

Introduction

The Conservatoire for Dance and Drama is a formal collaboration among six member schools and two affiliate schools¹ who are committed to the delivery of world leading education and specialist vocational training in the performing arts. The Conservatoire trains the performing artists and production professionals of the future: actors, circus artists, dancers, stage managers, technical theatre practitioners, choreographers and directors.

Within the Conservatoire, there is a balance between the art forms of dance, drama and circus arts, and between classical and contemporary styles. Internationally renowned centres of training, the schools are also creative laboratories: inviting national and international artists to work with students and supporting emerging writers, directors and choreographers in creating and showcasing new work.

In 2017-18, the Conservatoire commissioned the International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS) at the University of Derby to conduct an in-depth qualitative study of graduate journeys into employment. The final report² recommended that a larger scale study be conducted to explore resonance of the findings over a wider range of graduates and to explore the significance of relationships between the experiences and backgrounds of graduates. It is anticipated that the larger scale study would also identify areas where more graduate support may be needed and provide recommendations for support models. The project is supported by an industry steering group including professionals covering the major art forms for which the Conservatoire trains graduates.

Project Objectives

The proposed survey is part of a multi-phase project which aims to explore in greater depth the graduate journeys of Conservatoire graduates. The narrative of graduate success created through a reliance on Longitudinal Employment Outcomes (LEO) data and the findings of the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) is always only going to offer a partial picture of success for individuals undertaking conservatoire training. As these measures of success become central to measuring success in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and to support the case for future Institution specific targeted allocation (ISTA) funding, the Conservatoire will need to develop a robust evidence base to challenge the narrative in terms of what success looks like within a field characterised by portfolio careers and in an industry which is reliant on contract employment and often wages below that of other graduate professions. The Conservatoire is also committed, as part of its Widening Access and Success Strategy, to achieving a better understanding of the achievement and experiences of its diverse body of students.

Objectives:

- To develop a more detailed understanding of how our students and graduates' progress into, and maintain a sustained career in their art form, including how our graduates shape the future of the art forms;

¹ See www.cdd.ac.uk for more details

² Copies of this report are available to those submitting an expression of interest to support the submission of a full proposal

- To identify and understand the diverse career paths of our graduates, whether these are more or less directly linked to the skills and experiences linked to conservatoire training;
- To understand how the conservatoire training supports or contributes to the diverse career paths of our graduates;
- To develop a robust evidence base to influence public policy in terms of what graduate success looks like in the performing arts;
- To explore and determine what success looks like in the context of conservatoire education and training in the performing arts.

Rationale for Survey

The key issues raised in the report from the iCeGS qualitative study were as follows:

- Graduates of the Conservatoire schools follow a range of employment trajectories. Most are at a graduate level and in the arts.
- Career journeys may change over time, characterised by periods of stability and uncertainty that may not be captured in a single snapshot.
- Employment often involves a juggling mixture of stopgap jobs and longer-term contracts.
- There were several emerging types of employment profile, often relating to the art form within which the graduates had trained.
- Artistic integrity and quality of artistic work was valued by graduates over income and employment in particular roles.
- The training in Conservatoire schools provides the basis for successful careers by developing social and cultural capital but there could be areas where the Conservatoire could extend additional support to graduates as they develop their careers.

The full report will be provided to interested parties whose expressions of interest are taken forward to the next stage. The first phase identified a need to give further thought to the need to measure 'success' in a Conservatoire context and how graduates shape the 'art form' which would both need to be key issues explored with the Survey.

Intellectual Property

The Conservatoire would expect to retain ownership of the data collection tool for future use and exploitation within and beyond higher education.

Project Brief

- Development of a suitable measure for 'success' in the context of Conservatoire training and how graduates 'shape the art form' which will require also some limited additional qualitative work with stakeholders to inform this should form part of the proposal.
- A survey that captures the employment paths of students working directly in the arts field, associated fields and less directly associated fields.
- An online, student-centred, and user-friendly survey tool³ that has been tested with students for ongoing use to capture the experiences of a wider group of students and graduates that could also be used more widely in the sector to better evidence the success of arts and professionals
- Written report of the pilot of this instrument with any recommendations for its wider implementation and recommendations for models of graduate support.
- Raw data collected from the tool for future longitudinal analysis.

³ It is anticipated that the Survey created will be supplied in an online form that is suitable for collecting data and could be re-used in future years to gather data. The survey and its delivery mechanism comprise the 'tool'

- A standalone user guide to enable the Conservatoire to administer and analyse future iterations of the survey.

Project costing

Interested parties should submit a fixed price cost for the project and provide a breakdown of these costs. The anticipated budget available for the project **would not exceed £20,000**

Project Timescales

Expression of Interest published	6 th February 2019
Deadline for expressions of interest	21 st February 2019
Provision of further materials to interested parties	w/c 25 th February 2019
Deadline for proposals for work	8 th March 2019
Shortlisting and potential face to face meetings	w/c 11 th March 2019
Work to commence	8 th April 2019
Project outputs to be completed by	30 th August 2019

How to respond to this expression of interest

Initially the Conservatoire is seeking indicative written quotes or proposals **by 21st February 2019** from parties interested in developing the survey and associated outputs. These proposals should include information on the expertise the proposed team have in this area and a proposed methodology. It should also highlight any potential challenges or limitations anticipated in addressing the brief.

Following the closing date for expressions of interest, interested parties will be contracted with details of the next steps that will include a more substantial proposal and additionally may include a face-to-face meeting with key stakeholders from the Conservatoire. Those parties whose proposals that are pursued further will be expected to provide more detailed costings and proposals **by 8th March 2019**.

Organisational contacts

The primary contacts for this project are as follows:

For expressions of interest: Jon Rainford – Widening Participation and Access Co-ordinator
jon.rainford@cdd.ac.uk

For final proposals: Nick Holland – Academic Registrar
nick.holland@cdd.ac.uk

Paul Rummer – Chair of Steering Group
 Principal Bristol Old Vic Theatre School