) and the National Council for Drama Training (NCDT).

Assessment and moderation

Internal assessment

Internal school assessment procedures are scrutinised during the validation process in order to ensure that such procedures are fair, rigorous and clear. Course Providers are only required to assess students at a Pass/Fail level. However, Trinity College London considers it good practice for the students to be given a clear indication of the level of their attainment by the Course Provider. Students must be assessed formally at least once annually, and must pass their assessments in all core subjects and integrated professional studies in order to proceed onto the next year of

the course. Usually students will be assessed and obtain feedback on their progress at several points during each year. Where students fail an area, an opportunity to re-take the subject should be offered. Detailed guidance on assessment procedures and weighting are given in the Course Provider's Handbook. Attainment descriptors for each component are detailed for each Diploma/Certificate and may be a useful guide to Course Providers when assessing student skills.

Trinity College London assessment and moderation

Trinity College London moderates the Course Provider's internal assessment of first, second and third year students and externally assesses students in their final year performances. Trinity will send Assessors to a range of events, performances and internal assessments. It is the responsibility of the Course Provider to inform Trinity when assessment and performances take place. Without this information Trinity cannot fulfil its moderation or assessment responsibilities. Further information on the arrangement of visits can be found in the Course Provider's Handbook.

Awarding of the qualification

The final approval of the awarding of the National Professional Performing Arts Qualifications rests with the Trinity College London Diploma Board. The Diploma Board consists of Senior Trinity College London Assessors and the Head of Acting & Dance Qualifications, and meets as and when necessary to advise and adjudicate on all matters relating to the qualifications' course content and delivery. The aims and responsibilities of the Board are to review the relevance, validity, reliability and working conduct of any and all assessments.

Trinity College London Assessors

Trinity Assessors are professional performers who often also have extensive experience in performing arts teaching and/or performing arts administration. The Trinity Assessors' major role is moderation of the Course Provider's own assessment procedures to ensure the school is applying fair, rigorous and transparent procedures. Assessors may moderate either class or performance assessment occasions, and may also be called upon to independently assess third year students in final performance. All Assessors attend an annual conference which involves additional training and standardisation exercises.

A proportion of Trinity College London Assessors are Senior Assessors who have roles additional to those of the general Assessors. These include moderation of Assessors, validation and pre-validation of new Course Providers, re-validation of current Course Providers, and involvement in the creation of new materials and handbooks. Senior Assessors also form the Diploma Board, which meets as and when necessary to moderate and adjudicate all matters relating to course delivery.

The scheme is overseen by the Head of Acting & Dance Qualifications at Trinity College London (dada@trinitycollege.co.uk)

Guided learning hours

As each Course Provider delivers the qualification in its own unique way, it is not possible to require specific guided learning hours (GLH). However, these qualifications are by nature very intensive in taught hours. The following guided learning hours are an approximate minimum requirement. Course Providers may have different intensity of guided time depending on where the student is in the course. Generally the GLH are between 1,000 and 1,500 per year. Guided learning hours do not include self-directed projects or rehearsals. Units 1 and 2 of the qualification are much more intensive in contact time than Units 3 and 4. Assuming that each year provides 1,000 GLH, a course average will be as follows:

National Diploma in Professional Dance, Musical Theatre and Acting (three years, approximate minimum of 3,000 GLH)

- Unit 1 – approx. 1,050 GLH
- Unit 2 – approx. 1,050 GLH
- Unit 3 – approx. 600 GLH
- Unit 4 – approx. 300 GLH

National Diploma in Professional Production Skills (two years, approximate minimum of 2,300 GLH)

- Unit 1 – approx. 800 GLH
- Unit 2 – approx. 800 GLH
- Unit 3 – approx. 400 GLH
- Unit 4 – approx. 300 GLH

National Certificate in Professional Dance (two years, approximate minimum of 2,000 GLH)

- Unit 1 – approx. 800 GLH
- Unit 2 – approx. 800 GLH
- Unit 3 – approx. 400 GLH

National Certificate in Professional Acting (one year, approximate minimum of 1,000 GLH)

- Unit 1 – approx. 400 GLH
- Unit 2 – approx. 400 GLH
- Unit 3 – approx. 200 GLH

Please note: The guided learning hours of each Course Provider will be agreed with Trinity College London at the time of validation. It is also important for Course Providers to note that some components or parts of components are delivered through the provision of other units. For example, some elements of the Health and Safety component will be delivered through Units 1 and 2 of the qualification.

Special needs

Trinity College London welcomes candidates with special needs. Successful auditionees with special needs should communicate fully their requirements to the Course Provider in order that their needs may be met and special arrangements made as and where possible. Special needs students should also make their doctor aware of the nature of the course they are undertaking and be prepared to present a clearance note from their doctor approving their participation, particularly in physically demanding classes.

Special needs and Course Provider responsibility

Each Course Provider is validated separately and within this procedure the Provider needs to show that they are making reasonable adjustments to adapt their course and assessments to provide for students with special needs. Course Providers should inform Trinity College London regarding the special needs of individual students so that Assessors are appropriately informed prior to visits.

Reasonable adjustments and special consideration

By regularly reviewing the way in which we provide our services, Trinity College London aims to identify the barriers or impediments to access.

Malpractice

When schools are validated to provide the Trinity College London National Professional Qualifications in Acting, Dance, Musical Theatre, and Production Skills, they make a commitment to abide by the guidelines set out in the Course Provider's Handbook and this document. Where a Course Provider does not keep to these guidelines, Trinity will advise them on any changes they need to make and a deadline by which to make them. If the deadlines given are not met, Trinity will consider this as malpractice. Malpractice may result in the withdrawal of validation.

Fees

Qualification fees are printed on a separate fee sheet. Details are available from Trinity College London's Head Office (dada@trinitycollege.co.uk).

Academic dress

For graduation ceremonies candidates who have successfully completed one of the National Professional Performing Arts Qualifications are entitled to wear the following:

National Diploma in Professional Dance/Acting/Musical Theatre/Production Skills – black gown, black mortar board, purple hood part-lined with five inch mauve with one inch purple laid in centre of ribbon.

National Certificate in Professional Dance/Acting – black gown, black mortar board.

These can be hired from Ede & Ravenscroft and, for more details, you can consult their website at www.edeandravenscroft.com, email student@edeandravenscroft.com or call them on 01223 861 854.

Post-nominal letters

Diploma and Certificate holders can now use the following letters after their names:

Dip TCL (Professional Dance)
Dip TCL (Professional Acting)
Dip TCL (Professional Musical Theatre)
Dip TCL (Professional Production Skills)
Cert TCL (Professional Dance)
Cert TCL (Professional Acting).

Use of Trinity College London logo

Personalised logos are now available for each Validated Course Provider. Each Course Provider should be using the specific Trinity College London logo for their institution on their printed information and website, rather than Trinity's general logo. All use of the logo needs to be approved by Trinity College London. To request your personalised logo and to have your logo use approved, please contact dada@trinitycollege.co.uk

Guidance for delivery of qualifications

The following is guidance for provision of some aspects of the Diplomas and Certificates. These guidelines are not compulsory but offer some suggestions to Course Providers in the delivery of the qualifications. Each Course Provider delivers the qualifications in their own unique way. Full guidance for Course Providers on the administration and delivery of these qualifications is given in the Course Provider's Handbook which is available to all Validated Course Providers.

Integrated Professional Studies

Integrated Professional Studies (IPS) develops the thinking, imaginative, self-reliant performer and incorporates key and transferable skills. IPS can be evidenced by three separate files which are supportive of the practical work of the Diploma.

The personal file – kept across the three years of study

The information file – kept across the three years of study

The performance project file – a record of a third year project

Detailed guidance on the content of these files and suitable pro formas for use in them are given in the Course Provider's Handbook. Schools are able to adapt and change the formats to suit their own provision. Course Providers should provide relevant internal assessment records for IPS for all candidates. Trinity Assessors should be given access to all personal files and performance project files where necessary.

Transferable skills

Transferable skills are an implicit and valuable part of performing arts training and equip candidates with knowledge and capabilities that can be used in another profession/workplace. The acquisition of transferable skills should be assessed in everyday practice across the course and also evidenced in the candidates' reflective journals, performance project files/folders and assessed work.