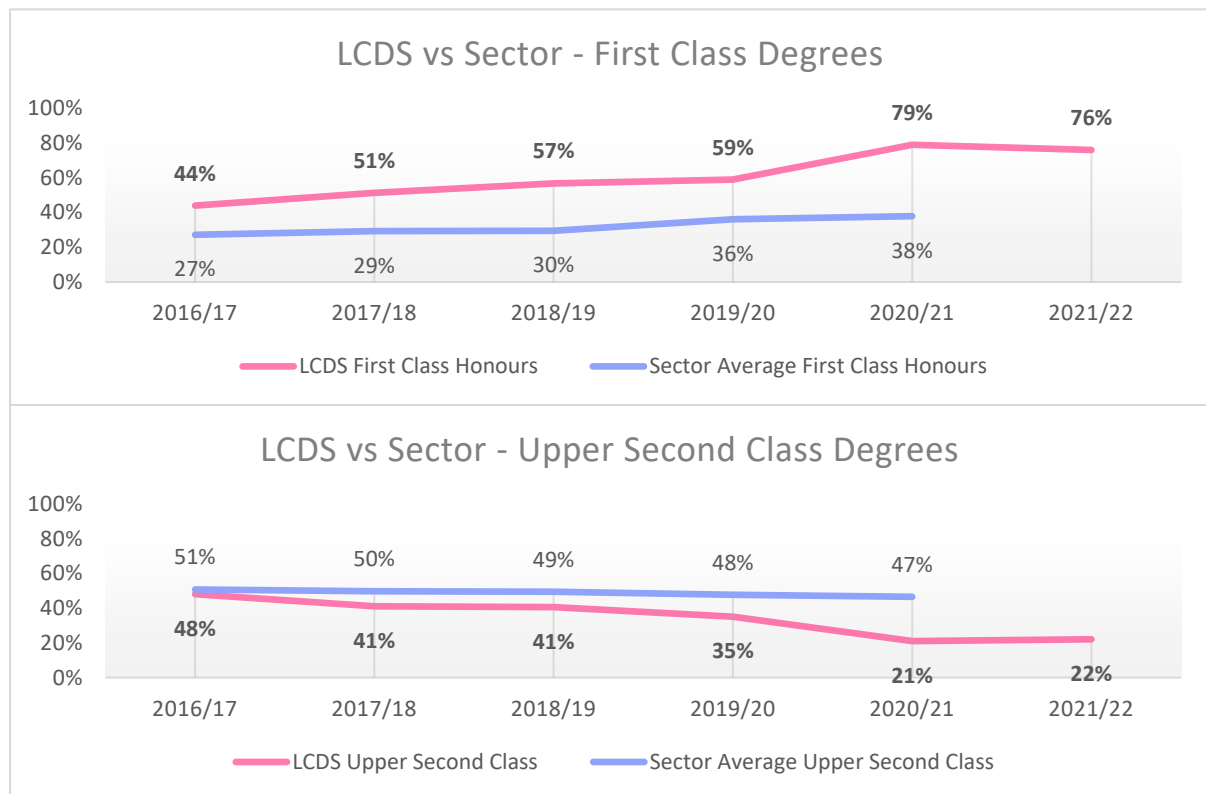


**Degree Outcomes Statement – London Contemporary Dance School
Nov 2022**

London Contemporary Dance School (LCDS), The Place is a small and specialist institution currently offering one degree programme at FHEQ level 6: BA (Hons) Contemporary Dance. Up until September 2021, the course was validated by the University of Kent, and the final cohort to graduate with a degree from University of Kent will be in July 2023. During the 2020/21 academic year the course was revalidated, and from September 2021 the course is validated by the University of the Arts London (UAL).

Degree Classification Profile

The graphs below summarise the trends in degree outcomes considered in this report.



Overall, the proportion of “good degrees” (those awarded a First Class or Upper Second class degree classification) has fluctuated over the last five years, ranging from 92% in 2017/18, to 100% in 2020/21 and in 2021/22 it was 98%.

Within this the proportion of students receiving a First Class honours, however, steadily rose from 44% in 2016/17 to 79% in 2020/21, although has dropped again in 2021/22 to 76%. Several no-detriment measures were introduced by the University of Kent in 2019/20 and 2020/21 which were intended to offset the disruption to student learning experience caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and may be one indicating factor of the increase in 2019/20 and 2020/21.

When focusing on Disability and Ethnicity, no attainment gaps have been identified for students obtaining a good degree. When looking solely at students gaining a First class degree, the data varies year on year, but no clear attainments gaps have been identified for

BAME students compared to white students. However, students with a declared disability typically perform lower than students without a disability, for example in 2021/22 there was a 26% attainment gap, with 57% of students with a declared disability gaining a First compared with 83% of students without a disability.

Also, the number of good degrees overall is above the national average. One factor for this is due to the nature of the course being highly intensive and students being accepted through audition. Another is due to being in receipt of ISTA funding during the years covered in this review, which is targeted support for small and specialist institutes, and has allowed us to deliver higher contact hours. Overall, this means students are highly motivated to study and their achievements are often very good and higher than the national average.

LCDS will monitor the high level of good degrees awarded, focusing on any potential effects of the newly validated course and change in assessment practices and classification algorithms.

Assessment and Marking Practices

LCDS is subject to and adheres to the assessment practices of the validating university including marking scale, degree algorithms and internal and external moderation processes. These practices align with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, with thorough processes in place to ensure that assessment and marking practices operate in accordance with the expectations, core practices and other reference points (e.g. Subject Benchmark Statements and Degree Classification Descriptors). LCDS also has its own Quality Handbook which outlines the internal processes for following and ensuring adherence with the validating universities assessment practices.

All marking is undertaken either by a group of assessors, or by a first marker, and then moderated by another examiner. Assessment and marking practices are reviewed by the Board of Examiners which operate with a member of academic staff at the validating university as Chair, and an external examiner.

The external examiner produces an annual report providing informed and impartial assurance of the academic standards achieved, both in comparison to the FHEQ and those at other universities in the UK, and comment on the reliability of assessment and marking practices and on the standards achieved by students. These reports are reviewed internally at LCDS by the Academic Board and a response written with actions highlighted.

Academic Governance

LCDS Academic Board maintains oversight of student attainment and degree outcomes through a detailed report received annually. The report also benchmarks against national averages and trends, and against other comparable courses. Degree outcomes are also considered in the Annual Monitoring Reports which are reviewed by Academic Board before being sent to the validating universities. On top of this the External Examiner Reports and Responses are considered and received by the Academic Board.

A report is also compiled annually for the Board of Governors on academic practice and standards within LCDS. Student observers also sit on the Board of Governors in order to provide additional assurance to the governing body.

Classification Algorithms

For the degrees awarded up until July 2023 by the University of Kent, two methods of classification were used, in alignment with their classification system. These are the 'average' method and the 'preponderance' method, with students awarded the better result achieved under either methodology. Classification under the 'average' method is based on the calculation of a final weighted course average mark, whilst the 'preponderance' method of classification requires the achievement of a final weighted course average mark that falls within 3% of the boundary for a higher class band and for at least 50% of the contributing credits to be achieved in that higher band. Condonement and compensation may be applied to relevant modules up to 25% of the credit required for the stage, and students are normally allowed a maximum of two reassessment opportunities where a module has been failed and compensation or condonement has not been applied.

In 2023/24, the first cohort of the newly validated course through UAL will graduate, and the degrees will be calculated using UAL classification algorithm. UAL also use a dual algorithm under which two results are calculated and the one that provides a better result is used, these are: the final year, level 6, calculation and a combination of unit results at levels 5 and 6. The results will be analysed with the change of validated to assess any impact it has on student grades.

Teaching Practices and Learning Resources

The BA course is highly intensive and has a high number of contact hours. Feedback is delivered regularly in classes, along with one-one tutorials and through written assessment reports. Recent staff training sessions have been held to address external examiner comments on inconsistency in lengths of feedback students received, with progress in this area being recognised by the external examiner.

Over the last year several staff have been working to gain fellowships with the Higher Education Academy (Advance HE), with a target for 50% of core faculty to gain fellowship.

The development of online resources became a key priority during the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing students greater access to online library resources in particular. Blended learning developments over the last couple of years have also enabled staff to gain greater expertise in delivering and adapting sessions for online and blended learning. Also, over the last few years the Virtual Learning Environment has changed and developed to become more of a central resource to students' learning alongside their practical training.

Due to NSS scores around Learning Resources, focus in the 22/23 year will be to establish a closer relationship between different learning resources as well as gaining a greater understanding of students perceptions of the resources on offer.

Identifying Good Practice and Actions

External examiners regularly comment on the high quality of student work and note that all degrees awarded are appropriate for the level and achievement of the students.

Alongside this, the external examiners often praise the high standard of teaching and professionalism of staff and students. Also, student satisfaction around the teaching on the course, academic support and learning opportunities have also been largely above sector average on the NSS for the last 5 years. Having opportunities to work with a range of

professional artists alongside teaching staff who are active in the field allow students reach the high standards noted by the external examiner and achieve excellent outcomes.

Risks and Challenges

One key challenge is the attainment gap between students with declared disability compared to those with no disability. Work is being undertaken to raise greater awareness of the Disabled Students Allowance, and the extra support this can bring, including mentoring, and staff are encouraging more eligible students to apply for it. We will continue to monitor the uptake of DSA and other support systems within the school, against the impact this has on student attainment.

Another is the increase in Firsts awarded over the last five years; however, this will be monitored closely and the impact of the newly validated course and change in validating university will play a key part in any conversations and analysis.

As a small and specialist institution, identifying clear trends with small data sets can be tricky, and the capacity and resource available to monitor, review and instigate developments can be limited and slower to progress. However, we are committed to taking a strategic approach to enabling student achievement and protecting the value and credibility of the degrees awarded.