

# PEDAGOGICAL CONCEPT BACHELOR DANCE

Royal Conservatoire  
Antwerp

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# 1 Mission of the programme

The Dance programme of the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp is a creative environment where passionate teaching and performing artists representing the diversity of contemporary dance practice inspire young dancers from a multiplicity of backgrounds to define and articulate their own identity as an embodied dance artist.

We empower our students to develop creative, performative and reflective skills to become open-minded, engaged dance artists with a potential to contribute to and shape the working field.

## 2 Pedagogical concept

The dance programme is a three-year full-time study with 180 credits. Throughout the programme students will encounter a variety of contemporary dance techniques and systems; meet and work with choreographers and artists from Belgium and abroad; be challenged to develop their own artistic potential and become dance artists with a vision and an authentic personality.

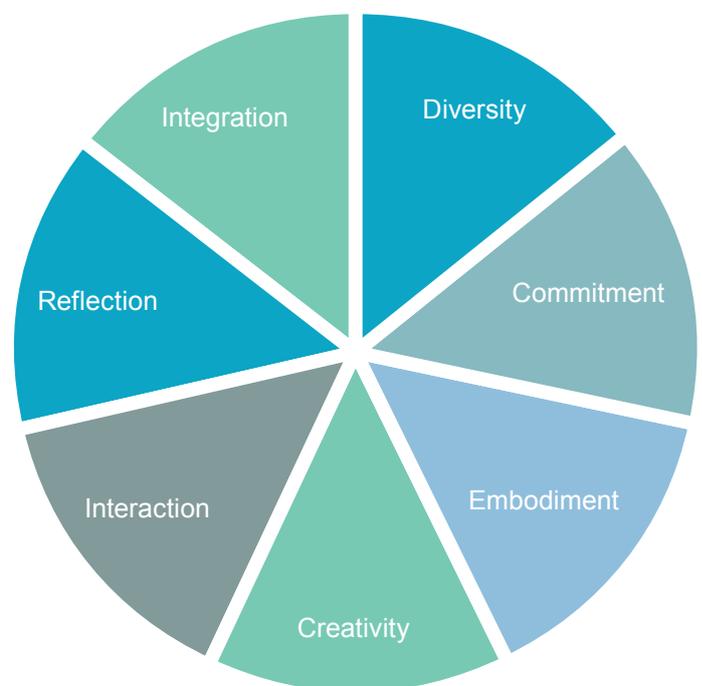
Contemporary dance artists must create, execute, initiate, communicate, network, collaborate, document, self-evaluate, redefine and self-educate. The intensive dance artist training in the Bachelor dance programme helps develop the skills required for a dance artist in the working field.

Education is a bridge to a working field and therefore our programme provides a multitude of experiences for the individual to be able to make choices based on self-reflection, and to know “*what is my desire and how can I reach my potential*”. That potential lies in the multiplicity of what dance can offer within its diversity. We explicitly choose to maximize the possibilities for our students by providing a training that encourages an individual trajectory.

### 2.1 Programme principles

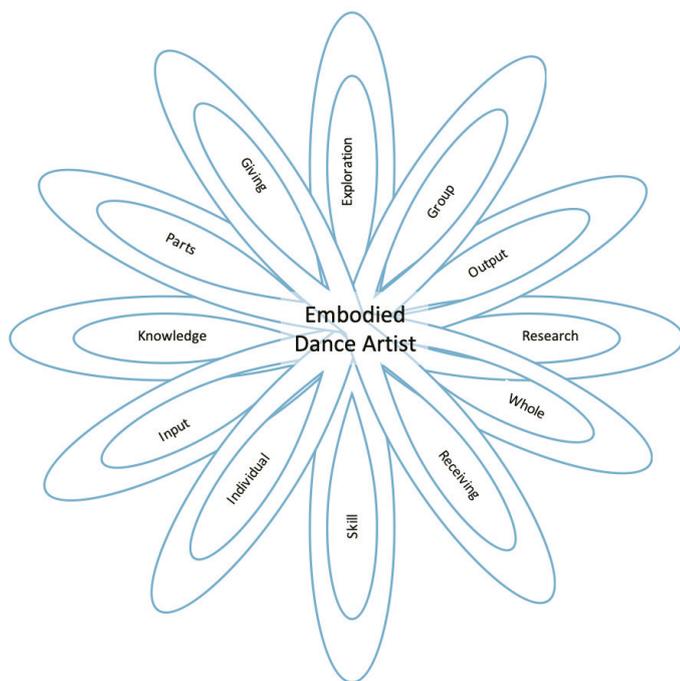
A set of guiding principles is defined in order to achieve the ambition of our programme. They are reflected in the programme content, the teaching and assessing methods. They shape the way we work and determine the culture of our programme.

- **Diversity** – incorporating a diverse range of experiences and practices that reflect the working field, as well as working within diverse settings
- **Commitment** – complete immersion in the programme is required in order to maximize the continuity of self-reflection that supports development and decision making
- **Embodiment** – connecting mind and body throughout the practice and making this tangible
- **Creativity** – encouraging exploration of own creative expression and artistry
- **Interaction** – dialogue with colleagues, teachers, working field and society is encouraged throughout the education, stimulating articulate communication
- **Reflection** – through diligent practice and dialogue, reflection on current activity informs future practice
- **Integration** – teaching students how to integrate knowledge through practice to enable the many parts to make a whole



## 2.2 Embodied Dance Artist

The basic pedagogical vision of the Bachelor programme is based on an interaction between key elements for the development of an **Embodied Dance Artist**:



- input and output
- skill building and exploration
- knowledge and research
- individual and group
- parts and whole
- giving and receiving

The Embodied Dance Artist engages and relates the mind, body and senses, and acknowledges the body as a container of knowledge. An Embodied Dance Artist accepts and listens to body intelligence and allows the mind and body to be a source for and of inspiration, research and creation.

Visually the elements that contribute to the development of the Embodied Dance Artist are represented by many lemniscates moving through a central axis. These elements are not only defined as end points; they are all on a continuum between the two elements and are not distinct from one another. Also, through the central axis of the Embodied Dance Artist you see the density of elements

coming together. As each element is added, the integration becomes more significant and the elements interact with one another.

The Embodied Dance Artist stays central and the lively interplay between opposite elements is continually balanced and explored. This exchange maintains a focus on interaction and active engagement on many levels simultaneously. For example, in a class situation this could mean that a specific (**part**) skill (**skill building**) is taught (**input**) for each student (**individual**) to attain (**knowledge**) from an expert (**receiving**). Within the same class the task may then evolve for all students (**group**) to integrate (**whole**) the skill through experimentation (**exploration**) and improvisation (**research**) to collectively develop (**giving**) a product (**output**).

The *Programme Principles* and attention to the *Embodied Dance Artist* are the backbone of the Bachelor dance programme.

## 3 Bachelor Dance curriculum

### Bachelor 1

<b>Training and Skill Development</b>	Dance training 1	18
	Complementary Training 1	12
<b>Artistic Practice</b>	Production Practice 1	9
	Choreography 1	3
	Improvisation 1	6
	Drama 1	3
	Music 1	3
<b>Contextualisation and Reflection</b>	Portfolio 1	3
	History 1	3
		<b>60</b>

### Bachelor 2

<b>Training and Skill Development</b>	Dance training 2	15
	Complementary Training 2	9
<b>Artistic Practice</b>	Production Practice 2	9
	Choreography 2	6
	Improvisation 2	6
	Drama 2	3
	Music 2	3
<b>Contextualisation and Reflection</b>	Portfolio 2	3
	History 2	3
	Optional Course	3
		<b>60</b>

### Bachelor 3

<b>Training and Skill Development</b>	Dance training 3	15
	Complementary Training 3	6
<b>Artistic Practice</b>	Production Practice 3	18
	Bachelor exam – Group choreography	6
	Bachelor exam – Solo choreography	6
<b>Contextualisation and Reflection</b>	Bachelor exam – Research paper	6
	Optional Course	3
		<b>60</b>

### Optional Courses

<b>Artistic Practice</b>	Internship	3
	Project	3
<b>Contextualisation and Reflection</b>	Arts and Humanities 1	3
	Arts and Humanities 2	3
	Studium Generale	3
	Artist in Society	3
	Student Participation	3

# 4 Learning Outcomes

## 4.1 Starting Competences for the Bachelor dance

The dance department is interested in the potential of dance artists and seek this in many forms that begins with the application and audition process. The audition includes contemporary, classical and improvisation classes, repertoire, composition, solo, group discussion and individual interview. The application process is designed in order for the selection team to establish a baseline for the starting competencies. This enables the programme to identify a starting point, a standard of expectations so that the teaching team have a shared guideline from which the education can begin. The starting competencies will still be diversely spread to accomplish the goal of diversity in the student group, but the baseline is established.

The skill set are listed on the website for interested dance artists to reflect upon before applying to the programme. Dance technical skills are essential, as well as creativity, individuality, personality and an ability to verbalise artistic interests. The combination of elements determine acceptance into the course. These skills are additional to the diploma conditions.

- Good level of contemporary dance technique
- Fundamental level of classical ballet technique
- Fundamental experience and awareness of improvisation techniques
- Movement skills, amongst others: an adequate application of - postural alignment, centre of gravity, strength, control, breath, connectivity, coordination, efficiency, spatial awareness, dynamic range, musicality, expressivity, presence and mind-body connection
- Creative choice making and response to instructions
- Physical and mental condition to maintain the intensity of the programme
- Capacity for reflection and critical thinking
- Awareness of the Belgian and international dance and arts scene and wider society
- Communication skills and willingness to develop in a collective setting
- Clear motivation
- Positive attitude
- Passion for developing skills as a dance artist

The application and audition process present enough opportunities for these skills to be demonstrated. An absence of a skill does not automatically result in a rejection, but the list provides a reference point from which to make comparison between candidates possible.

The candidates selected results in a basic standard that enables the programme to begin from a place of shared understanding and knowledge. This allows the following set of Learning Outcomes to be focused upon within the three-year programme.

## 4.2 Learning Outcomes of the programme

From the starting competencies that are identified as the base level for entrance into the education, the following Learning Outcomes are defined as the skills that our dance graduates will acquire after the three-year programme of 180 credits.

The graduate of the professional Bachelor Dance:

<b>LO 1</b>	embodies a wide range of dance skills
<b>LO 2</b>	invests in diverse physical practices to support mind-body awareness and connection
<b>LO 3</b>	broadly integrates dance skills and knowledge in order to develop a sustainable dance practice
<b>LO 4</b>	engages in, interprets, translates and performs creative dance projects
<b>LO 5</b>	develops and expresses a personal voice within the conceptualisation and creation of own artistic work
<b>LO 6</b>	interacts and collaborates with other disciplines and practices
<b>LO 7</b>	comprehends historical and current cultural and social frameworks
<b>LO 8</b>	critically reflects upon own artistic practice to situate and engage within diverse social and artistic contexts
<b>LO 9</b>	investigates, digests and engages in current arts research
<b>LO 10</b>	has self-discipline, organizational self-reliance and entrepreneurial skills to sustain and develop own artistic practice
<b>LO 11</b>	uses relevant social and group dynamics skills to contribute to and share responsibility in diverse group settings
<b>LO 12</b>	uses relevant skills to communicate and dialogue with diverse target groups

Collectively these Learning Outcomes provide a set of skills that are required for a Dance Artist in the working field. They incorporate both specific and generic skills and attitudes that enable the graduates to apply themselves with diverse capacities.

# 5 Cluster Organisation

The three-year trajectory and expansion of vision is apportioned to the clustering of courses within three main focus areas:

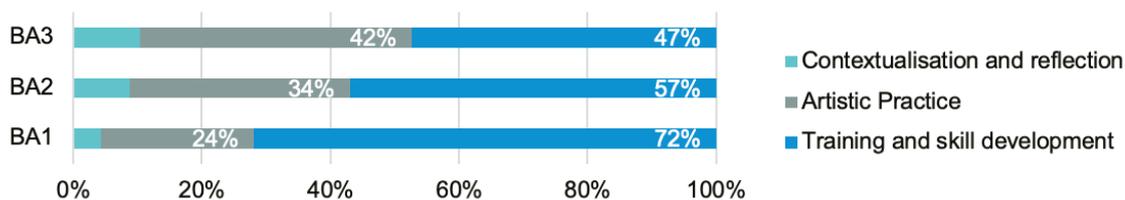
- **Training and Skill Development**
- **Artistic Practice**
- **Contextualisation and Reflection**

The weight for each cluster changes throughout the trajectory and reflects the objectives of the programme that emphasizes input and skill development in the first year and gradually moves towards more artistic practice and output in the final year. Connecting all clusters are the students' personal skills and individual trajectory.

The graph below shows the balance and evolution, depicting the relation between the clusters, based on the number of credits allocated to them. This demonstrates a decrease in Training and Skill development and an increase in Artistic Practice and Contextualisation throughout the three years.



Cluster organisation



## 5.1 Training and Skill Development

This cluster incorporates the development of skills that are collectively required for the development of the individual artist.

- **Dance Training** is a core part of the programme that introduces students to a wide range of different inputs from several different guest teachers throughout the year. Students are introduced to a series of contemporary, classical and improvisation movement styles in order to explore their own movement potential and artistic vision. Students are encouraged to explore their mind-body connection through increasing their body consciousness and sensing through embodied practice, and search for their personal awareness and connectivity within each movement style and teaching methodology.
- **Complementary Training** offers a wide range of courses that support the development of the dance artist. The lessons include, amongst others; yoga, dance analysis, anatomy, condition training, inclusive dance practice, acrobatics, body mind centering and nutrition provided by specialists in their field. The courses provide a physical training that present various perspectives for mind-body awareness and through a continuous engagement encourage students to find their personal connection, embodiment and understanding of each form offered that supports the longevity of the dance artist. Integration of knowledge from these courses and exploration of the connections between subjects into the whole programme is sought.

## 5.2 Artistic Practice

This cluster enables a student to indulge in a large range of artistic processes that contribute to the development of a personal artistic voice supported by the teaching team and dance artists from the working field, and contributes to the development of performative skills, a personal artistic voice and an open vision.

- **Production Practice – repertoire** is an opportunity for students to internalise the movement vocabulary, working methods and vision of an artist, through the reproduction and personal representation of current repertoire. It allows students to make a direct connection with the professional working field and start building a network.
- **Production Practice – workshops** are an aspect of the programme that continually evolves to reflect the needs of the education in resonance with the working field and society, introducing embodied artistic practices, interdisciplinary work and thematic based workshops. The format morphs to fit the requirements of the content. This can range from a pre- or post-show meeting with a company, choreographer and dancers, that are performing in the artistic programme of deSingel, to a practice-based exchange in the studio with the students.
- **Production Practice – projects** are thematic projects such as the bi-annual symposium on dance and diversity, which are structurally embedded in the programme. Inclusive dance practice has become an integral part of the curriculum and forms an explicit context where diversity in physicality and personality enters into cross-pollination with equality, reciprocal learning and creation. These projects challenge the students to expand the familiar spectrum of interpersonal relationships and explore the potential of dance and interdisciplinary practice in different settings.
- **Production Practice – creations** are a regular part of the programme whereby an artist creates new work with the students for a public performance. The artists are invited based on their relevance to each year group and over the three years provide a diverse set of creative and performance experiences. Through a collaboration with deSingel and our own international network the programme offers a professional and diverse artistic context to the students throughout the three years.

Collectively the **Production Practice course** enables students to engage in a wide range of artistic processes and skill building to reflect upon for the development of their own artistic vision. Artistic Practice also includes regular courses that both contribute to the development of required skills of a dance artist as well as providing input to the evolving personal artistic vision:

- **Improvisation** is both the development of a skill as well as the artistic practice of engaging in it as an art form. We register an increasing relevance of the importance of improvisation as a performance practice as well as a skill that is expected of a dance artist in function of creation. Improvisation is experienced as a source of inspiration, as a route to discover one's own movement potential, as a means of generating material and increasing sensitivity, awareness and self-reflection and as a compositional practice in itself. Improvisation is also taught by a range of teachers each contributing from their own specialisation which allows students to explore their personal resonance with each input.
- **Choreography** is nurtured throughout the programme from the development of a choreographic toolbox to the implementation of these tools into decision making and creation tasks. The programme incorporates skill building with a variety of tools from a range of perspectives in the 1st year. In the 2nd year students work culminates with the production of a site-specific solo created as a promenade performance. In the 3rd year the students final artistic project is their Bachelor Exam that encompasses two choreographic projects – Part 1: a group creation made with 1st and 2nd year students, and Part 2: an interdisciplinary creation in collaboration with an artist from another discipline. These choreographic tasks are inextricably linked to their research question used for the Bachelor Exam Part 3: research paper. The three assignments connect mind and body through their research interests. All choreography tasks are embedded in group dialogue, peer feedback techniques and referencing examples from other choreographic work from the working field in order to enhance reflection and verbalisation skills and help build wider reference perspectives.
- **Drama** incorporates both skill development and artistic practice in the use of voice, expression and presence in an authentic embodied way. In the 1st year the focus lies on the exploration and investigation of theatrical states and transformations moving through to the creation of spoken scenes in the 2nd and 3rd year as solos and duets. The embodied theatrical skills trained in this class support the dance students in the development of their performative skills and own artistic voice.
- **Music** enables the student to develop both basic music skills in rhythm, percussion and terminology as well as develop artistic practice in raising awareness of musical preferences and impact on the moving body. A range of music elements present different perspectives to aid students' personal growth as a dance artist, by considering the impact of another discipline with their dance practice. The course incorporates a range of teachers and practices that include, amongst others, percussion techniques, music analysis, singing and percussive thinking. Students are also encouraged to reflect on their relationship to musicality and how they relate their expressive choices to the sound used, which is especially significant in the 3rd year where students are able to collaborate with a musician in their final choreography task.

## 5.3 Contextualisation and Reflection

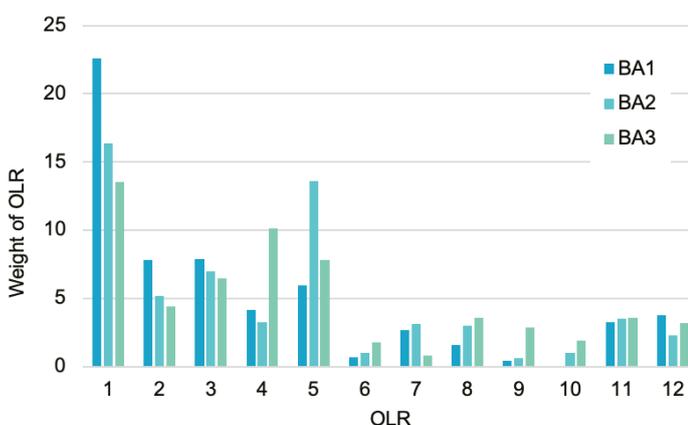
This cluster develops the knowledge base of dance and culture from both a historical and current perspective while simultaneously developing writing, speaking and researching skills. Through lectures and dialogue students reflect on how they situate themselves within the current artistic landscape and develop articulacy skills in communicating their viewpoints.

- **Dance History** – this theoretical course in Bachelor 1 and 2 introduces students to a historical understanding of dance placed in a cultural, political and interdisciplinary context and raises the awareness of the construction of dance history. The courses also focus on how choreographers, past and present, relate themselves to history, in order to stimulate students to think about what history can mean within their own dance practice and covers topics such as: rituals, gender, naturalness, colonialism, the ‘political body’, expression and drama, space and performance context and institutionalization.
- **Portfolio** is an ongoing course throughout the three Bachelor years that provides students with tools to embrace, research and analyse their own artistic identity in relation to the dance field. Main activities are listening, reading, writing, discussing and visualising. In the Portfolio writing and analysing classes, personal writing (manifesto, movement diary, blog review) is combined with analytical writing, starting with newspaper review writing in the 1st year, going into defining a research question and essay writing in the 2nd year. Portfolio culminates with their Bachelor Exam Part 3 in the writing of a research paper that relates, investigates and supports their choreographic processes. Emphasis is on ways of defining, clarifying, and arguing points of view.
- **Working field orientation** enables students to learn about relevant organisations, subsidy procedures, political landscape and networks. Through lectures and discussions, students situate themselves within these with a focus on their own future career development.
- **Optional courses** are offered in the 2nd and 3rd bachelor years and students can choose between: doing an **internship** or a **project** where they are artistically engaged in the practice and process of a dance creation; following an **Arts and Humanities** course or the lecture series **Studium Generale** that widens perspective to a more holistic cultural viewpoint; engaging in **Artist in Society** whereby students observe current practice of artists engaging in societal practices; or **Student Participation** where they engage with the School of Arts in a representative manner and assume responsibility for communicating ideas about the activities of the student council.

## 5.4 Personal skills and individual trajectory

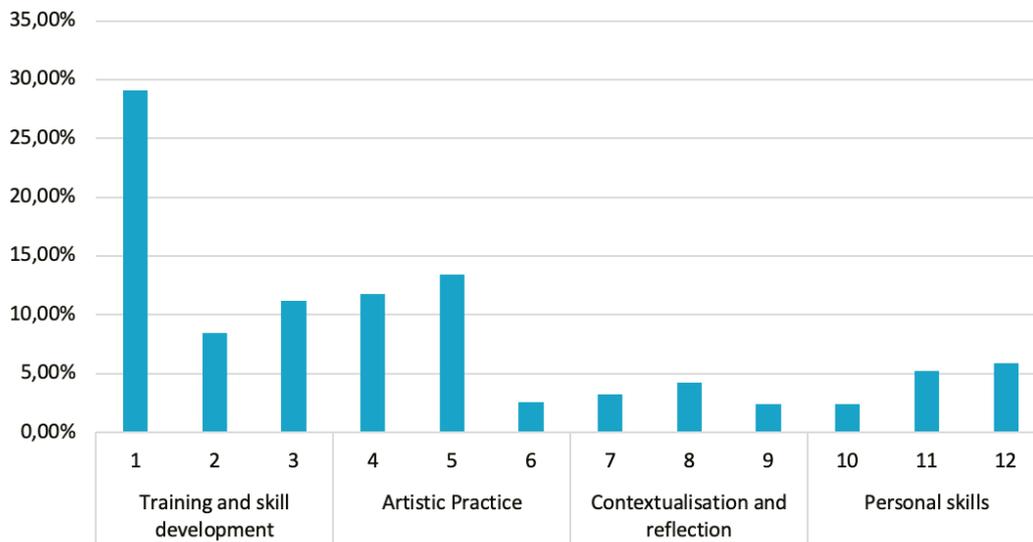
Whilst the three clusters amount to the total 180 credits for a Bachelor diploma, **Personal Skills** is an aspect of the programme crucial to enabling the rest of the programme to flourish. Personal skills are specifically addressed in the Learning Outcomes 10-12 but are required throughout all parts of the programme. These skills include the ability to communicate in diverse settings, understand and utilise relevant social skills in group environments, and have the required self-discipline and organisational capacities to be able to continue to develop artistic practice independently. These personal skills are trained throughout all aspects of the programme. The programme also takes a responsibility to empower the individual artist to own their ideas and make relevant choices. Throughout the programme there are opportunities to encourage dialogue, reflection and group work in order to allow the individuality of each student to flourish within a critical but supportive environment. The Transferable Skills exercise discussed later adds value to these Personal Skills and promotes awareness and importance to such skills.

## 5.5 Coverage of learning outcomes in the programme



Through the extensive monitoring of the Learning Outcomes in the associated excel document that records the DLR (domain specific learning outcomes), OLR (programme specific learning outcomes), Learning Objectives and Criteria of Assessment, we can conclude that all learning outcomes, with differing range of intensities, are addressed in the programme.

Although not exclusively, there is a focus of the clusters in certain Learning Outcomes:



This graph visualizes the percentage of each cluster as a part of the whole curriculum. It illustrates the needs of the programme that requires continuous training and skill development throughout all three study years as well as a focus on the development of an artistic vision.

## 6 Structure of the curriculum

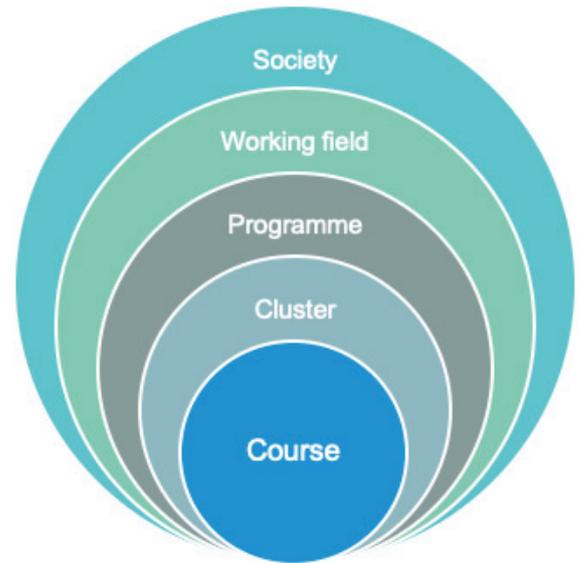
The programme content is delineated in a structure that enables each course to be defined by its unique set of learning outcomes, learning objectives and evaluation criteria. From the defined frame of each course teachers are able to steer the content and delivery of their part in a course and the coordinators are able to maintain an overview of the whole. The structure that is embedded in the excel document enables both stability and flexibility in being able to provide a frame of reference whilst simultaneously enabling creativity within shared goals.

<b>Cluster</b>	Training and Skill Development, Artistic Practice, Contextualisation and Reflection, Personal Skills
<b>Course</b>	Dance Training, Improvisation, Portfolio....
<b>Learning outcome</b>	The 12 OLR that collectively summarise the competences acquired in a graduate dance student
<b>Learning objective</b>	Course specific goals to be achieved
<b>Evaluation criteria</b>	Criteria defined to assess the specific goals
<b>Assessment method</b>	Method used to assess the achievement of the goal: Knowledge, skill, artistic practice, reflection, project, portfolio
<b>Assessment moment</b>	Process or product
<b>Assessor</b>	Self, peer, teacher, internal jury, external jury

# 7 Expanding curriculum

To embrace the fundamental element of parts and whole, each content area is taught in relation to the whole programme, and students and teachers are made aware of the importance of the integration of knowledge on many levels. However, the parts can be delineated as thus:

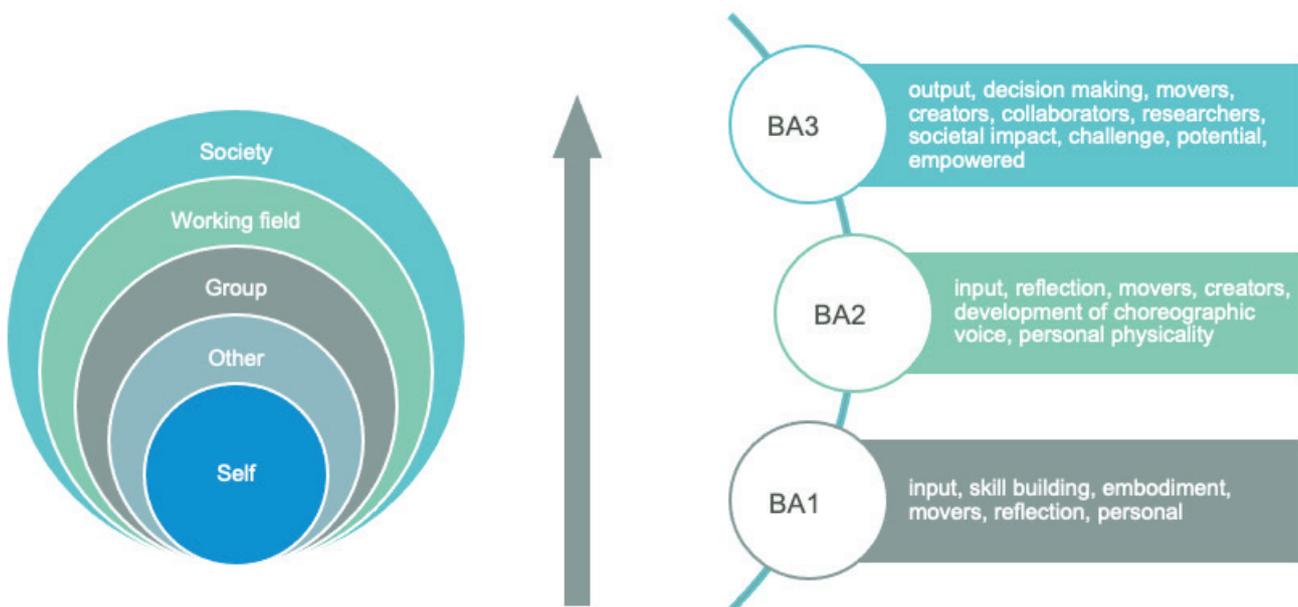
- Each teacher is invited to deliver an individual course content taking into account the learning objectives for that **course** or cluster.
- Every individual course is part of a **cluster** of courses that interconnect and make up a portion of the programme.
- The **programme** has several clusters in each study year that comprise the 180 credits to obtain the Bachelor diploma.
- The programme integrates networking with the **working field** within its core content and also continually reflects on the needs of graduates entering the working field.
- The awareness of the artistic working field is brought into alignment with **societal** needs and incorporated into the programme through collaborative practices and projects in diverse settings such as the inclusive dance practice.



This expansion of vision is mirrored in the development of the individual dance artist. In the first year, there is a focus on input, skill building and knowledge, whilst encouraging embodiment, translation and reflection on information for personal use. In the second year, the input and embodiment continues with more reflection to encourage the student's individual focus, initiation of a choreographic voice and development of a physical personality. By the third year, the emphasis is on decision making as movers, creators, collaborators and researchers alongside reflection on how life interests affect performance, what impact societal concerns have on choreographic practice, and what work from the field inspires or challenges opinions. By graduation each student should realise their own potential, have a developing artistic voice, be willing to share that voice and be able to identify a personal trajectory.

This expansion evolves from an individual self-reflective focus in Bachelor 1 that develops to include the awareness of another and then the whole group. As a group the working field then becomes more present within the programme content and gradually expands to a societal view.

This can also be shown visually:



# 8 Feedback

Feedback has a significant effect on student learning and has been described as “the most powerful single moderator that enhances achievement”<sup>1</sup>

Feedback is an essential and integral part of the learning process, actively contributing to the empowerment of the individual dance artist. We want our students to develop the skills and the network to autonomously shape their future career and artistic vision. Dealing with feedback enables students to reflect on their goals, potential, choices made, and consider what choices they have ahead of them to make the progress they wish to achieve. Through continuous dialogue on all aspects of the training, students become aware of their strengths and challenges. In a field such as dance, it is essential that a dancer has both a physical and audible voice, and the programme strives to make this a core aspect of the programme. We are confident that this will strengthen the students in their later careers.

Feedback comes in many forms and is encouraged on all levels, incorporating critical self-reflection, peer feedback, written, spoken and physical feedback and awareness of Transferable Skills. Feedback is adapted according to its purpose. Group feedback can be relevant when working towards shared goals, for example in group creation processes, but mostly our feedback is individually focussed. The content of the feedback must be clear, constructive, specific and time relevant in order for it to meet a purpose.

We invest in a respectful and reflective learning environment and discuss this with incoming teachers and assessors. Our view on feedback is that the individual artist remains central in order to empower the individual student to clarify and consolidate their choice making. To enable students and teachers to provide feedback to one another and to use this as a (self)-reflection tool, a terminology and observational system can support a broad range of perspectives to be addressed. We integrate several approaches to enable students to explore their own tools for self-reflection and feedback.

Through continuous dialogue on all aspects of the training, students become aware of their strengths and challenges in order to make relevant choices in their education and later in their career paths.

## 8.1 Feedback methods used

Within the programme students are trained to observe and give feedback to one another as well as the course teacher and assessment team. To accomplish this goal, several approaches are incorporated within the course content:

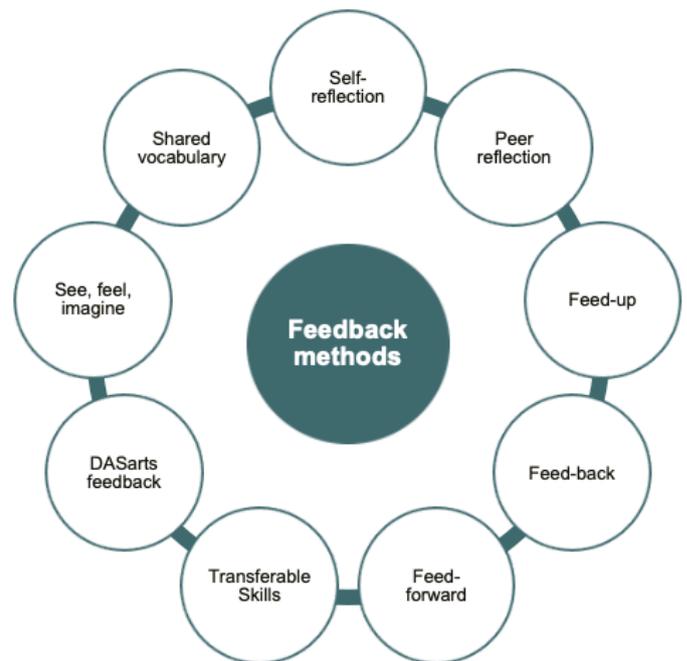
**Self-reflection** takes place continually through discussion, presentations, written assignments and reflection tasks in all aspects of the programme, both physically and theoretically.

**Peer-reflection** develops the students’ skills in observing, analysing and feedbacking to peers utilizing the methods that have been taught, practiced and developed.

**Shared vocabulary** is developed within all course content and in some courses is the specific focus. This acknowledges both teacher specific methodologies as well as established frameworks such as Laban Movement Analysis<sup>2</sup>. Students share a terminology with a shared understanding to aid clear communication.

**DASarts**<sup>3</sup> feedback system is an established system supporting the empowerment of the artist. Through the methodology students choose the element that will benefit them in their process, which may include requesting positive feedback, open questions, providing perspectives, tips and tricks amongst others. The training and utilisation of this takes place in the choreography courses.

**See, feel, imagine**<sup>4</sup> is an established approach whereby the student learns to differentiate between factual and personal interpretation. ‘I see’ relates to known and shared information, ‘I feel’ relates to how it affects a viewer emotionally, ‘I imagine’ allows the viewer to acknowledge how the work affects their fantasy and imagination. This permits the artist to hear both objective and subjective responses to their work.



1 Hattie, John & Helen Timperley. “The Power of Feedback” in: Review of Educational Research, vol. 77, no. 1, 2007

2 Hackney, Peggy, Making Connections, London: Gordon and Breach, 1998: 217

3 DASarts <https://www.atd.ahk.nl/en/theatre-programmes/das-theatre/feedback-method/#c75577>

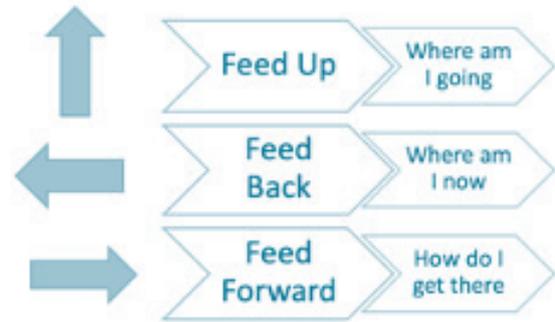
4 Halprin, Lawrence. The RSVP Cycles: Creative Processes in the Human Environment. Braziller, 1969

**Feedback** is an umbrella term used that incorporates **feed-up, feed-back and feed-forward**. The distinction between these demonstrates the importance of each to be used as separate tools:

**Feed-up** provides essential information about what is expected of a student, what is the task, the goals, the methods that should be used, it provides the basis for what the student should achieve.

**Feedback** provides information about how a student is doing, what are their current strengths and challenges in the work accomplished so far.

**Feed-forward** guides the student to what they should do to achieve the goals set out, it indicates where the student needs to evolve towards and how they can achieve this. All three are integral to the learning process.



Each of these methodologies and additional tools are embraced within the education to empower the student to make their own creative decisions.

**Transferable Skills**

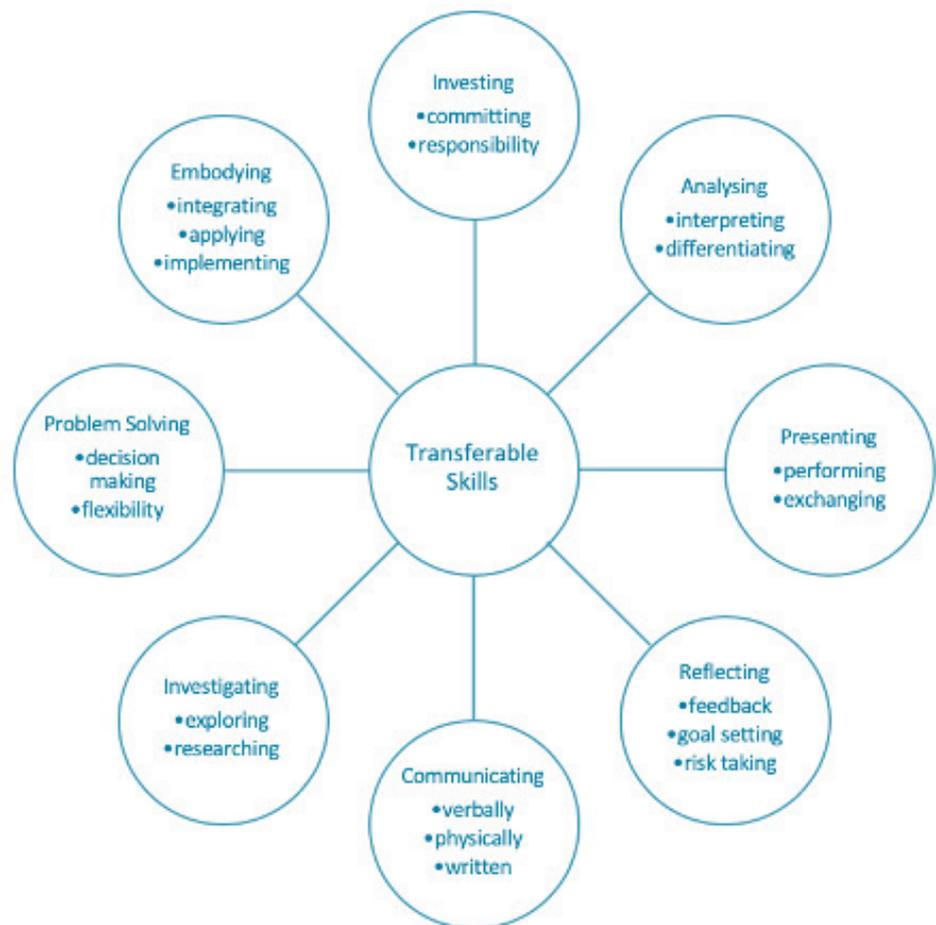
The Bachelor programme uses Transferable Skills as a reflection tool to enhance the integration of knowledge and cyclical approach to learning. Transferable Skills are used in order to bring an awareness to the students of the broad range of skills they are acquiring within the programme that can be used in alternative environments and processes throughout their work as a dance artist.

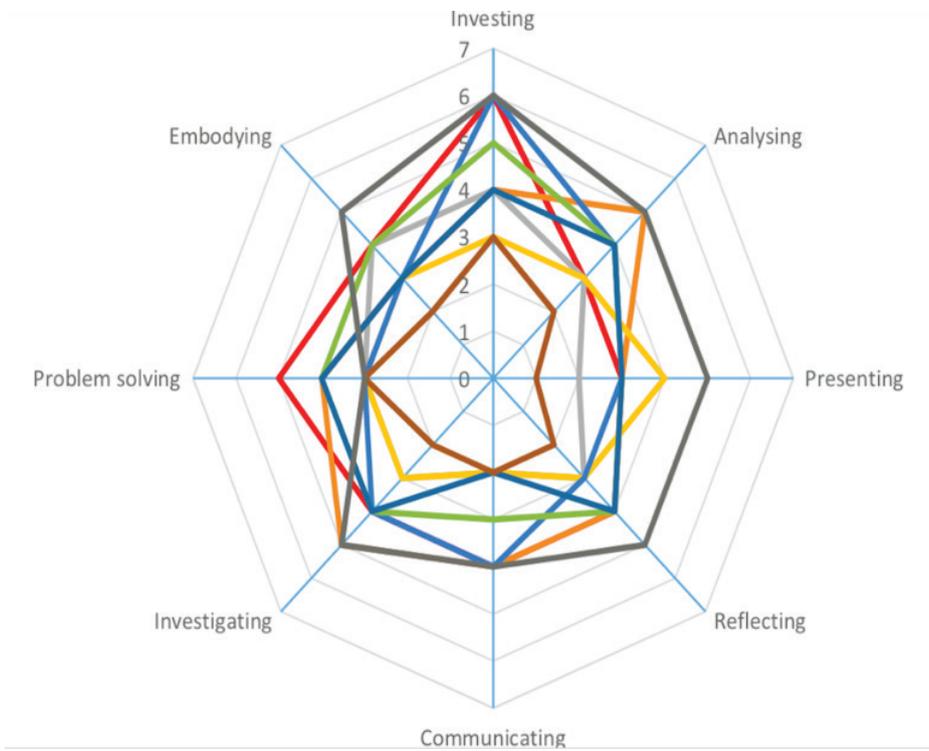
The Transferable Skills are collected into word clouds:

The Transferable Skills exercise requires students to reflect on the eight skills to acknowledge which skills they easily identify with and which they find more challenging in a digital rubric on a scale of 1 to 7.

Teachers are asked to complete the same task for each student, based on their perception of each individual in their class only.

The information from both the student’s own reflection as well as their teachers’ perception is collated in a graph. This visual representation enables a student to reflect on which skills they personally identify with and are equally recognized by their teacher in one or all subjects. This may lead to a recognition that certain skills are strengths in all areas, or that some skills are strengths when used in certain courses. If so, then the awareness is the beginning of a dialogue in order to increase consciousness to having a skill and being able to transfer that skill. The collections of feedback are visually collated into a spider-web graph for comparative analysis. This perception of self and others is encouraged to develop articulation in observation, discussion and reflection.

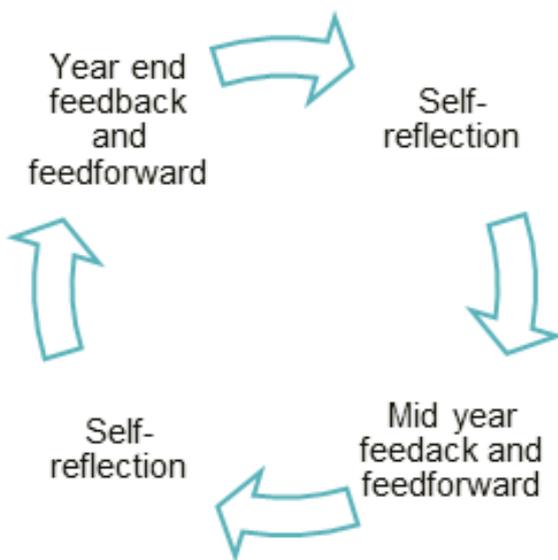




The results enable students' to visually see which skills are agreed strengths, as well as which skills have discrepancies between subjects that can be challenged to transfer.

The different colours represent the individual student and their teachers' viewpoints. The graph is one part of the conversation in one to one feedback talks

## 8.2 Timing



One to one discussions take place in January and June each year. By receiving regular feedback, students are constantly adjusted and guided in their learning process and create a cyclical pattern that continues to evolve throughout the three years. They learn to identify own strengths and challenges and to place them within their development as artists. After the first semester, all students are invited for an individual progress discussion with the artistic directors during which they receive extensive verbal feedback and feedforward with written feedback from individual teachers as well as the results of their Transferable Skills self and teacher perception.

Collectively the methods used, and the timing of implementation create an environment of continuous self-reflection that is integral and integrated into the whole programme. This feedback system is a fundamental element and pre-requisite to assessment in the programme.

# 9 Assessment

Our ambition refers to empowering individuals to reach their potential. To reach this goal, it is clear that the assessment policy requires as much creativity as the programme itself in order to provide a framework for assessing that can be used as an independent learning tool and strategy rather than a summative grade that benchmarks students end product. A policy is required that both enhances students' learning as well as teachers' teaching and optimises the interaction between the two.

The Bachelor Dance programme therefore requires an assessment and guidance system in which students learn to manage their own learning process independently. A development- and professionally oriented approach can support future dance artists to independently monitor, assess and adjust their working practice, which will become an essential quality within their professional career. The programme strives for students to apply and integrate their knowledge, skills and attitudes, to develop their own products and processes and to offer creative answers to concrete situations. Assessments should encourage students to learn in depth, to develop the required professional competencies and increase their motivation as they experience the relevance of the instruction and assessment for their later professional activities.

The programme aims for a qualitatively strong assessment policy in which validity, reliability, transparency and feasibility are guaranteed. This policy needs to reflect a coherence between the different aspects of the pedagogic concept, to embrace all levels of the education, from the core goals to the individual teacher and needs to be maintained and monitored through a transparent reviewing process.

Arts assessment however rarely fits into a simple set of fixed criteria in the same way that artistic expression does not have one set of rules. Every talent is different and therefore objectivity is challenged. Ambiguity is intrinsic and essential to the education. This does not mean that talent cannot be disputed, in reality, there is a great deal of agreement concerning quality between experts, and this therefore makes intersubjectivity a crucial part of assessing arts.

## 9.1 Assessment as, for and of learning

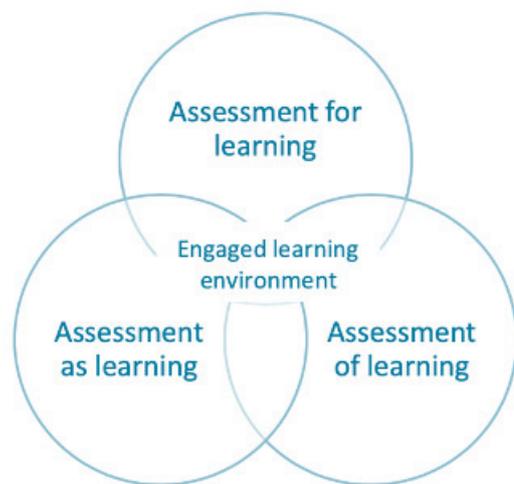
In this programme, **assessment is used for, as and of learning**. To contribute to the learning process and the development of the student, assessment is a continuous process throughout the three-year programme. The teachers stimulate, direct and evaluate the students' learning process.

In **assessment for learning** there is an ongoing process of gathering evidence in order to determine where students are in their learning process and what needs to be done to move forwards.

In **assessment as learning**, the student's personal guidance and active engagement is central to the assessment and thus shapes their own learning process.

In **assessment of learning**, testing is a means to gather evidence concerning to what extent the student has achieved the competences and thus to come to a decision about the awarding of a grade or a diploma.

All three types of assessment are needed and interact to create an engaged learning environment.

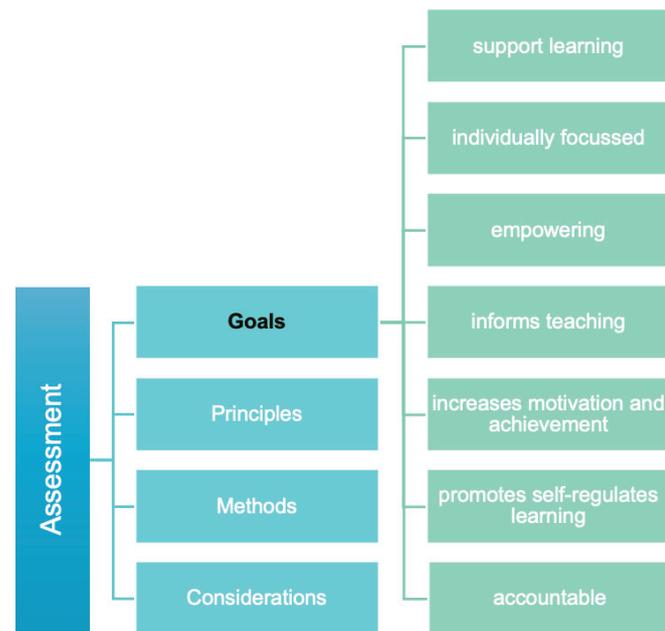
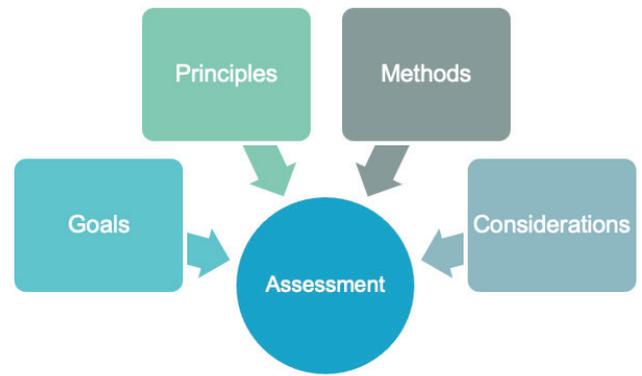


## 9.2 Elements of assessment

### 9.2.1 Goals of assessment

To begin to establish a clear policy and set of principles for assessment, it is imperative to define the main goals within the programme. An ambition that highlights individuality does not make this evident, but the goals must implicitly give space for the ambition to thrive.

**Supports learning** - assessment practices are fundamentally focussed on achieving learning goals and personal ambitions. The end goal of assessment is a proactive engagement within learning processes. Within this a student can drive their own goals, acknowledge where they are, where they are going and how they can achieve the trajectory. The notion of students being the driver of using feedback and assessment in order to improve own learning remains core.



**Individually focussed** - assessment needs to be personally relevant to make it valuable. Artistic practice does not have one truth or one goal, diversity is embraced within the programme on all levels, including the diversity of the individual and their personal artistic ambition. Therefore, it is not possible to determine one fixed goal for each course, but flexibility in achieving goals and personal ambitions is encouraged. Therefore, assessment must maintain an individuality in its delivery and content.

**Empowering** – the student stays central and should have ownership of their learning, trajectory and vision. Assessment is not delivered as a judgement about a student but focuses on awareness building and personal choice making. As a future dance artist, often in the environment of being judged by a public, it is important to build ownership and empowerment into the education for recognition of self-worth.

**Informs teaching practice and programme** – awareness of students learning and skill base, informs the content and development of the programme. Awareness of what works, what informs practice, what contributes effectively to the individual development and what is missing should inform how a teacher proceeds. A curriculum is only effective if embodiment is achieved, therefore assessment should function to steer the learning needs of each year group and class.

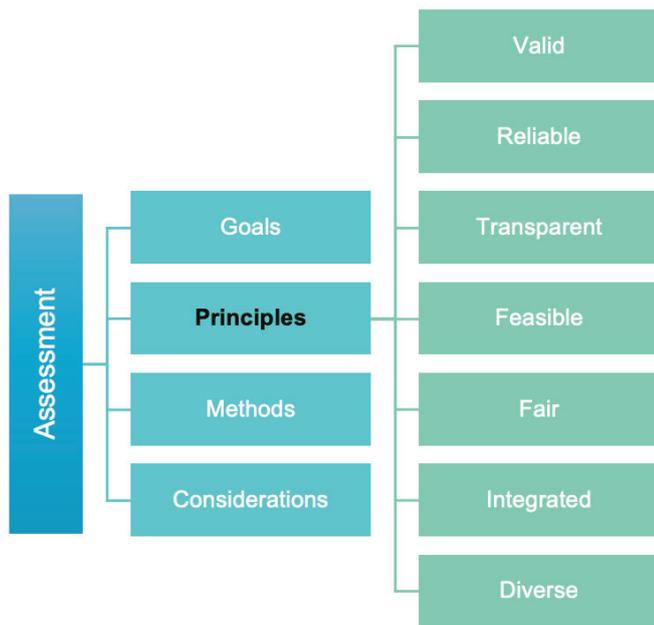
**Increases motivation and achievement** – assessment as learning should enable students to be aware of their learning needs and progress and use these to achieve better results. The knowledge of their progress becomes a motivator to personally develop in the direction desired and ultimately achieve personal goals and ambitions at a higher level. Setting learning goals and measuring the progress towards those, increases motivation and can significantly improve achievement.

**Promotes self-regulated learning** - Self-reflection is a recurring part of assessment within the programme. The students monitor their own learning process, competencies, vision and actions in practice, analyse what they can already do well and what needs to improve, and make adjustments in order to grow. Reflection is crucial to regulate own learning, enables students to deal with critical judgement from self and others and is indispensable in order to arrive at an individual artistic professional practice. Teaching students vital skills to monitor and take responsibility for meeting their goals creates self-regulated learners and builds independent autonomous thinkers.

**Provide accountability** – the focus on process is predominant, however, there is still a requirement to justify and account for progression through a programme in order to receive a final diploma. Assessment should still provide a means to have this accountability transparent on all levels of the education.

## 9.2.2 Principles of assessment

The goals enable the programme to focus on what needs to be achieved through assessment, but a set of principles guides a clear vision on a set of standards that make the goals and the methods justifiable.



**Valid** - The assessment must accurately measure and correspond to its intent. Each course and cluster have defined learning goals that are progressively designed over the three-year programme. This creates an opportunity to assess the validity of the assessment through clear attainable and measurable goals with aligned content and assessment. The coordinators manage the overview of the course goals and invite relevant teachers in order to accomplish the attainment of all goals. The programme coordinators consciously ensure that the assessment methods are valid to verify and demonstrate that the intended learning outcomes and the learning objectives of the course units have been achieved.

**Reliable** - Reliability results in different assessors reaching similar conclusions when assessing a student. This is usually assured through having clear assessment criteria that provide a clarity for assessors to be able to focus on specific aspects in the assessment process. In dance education, reliability must also however incorporate subjectivity as well as objectivity. Therefore, a jury becomes relevant, providing a platform wherein a collection of subjective opin-

ions enables intersubjectivity to achieve a more objective result. Having more assessors also reduces the influence of one subjective assessor taking precedence in the assessment, especially where less-measurable criteria are being used.

**Transparent** - Learning goals and assessment methods are communicated in the ECTS-files. These are the official contracts with the students. The online resource of these files is explicitly communicated to students and staff at the beginning of the academic year and recorded in the Dance Trotter information booklet. This system provides a transparent view to both students and staff of the expectations of the course or cluster. Additionally, if teaching within a subject cluster each course teacher may add supplementary information at the beginning of their class series, detailing the connection between the cluster objectives and the class specific objectives and assessment criteria. The system relies on transparency for all involved, and in practice requires several layers of communication especially where several teachers contribute to a cluster, but it enables students to follow the intention of the holistic view of the programme.

**Feasible** - Feasibility is required for the student, the teaching staff, the programme and resources. Providing high quality education implies that everything is in balance and expectations in all directions are feasible. Feasibility relates in all directions of the programme: the ambition of the student and teacher; the programme needs; the composition of the programme and daily schedule; the flow and input in the year; the availability of guest artists; the space available to work in and many more, but feasibility in assessment is also essential. The coordinators must continually check the balance between expectations of assessment, workload and learning processes. Clarity in the relationship between learning objectives and assessment criteria support checking the feasibility of each assessment method.

**Fair** - The assessment method should enable all students to have a fair and equal chance to demonstrate their achievements, and the assessor should be able to make sure that the work assessed is authentic and attributable to the person being assessed. This particularly needs close attention when working in group situations where there is an interdependency between students. This can happen in choreographic settings or research tasks where the group takes prominence. In these situations, the assessor must be able to either to extract individual contribution to allow fairness between all contributors or relate the assessment criteria to the interdependency.

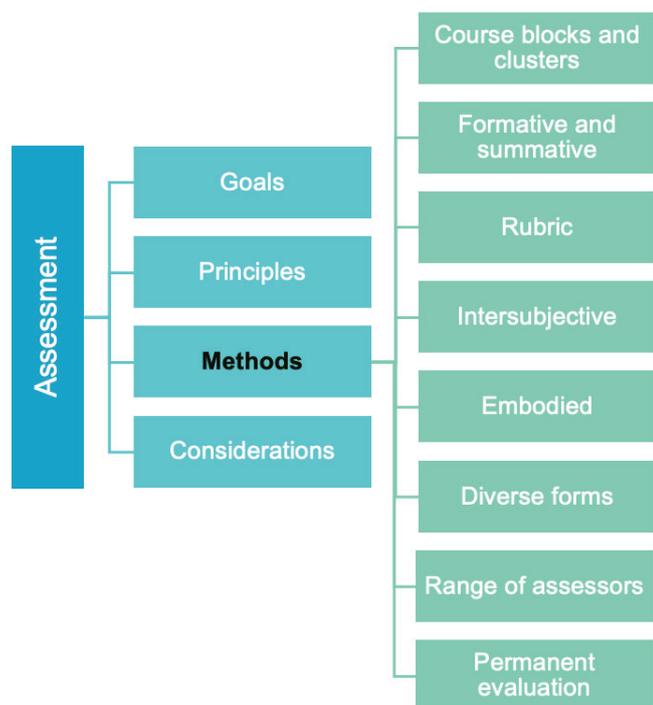
**Integrated** – the evidence collected from assessment procedures is integrated back into the learning process. The assessment is only summative at the end of the three-year trajectory, and even then, it should be the beginning of the next phase of each individuals' progression and the basis for life-long learning. The integrated approach also ensures the continuous exchange between process and product. Assessment is ongoing throughout the education and is a continuous feedback loop within a process, driving learning processes.

**Diverse** – assessment should reflect the diversity of the programme and should relate to the activity engaged within the learning environment. Therefore, a range of assessment methods and assessors are integrated into the programme to demonstrate the pluralistic nature of the education. A written exam, an open class situation, a public performance,

a spoken presentation, a self-reflection report are all valid forms of assessment, and the range that is inherent in the learning environment should be reflected in its assessment. This enables each student to demonstrate their range of skills in these different settings and explore where they excel, and which other skills may need attention. As preparation for the working field, the ability and strengths of sharing a skill or product is often imperative to success.

### 9.2.3 Assessment methods

To achieve the goals within a guiding set of principles requires a range of assessment methods in order to support the diversity in the ambition.



**Course and cluster** – one of the intentions of the cluster system is to enable a student to experience a wide range of different styles and techniques and not feel a pressure to be ‘good’ at everything. The programme relies on providing a diverse education where we ask students to fully immerse themselves in many different experiences. This will allow each student to recognise for themselves where are their interests, strengths and working points. The assessment of each individual part is undertaken by the teacher and most often a jury also, but the grades are collected and averaged into a course grade at the end of the year, enabling students to embrace their strengths and challenges without failing a whole course. The feedback however is written or verbalised for each individual aspect of the cluster. In this way both the parts and the whole can be acknowledged within the course/cluster relationship.

**Formative and summative assessment** – formative assessment is process oriented and helps form the ongoing development of the education for both students and teachers. Through the practice teachers can establish what is known and what needs to be learnt and adjusts the process accordingly. For students the feedback received during the formative assessment moments makes them aware of their strengths and areas that need more

attention, and then can inform how they proceed with their learning. This practice mirrors the development of an artistic project and therefore also strengthens its purpose and validity. Summative assessments take place within the education, and equally provide information for both student and teacher, in that they assess where the student arrived on the completion of a course. This information has its values and can inform future decision making but can also be instrumental in how a teacher develops their course with future year groups.

**Rubrics** – the use of a rubric in assessment enables an assessor to have a parity between students through having consistent scales for assessing a range of skills. One explicit scale that can flexibly adapt for different aspects of the curriculum provides a method in which teachers can have equality across all subjects studied. Consistency also enables students to view their education horizontally and vertically, horizontally across the spectrum of subjects at one moment in time and vertically through the time of their studies. The rubric currently in use is here below.

**Intersubjective** – arts assessment can often be criticised for being subjective, and it is a fact that subjectivity plays a significant part in dance education. This subjectivity enables us to develop our tastes and preferences in a diverse artistic world and is essential for dance students to establish a personal artistic voice. However, it would not present a truthful or fair perspective of a students’ work if only assessed by one subjective assessor. This is the reason for a significant role of intersubjectivity in assessing all aspects of the dance programme. A collection of subjective assessments is able to present an objective perspective to the student through the range of voices heard.

**Embodied** – embodiment remains the key ingredient throughout the dance programme. The embodiment of knowledge can be seen and assessed, although its tangibility can be brought into question. Here the reliability of an experienced range of teachers is essential, their ability to nurture and recognise embodiment, and therefore their ability to assess embodiment is critical. It is imperative that embodiment is recognised as physical knowledge, and assessments can incorporate embodiment as a goal of a course.

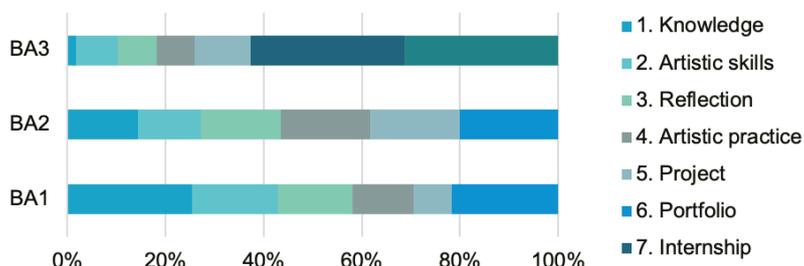
**Range of assessors** – assessment methods should come from various perspectives and will be understood differently depending on who the assessor is. Self- or peer- assessment encourage critical reflection, teacher assessments provide a viewpoint that can incorporate the process undergone. An internal jury promotes intersubjectivity and enables

continuity across subjects and years. An external jury provides a perspective that relates to the working field and incorporates the opportunity for work to be seen in a professional context. Each of these formats has a value for the student and therefore the programme incorporates all forms at some point throughout the education.

**Permanent evaluation** - A programme that is designed on the multiplicity of experiences requires full immersion of those experiences in order for the programme to be understood. Permanent evaluation is not only a monitoring tool however, but it provides the possibility for the students' continuous work throughout a course to be reflected on and monitored rather than a focus purely on the end result.

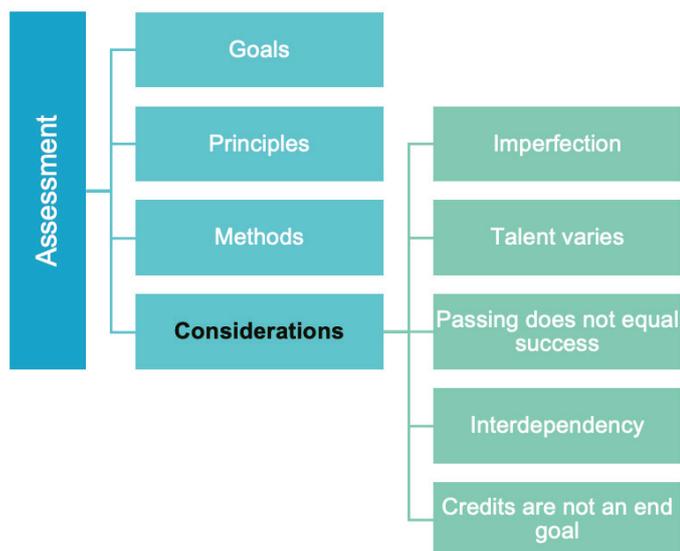
**Diverse forms** – assessment methods should take many forms to reflect the wide range of artistic competencies that a dancer needs to acquire. These can be embodied in class situations or performances, written exams, portfolio, reflections or research, spoken presentations or class discussions, projects and internships. This diversity should incorporate the assessment of knowledge, artistic skills, artistic practice and reflection. Diversity of assessment methods allows different students to excel, to recognise their strengths, to have opportunities to develop their working points and experience many possibilities.

Diversity in assessment methods, 2019-2020



### 9.2.4 Considerations

An assessment policy can state the principles, goals and methods, but within the clarity of these targets there will remain a need to look at individual cases and maintain an open perspective. There are several aspects that still need consideration within the assessment process.



**Imperfection** - motivational speeches may encourage students to strive for perfection, but for this programme we do not wish to define the perfect dancer. Perfection would be an unreachable end goal that would negate the purpose of the study. The goal for our students is to surprise us with their imperfections and what they can accomplish within these possibilities.

**Talent varies** – dance talent cannot have a set of fixed values that is the same for all. Innovation and originality require us to look beyond what we know and explore the unknown, and as teachers and assessors we need to continue to search for methods that enable us to measure differentiation. This also results in not benchmarking students against one another, but looking at the individual talent independently.

**Passing does not equal success** - reaching competences and gaining credits does not equal success in the working field. Clearly the development of skills will increase chances of success, but the working field is so

overpopulated and managed in so many different structures that success cannot be guaranteed. Developing a range of competencies and integrating these to develop an individual profile however, gives each individual more possibilities.

**Interdependency** – the dance programme is taught with one group per academic year and incorporates many different tasks within this frame including group work or assignments. Therefore, assessors need to remain aware of the interdependency on other students, and when an assignment is reliant or affected by the work of other students.

**Credits are not an end goal** – the students are engaged in the programme for many reasons, but predominantly for the extensive range of training experiences they will have and exploring their own potential. The students rarely ask about credits or approaches to get the highest grade. This mindset should be maintained, as the individual motivation should remain as the development of the individual and not the attainment of credits.

**Bachelor dance feedback and assessment 2020-21: BA1**

<b>Teacher name:</b>	
<b>Course and period:</b>	

**Numbers to be inserted in Transferable skills**

1	The student exhibits insufficient ability to identify with this skill	=
2	The student exhibits an emerging understanding of this skill	=
3	The student exhibits an evolving understanding of this skill	=
4	The student starts to experiment consciously with this skill	=
5	The student starts to implement the skill in his work	=
6	The student fully embodies the skill	=
7	The student fully integrates the skill	=

**Numbers to be inserted for final grade**

<b>0-9</b>	Student exhibits insufficient ability to identify with the skills required and the work is of insufficient standard to pass the course
<b>10-11</b>	Student exhibits an emerging understanding of the skills required and accomplishes the work that is requested of them at a basic level. Student demonstrates comprehension of material, and makes reasonable decisions
<b>12-13</b>	Student exhibits an evolving understanding of the skills required, invests in acquiring knowledge, utilises skills and takes responsibility for quality of output
<b>14-15</b>	Student experiments with the skills and engages fully with the given material to generate ideas through an analysis of the concepts given. Demonstrates specialised skills, can reflect and adjust, and accepts responsibility of outcomes
<b>16-17</b>	Student implements skills in their own work, and works with an internal motivation to explore possibilities. Critically reflects, consolidates and redefines body of knowledge utilising specialised skills
<b>18-19</b>	Student fully embodies the skills, is fully engaged and invests more than is requested. Displays mastery of complex and specialised skills and knowledge and continues to research possibilities
<b>20</b>	Student fully integrates the skills required within a course specifically and across their programme. Makes a significant and original contribution to a the working field, with continued critical reflection and research of current practices

Transferable Skills										Grade		Grade /20													
Investing (committing, responsibility)...	Analyzing (interpreting, differentiating)...	Presenting (sharing, performing, exchanging, transmitting)...	Reflecting (feedback, feed forward, self-reflection, risk-taking, goal setting)...	Communicating (verbally, physically, written)...	Investigating (exploring, researching)...	Problem solving (decision making, flexibility)...	Embodying (integrating, applying, implementing)...	/ 20		Knowledge	Artistic Skills		Artistic Practice		Reflection		Project		Portfolio		Graduation Assignment				
BA1										Process	Product	Process	Product	Process	Product	Process	Product	Process	Product	Process	Product	Process	Product	Process	Product
1	Elly-My Blomdahl																								
2	Martin Boyer																								
3	Laure de Dietrich																								
4	Mei Li Dong Paez																								
5	Nathan Felix																								
6	Louka Gailliez																								
7	Kika Ilegems																								
8	Marino Jakovcevic																								
9	Marta Jamsja																								
10	Julia Kosalka																								
11	Silas Martens																								
12	Mira Sloommaekers																								
13	Lentle Tolkathev																								
14	Luca Tomaselli																								

**Written feedback and feedforward**

1	Elly-My Blomdahl	
2	Martin Boyer	
3	Laure de Dietrich	
4	Mei Li Dong Paez	
5	Nathan Felix	
6	Louka Gailliez	
7	Kika Ilegems	
8	Marino Jakovcevic	
9	Marta Jamsja	
10	Julia Kosalka	
11	Silas Martens	
12	Mira Sloommaekers	
13	Lentle Tolkathev	
14	Luca Tomaselli	

# 10 Summary

Collectively the programme ambition, pedagogical concept, feedback and assessment fulfil the vision of the Bachelor dance programme. A programme that wishes to enable an individual to develop their individual potential, through an acquisition of knowledge and experiences and reformulates this into a personal artistic vision. A programme that works intensively in small groups to reach common goals in individual approaches with teachers and artists from the working field, a programme that prepares students with lifelong skills in reflection, responsibility and empowerment, a programme that is fair, diverse, proactive and engaged.

This pedagogical concept is one aspect of the global vision of the Bachelor dance programme. The programme is one trajectory in the School of Arts that provides a large framework in which the dance programme exists. The School of Arts is part of AP University College which provides a macro perspective of education.