

MAC Review of the Shortage Occupation List

This form is for anyone providing evidence of current sector/wider recruitment shortages, evidence provided on behalf of members, or from academic institutions, and think tanks. Please use this form to gather evidence for completion of the online form.

About you

1. What is the name of your organisation?

Society of London Theatre and UK Theatre

2. What is your email address?

louise@soltukt.co.uk

3. Please indicate if you would like to be added to our database for future research purposes and updates on MAC work.

Yes.

4. What is your type of organisation

Business sector representative/bodies including recruitment agencies

5. Please tell us the location of your organisation (Please select all that apply.)

UK wide

6. Please indicate which of the options below best explain your reason for completing this online form.

I would like to provide evidence on sector/wider shortages on behalf of members or as a recruitment business.

Your evidence

**25. Please indicate from which of these industries are you providing evidence?
(Please select all that apply).**

- All sectors
- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
- Mining and Quarrying Activities
- Manufacturing
- Energy
- Water supply, sewerage, waste management
- Construction
- Wholesale and Retail Trade
- Transport
- Warehousing
- Accommodation and Hospitality
- Media and Communications
- IT
- Financial and Insurance
- Professional Services
- Administrative and Support Service Activities

- Public Administration
- Education
- Health
- Residential and Social Care
- X Creative Arts and Entertainment
- Other (please specify):

26. If you wish, you can provide details of individual jobs titles you/your members have found hard to fill in the boxes below (maximum of 10). Please help us by matching the job titles you have provided with the closest standardised ONS job title and associated 4-digit occupation (SOC) code using the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Occupation Tool – https://onsdigital.github.io/dp-classification-tools/standard-occupational-classification/ONS_SOC_occupation_coding_tool.html. There is also space to list the sector(s) where shortages of candidates to fill these job titles has been most acute. If providing this information, please refer to the list in question 24.

Job title	Closest ONS job title	Closest ONS occupation code (4 digit)	Sector(s) most affected
Skilled Classical Ballet Dancer	Ballet dancer	3414	Creative Arts and Entertainment
Skilled Contemporary Dancer	Dancer	3414	Creative Arts and Entertainment
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

If there are more than 10 jobs in shortage, please use this space to provide the job titles, closest ONS job title, ONS occupation code and sector most affected as above.

27. What do you think are the main reasons for job shortages (answered in the question above), and or wider shortages in the sector(s)? (Not to exceed 500 words).

Only a limited number of dancers, worldwide, meet the standards of the UK's leading dance companies. The following are required:

- i) innate ability: similarly to sportspeople, a significant amount of talent or innate ability is required to perform at the highest professional level.
- ii) length of training: dance, like sport, involves a huge amount of training to reach professional status. The required commitment and time contribute to the shortage.
- iii) funding for training: scholarships and Government schemes help, but without significant and prolonged Government investment, the limited supply of British dancers will continue.

iv) an exceptionally high degree of skill and experience:

A skilled classical ballet dancer will:

- a. have advanced technical and artistic ability;
- b. be able to perform a broad range of repertoire to world class standards at a major venue;
- c. have full knowledge of the theory and techniques of classical ballet;
- d. have a broad knowledge of classical repertoire;

- e. demonstrate the aesthetic standards required by a style of choreography through their physique/body form and physical fitness;
- f. have acting ability and artistic interpretation of a role;
- g. be able to work extensively in the styles and techniques of different choreographers on new and existing works;

A skilled contemporary dancer will:

- h. have advanced technical ability, and be highly skilled in performance and in contributing creatively to the making of new work;
- i. be a specialist who may be highly trained in the specific movement genre of a particular company or choreographer;

Job descriptions are not commonly used for dancers but, to assist the MAC, we have compiled descriptions (attached) of the range of skills sought by the leading dance companies.

- v) short career: dancers tend to retire in their 20s and 30s due to the physical demands of the job;
- vi) specific factors:
 - a. male dancers need to be tall enough to partner other dancers (and, in the case of ballet, female dancers on pointe) and able to lift them;
 - b. there is a shortage of dancers from a diverse background;
 - c. in the case of contemporary dance:
 - i. the dancers need to be suited to the particular choreography. One company reports that it finds it challenging to recruit dancers (particularly male) within the UK with a combination of high level skills in a range of dance styles;
 - ii. the American provenance of many key contemporary dance techniques mean that those techniques are more widely taught in the United States;

- iii. some choreographers use techniques or traditional dance forms that are not taught, or are only just beginning to be taught, in the EEA, eg Asian dance skills;
- iv. some companies' aesthetics are based on diversity of dance skills, looks and background;
- v. one dance company reports a shortage of British skilled, disabled contemporary dancers.

Other factors:

- vii) Worldwide shortage: the UK's leading companies are competing with the world's other top companies for the best dancers.
- viii) School children have an ever-wider range of extra-curricular activities to choose from.

28. Please explain what measures have been taken to reduce shortages in the sector as informed by your members and or research. (Not to exceed 500 words).

The dance companies and choreographers work very closely with the dance schools to ensure that students are trained towards the requisite standards. Contact is also maintained through industry bodies such as One Dance UK and the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre Education and Training (CDMT).

Numerous activities are conducted to attract and nurture home-grown talent. For example:

- i) The Royal Ballet runs a nationwide 'Chance to Dance' programme for children to participate in ballet and dance.
- ii) The Royal Ballet is a partner in an annual worldwide digital event, World Ballet Day. Classes, rehearsals and interviews with dancers and staff are streamed on Facebook and the Royal Opera House website. Figures for UK based viewers are typically over 100,000.
- iii) The Royal Opera House works collaboratively with dance education partners to model best practice in the teaching of ballet and establish more accessible pathways.
- iv) The Royal Opera House has recently launched a new initiative to introduce ballet to very

young children through creative movement and dance.

- v) Through its Academy, Northern Ballet runs a variety of programmes, including “Spotted”, an outreach programme offering the opportunity for children who perhaps would not otherwise have had access to dance to develop their skills and talent.
- vi) Birmingham Royal Ballet runs many activities: Insight Days, Dance Track, community engagement work, family workshops, and the First Steps programme of performances specially designed for families and young children.
- vii) Birmingham Royal Ballet has run Dance Track for 20 years to offer free ballet training to talented primary school children who would not normally have this opportunity.
- viii) Scottish Ballet runs various school affiliate programmes to promote ballet. It also partners the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in producing a BA in Modern Ballet.
- ix) Candoco provides training opportunities for disabled and non-disabled dancers. It also regularly holds teacher training days to provide professional development opportunities for dance teachers and to develop more, and improved, inclusive dance training.
- x) Motionhouse seeks to train and develop young dancers in the skills it requires through apprenticeships.
- xi) the Royal Ballet School runs an Associates programme which offers pre-vocational ballet training for 8 to 15-year olds in 8 national locations;
- xii) Elmhurst School for Dance runs the Elmhurst Associate Programme which offers pre-vocational ballet training for 8 to 11-year olds in 4 cities;
- xiii) Each year the National Youth Dance Company, run by Sadler’s Wells and funded by the DfE and ACE, provides 30 new 16 to 19-year-old dancers (up to 24 years old if deaf or disabled) with intensive training and performance opportunities led by world-leading choreographers;
- xiv) Rambert2, a partnership between Rambert and Rambert School, aims to enable dancers at an early stage in their careers to attain the highest levels of artistic, creative and technical excellence and work towards an MA in Professional Dance Performance.
- xv) Rambert runs a programme of 36 weekly dance classes and summer schools across the UK which help prepare young people for vocational training as dancers.

29. Have these measures worked, if not why? (Not to exceed 500 words).

Some of the measures in our answer to Q28 have yielded varying degrees of success (see below). However, given the factors stated in our answer to Q27, despite the combined ongoing efforts of the dance schools and the dance companies to attract, train and upskill the resident labour force, “skilled classical ballet dancer” and “skilled contemporary dancer” remain shortage occupations. It is unlikely that the requirements of the leading dance companies – and even more so for “niche” companies such as Rambert, Candoco and those based in a specific ethnic tradition – will ever be entirely met by the resident labour force.

The Royal Ballet’s “The Chance to Dance programme” is a long-term investment and it is too early to see what impact the overhauled programme will have as the current participants are of primary and secondary school age.

Over the past 4 years Northern Ballet has recruited at least one dancer from the Academy each year. In terms of programmes like “Spotted,” this is a longer-term commitment.

Whilst Birmingham Royal Ballet’s Dance Track has been successful in enabling talented individuals to access both pre-vocational and vocational training, no professional dancer has yet been recruited from the programme into the company and only approximately 2 graduates in 20 years have progressed to professional careers with one of the major ballet companies.

10 former Dance Track students have entered full-time vocational training in the last 10 years and since 2017 over 20 have either joined, or been offered places on, the Royal Ballet School and Elmhurst School for Dance Associate programmes. Dance Track graduates regularly dance as children with Birmingham Royal Ballet.

Candoco is beginning to see alumni from its youth dance company (Cando2) going on to progress in their training, with young dancers recently joining the National Youth Dance Company and The Place CAT scheme.

Motionhouse has had some success in that a recent apprentice successfully auditioned and is now a full-time company member.

Rambert’s classes are very popular, but it is too early to say whether Rambert2 will be successful.

Through its relationship with English National Ballet School, English National Ballet was able to offer four contracts to the school this year and there is 100% employment among the graduating students. This is because the standard and skills of the school dancers have improved, making them more suitable for recruitment. This is due to the teaching being better aligned with the vision and repertoire of the company and more involvement from the Artistic Director, English National Ballet teachers and dancers, as well as guest choreographers and teachers from outside the UK in training the students.

30. Are the jobs that you have said are in shortage, open to eligible workers from the Tier 2 points-based visa system?

Yes

No

31. If known, how many workers from outside of the UK have been recruited using the Tier 2 points-based visa system in the past 12 months, stating the job titles. (Not to exceed 500 words).

Skilled classical ballet dancers: c17

Skilled contemporary dancers: c 3

There are c50 dancers currently employed from outside the EEA under Tier 2 across the UK's ballet and contemporary dance companies.

32. If you have supporting evidence such as survey results from members please attach here. Please remember to omit sensitive details before attaching.

Job descriptions are not commonly used for dancers but, to assist the MAC, we have compiled descriptions (attached) of the range of skills sought by the leading dance companies for the occupations of skilled contemporary dancer and skilled ballet dancer.

32. If you have any other information that might be useful for our call for evidence please use the space below to explain (Not to exceed 500 words).

Recruiting from outside the EEA

Dance companies always look to recruit from within the EEA first (see comments re Brexit below), not least because recruiting non-EEA dancers is expensive. However, recruitment for the requisite talent requires an international talent search on a continual basis. The leading companies will employ British or EEA dancers wherever possible, but if a non-EEA national is the best candidate, he or she will be appointed in order to maintain the company's high standards.

Brexit

The majority of our leading dance companies have EU dancers and, due to the worldwide shortage of dancers of the requisite high standards, will continue to need to recruit from Europe, as well as internationally, after the UK has left the EU.

We understand from the Government's White Paper, 'The UK's future skills-based immigration system', that the post-Brexit system will offer no preferential treatment for EU migrants.

Whilst the Government proposes to remove the resident labour market test, we note that the SOL will remain and that there is a suggestion in the White Paper that there may be some flexibility in the minimum salary threshold where skills are in shortage.

The relevance of the SOL to dance companies is likely to increase as EU dancers are brought within the system. This will apply both to dance companies which currently use Tier 2 and others which do not (as they are currently able to fill their recruitment needs with dancers from the UK and the EU).

This submission is made by:

- Society of London Theatre and UK Theatre are trade associations representing the interests of those engaged in the production and presentation of medium to large-scale dramatic and lyric theatre in the UK. Their members, drawn from the subsidised and

commercial theatre, together number c470 and include theatres, arts centres and touring venues, major national companies, producers, and opera and dance companies.

- Independent Theatre Council is the management association for 450+ performing arts organisations and individuals working in the fields of drama, dance, opera and music theatre, mime and physical theatre, circus, puppetry, street arts and mixed media. ITC members are based throughout the UK and work extensively both nationally and across the world producing some of the best new work in the performing arts today.
- One Dance UK is an advocacy body, the Sector Support Organisation for dance and the Subject Association for dance in schools, with over 1500 individual and organisational members, ranging from schools to theatres like Sadler's Wells and dance companies like the National Dance Company Wales, and individuals working in a range of dance-related roles, including dancers, dance teachers, choreographers, managers, producers, researchers and healthcare practitioners.
- National Campaign for the Arts is the UK's independent campaigning organisation for the arts. It provides a voice for the sector and ensures that artists, arts organisations, the media and politicians have access to relevant, robust data and intelligence to effectively make the case for the arts.

For further information, please contact:

Louise Norman

SOLT and UK Theatre

louise@soltukt.co.uk

33. Please use this space to let us know if you experienced any difficulties in using this online form. (Not to exceed 500 words).

It has been extremely difficult to condense the key points to be made in response to each question into 500 words. It would have been helpful to have some flexibility on the word limit but we found that we could not submit a response unless it was 500 words or less.

As we need to keep a record of our response, it would be particularly useful to have an

option to print a final version of the whole response.

The question which appears as Q32 in the annex in the consultation document does not appear as one of the highlighted questions. Instead it is attached to a comment box, which meant that it was easily missed.

Continued...

MAC Review of the Shortage Occupation List

32. If you have supporting evidence such as survey results from members please attach here. Please remember to omit sensitive details before attaching.

Job descriptions are not commonly used for dancers but, to assist the MAC, we have compiled descriptions (attached) of the range of skills sought by the leading dance companies for the occupations of skilled contemporary dancer and skilled ballet dancer.

Continued...

Job Description/Person Specification – Skilled Contemporary Dancer - Rambert Dance Company

Job Description

To attend class (6 per week), rehearse and dance such parts as the Company may call upon you to play, including supporting activities such as photo shoots, workshops, open days etc.

Person Specification

Innate ability

- Able to demonstrate that technical skill is infused with a personal quality, that quality being right for the style of the company.

Training

- Trained and skilled in both ballet and contemporary dance techniques (preferably Cunningham).

Physical attributes

- Able to demonstrate the levels of flexibility (especially of the spine), strength and stamina necessary to undertake a wide range of roles and to train, rehearse and perform 6 days a week.
- Excellent level of fitness and resistance to injury (your musculoskeletal system will be examined to assess the likelihood of future injury e.g. hip-knee-ankle alignment and your injury history will be reviewed).
- Able to jump and turn, and for male dancers, able to lift other dancers.
- Able to demonstrate a wide range of movement, from the elongation and extensions required by ballet techniques to displaying grounded movement and a sense of weight for contemporary techniques.

Repertoire

- Able to quickly learn a wide range of repertoire.
- Able to perform to the highest professional standard, in front of an audience in a major venue, such as Sadler's Wells.
- Good working knowledge of dance terminology.
- Able to demonstrate musicality.
- Able to take direction from choreographers and interpret their requirements.
- Able to contribute to the process of creating new works.
- Likely to have experience of working with a range of respected choreographers.

Availability

- Free of any commitments that would prevent you from regularly touring with the company, both in the UK and overseas.

Job Description/Person Specification - Skilled Classical Ballet Dancer – Entry Level (Corps de Ballet)

This is a description of what the leading ballet companies look for when recruiting dancers at entry level. Recruitment to higher ranks calls for the same, plus significant additional innate ability and experience at elite level.

NB Outside innate ability, these requirements may vary slightly from one company to another.

Job Description

- To attend class (4 to 6 per week), rehearse and dance (or understudy) such parts as the Company may call upon you to play, including supporting activities such as photo shoots, workshops, open days etc.
- To maintain the highest standards of attendance, reliability, teamwork and professionalism in all aspects of the work
- To manage own learning and continuous development
- To contribute to a culture of continuous improvement

Person Specification

Innate ability

The personal quality with which a dancer infuses their technical skill and which determines whether they are right for the particular style of the company.

Physical attributes

- Able to demonstrate the levels of flexibility (especially of the spine), strength and stamina necessary to undertake a wide range of roles and to train, rehearse and perform 6 days a week.
- Excellent level of fitness, physique and resistance to injury.
- Able to complement the existing corps de ballet in height, build and physique.
- Able to jump and turn, and for male dancers, able to lift other dancers.
- For female dancers, able to perform extensively on pointe; able to perform with partners for jumps, lifts and throws.
- Able to demonstrate a wide range of movement to the aesthetic standard required by classical ballet technique, and new classical ballet choreography.

Skills and knowledge

- Good knowledge of the classical ballet repertoire (including learning full length ballets).
- The ability to learn quickly and retain information to perform different roles in a range of ballets.

- Highly organised and disciplined approach, able to respond effectively to short notice demands of the schedule.
- The ability to work with a high volume workload.
- A very good knowledge of ballet theory including notation, terminology, mime and history of ballet.
- A good understanding of and ability to perform different choreographic styles.
- The ability to perform in costume in classical or modern classical repertoire to a high professional standard, in front of an audience in a major venue.
- Musicality, and good acting ability or character interpretation as required, to provide artistic interpretation within the role.
- Desirable - prize winner at one of the UK ballet schools or a Prix de Lausanne international prize winner, or able to demonstrate equivalent standard of talent.

Qualifications

It is desirable, but not essential, for dancers to have completed:

- the Trinity College National Diploma in Professional Dance (NVQ level 6) or the BA in Modern Ballet at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland;
- the National Certificate in Professional Dance (NVQ level 4);
- one A-Level;
- and two BTEC National Awards in Performing Arts (Dance and Arts Management) (NVQ level 4)¹.

Training

Dancers will have normally completed a full-time three-year course in classical ballet training, for students aged 16 – 18, at one of the UK ballet schools (the Royal Ballet School, the English National Ballet School, Elmhurst School for Dance and Central School of Ballet), or through Scottish Ballet's Associates Programme, or at an institution of a similar standard outside the UK.

The dance training covers classical ballet, pas de deux, solos, repertoire, character, contemporary, stagecraft, make-up and body conditioning. In the third and final year the students gain performance experience by performing with a leading professional company and as a touring group.

(Prior to this training at tertiary level education, a minimum of two years' training will have been undertaken, although this would be exceptionally short compared to the average. Normally, training starts for girls at 3 or 4 years old and for boys at 7 or 8. From this age until 15 or 16, the individual will be intensively trained alongside their conventional education. At 15/16 the tertiary education begins. It is therefore quite usual to see 10 years' training in ballet before the requisite technical capabilities are developed for work in a professional company.)

¹ According to the [London School of Economics'](#) Research Lab, the following qualifications are equivalent to graduate level or NVQ 4:

- BTEC Higher National Certificate ([HNC](#))
- Higher National Diploma ([HND](#))
- [City & Guilds](#) Full Technological Certificate / Diploma.