



PROFESSIONAL BACHELOR IN DANCE

P.A.R.T.S. - PERFORMING ARTS RESEARCH AND TRAINING STUDIOS VZW

INITIAL ACCREDITATION • COMMITTEE REPORT

4 MARCH 2019





Table of contents

1	Executive summary	4
2	Description of the programme	6
2.1	Overview.....	6
2.2	Profile of the institution	6
2.3	Profile of the programme	6
3	Assessment per generic quality guarantee	8
3.1	Intended exit level (generic quality guarantee 1).....	8
3.2	Teaching-learning environment (generic quality guarantee 2).....	11
3.3	Exit level to be achieved (generic quality guarantee 3)	15
3.4	Set-up and organization of the internal quality assurance (generic quality guarantee 4).....	16
4	Assessment procedure.....	19
4.1	The procedure	19
4.2	Committee report.....	20
5	Overview of the assessments	21
	Annex 1: General information institution and programme	22
	Annex 2: Discipline-specific learning outcomes.....	24
	Annex 3: Composition of the committee	26
	Annex 4: Schedule of the site visit	27
	Annex 5: Documents reviewed	29
	Annex 6: List of abbreviations.....	30

1 Executive summary

The Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) received a request for an initial accreditation from Performing Arts Research and Training Studios (P.A.R.T.S.: hereafter PARTS) for an initial bachelor's programme. PARTS seeks initial accreditation for the proposed degree *Professional Bachelor in Dance*, offered in full-time mode. The discipline-specific learning results for the Professional Bachelor in Dance were approved on 24 September 2018.

The expert committee was convened by the NVAO and agreed to by the institution. The committee has examined the available information. During a site visit it discussed the proposed programme with representatives of the institution, (former) students and the professional field. Based on this information the committee report to the board of the NVAO contains a positive advice.

PARTS has been present in the Belgian dance education scene since 1995, as an established school for contemporary dance. The school is funded by the Flanders Ministry of Education. Dance is approached from the broad perspective of the performing arts as a whole. The education consists of two cycles: a three-year Training programme, followed by a two-year Studio programme for making work. The proposed programme in dance is based on the current Training cycle. It prepares the students to work as independent dancers and choreographers, developing their creative voices and their dance skills in the broadest sense, under the guidance of trained artists and teachers for a transfer of experience. The programme provides a response to developments within the professional field, as a recognised diploma will provide students with more possibilities.

Both the design of the programme, that corresponds with the developments in the contemporary dance scene, and its flexibility support students to develop as artists. The committee highly values the quality of the teaching staff and facilities, the intensive tutoring of students and the structural involvement of the professional field in the programme (guest teachers). While technique is a fundamental part of the programme, an important balance has been found between theory and practice. Students develop a set of competencies, which are related to four areas: creativity and performance, theory and reflection, communication and interprofessional collaboration and transfer to the professional world. The learning outcomes are highly relevant in the eyes of the committee. There is a well-thought-out vision on the level at which students from a professional bachelor's programme in Dance should graduate. The documented success of PARTS graduates provides an additional guarantee that the intended exit level meets the demands of the international work field.

PARTS has a well-developed evaluation system that provides an integral assessment of the development of students. The permanent and qualitative evaluation fit the system of the school and facilitate the learning process of students. The committee values the role of the tutors, who provide structural feedback and at the same time safeguard the overall perspective. Furthermore, the formal evaluation at the end of each semester and the deliberation committee support the adequacy of the evaluation system. However, the committee encourages the programme to be more transparent about the specific relation between assessment criteria and learning outcomes through further formal specifications on the rather holistic integral assessment.

The committee considers the system for quality management of a sufficient standard. Although the system could be more formalised to ensure continuity, the committee recognises that a complete formalisation is not desirable, since this might oppose the specificity and unique selling point of PARTS, which has been a success factor since the foundation of the school.

There is a coherent consultation structure, through which all stakeholders, including the professional field, are involved in the quality control of the organisation. The structure and character of the school facilitate a permanent optimisation of the programme. Moreover, the committee establishes a sufficient and true quality culture throughout the whole institution. The committee sees an impressive continuous development, which has led to a stable and inspiring environment for dance students.

The Hague, 4 March 2019

On behalf of the expert committee convened to assess the bachelor's programme in Dance:

Prof. dr. Bart Verschaffel
(committee chair)

Carlijn Braam MA
(secretary)

2 Description of the programme

2.1 Overview

Country	Flanders (Belgium)
Institution	P.A.R.T.S. - Performing Arts Research and Training Studios
Programme	Professional Bachelor in Dance
Language of instruction	English
Level and orientation	Academic Initial Bachelor
Number of credits	180 credits
Location	Van Volxemlaan 164 1190 Brussels, Belgium
Study mode	Full time
Domain of study	Music and performing arts

2.2 Profile of the institution

PARTS, Performing Arts Research and Training Studios, was founded in 1995 as a new school for contemporary dance to fill the gap that was left when Maurice Béjart's dancing school École Mudra was closed in 1988. The institution was set up by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, choreographer and artistic director of the dance company Rosas, and Bernard Foccroulle, director of the opera house De Munt/La Monnaie in Brussels. Guiding principles behind the school's development are De Keersmaeker's methods, but the artistic practice of other artists is also apparent in the programme. PARTS' main goal is to train independent dancers and choreographers. Belgium hosts a significant and impactful base in contemporary dance internationally. To maintain this significance, a focus on the sustainability of the dance artist is important.

As of 1997 the institution is funded by the Government of Flanders. Since 2002, financing by the Government of Flanders has been carried out on the basis of management agreements that are renewed every five years, the current one running from 2017 to 2021. According to the requirements in this agreement, the school population of every new cycle consists of approximately 45 students (selected through an extensive audition procedure). In 2013 the educational structure changed to a five-year trajectory of two cycles: three years Training and two years Studios. The three-year Training programme is about to complete its second edition (2016-2019). A fully re-designed two-year Studio programme will be organised for the first time in 2019-2021. Currently, PARTS is applying for recognition of the Training programme as a professional bachelor, starting from the cycle 2019-2022 (September 2019 until June 2022).

2.3 Profile of the programme

The proposed programme in dance is an initial bachelor's programme, primarily selecting students aged between 18 and 23 who are in a specific phase of their (artistic) development to enter the programme. The school aims to strengthen and enrich their dance skills in the broadest sense and to expose the students to professional working practice under the guidance of experienced artists and teachers for a transfer of experience. Technique is a fundamental part of the programme. However, it is essential to create one's own creative voice and personal profile. The curriculum reflects a balance between theory and practice, as both physical practice and an analytical approach are a necessity.

The proposed programme is the second Bachelor of Arts in Dance offered in Flanders, the first programme being offered by Artesis Plantijn University College. It is a full-time programme, spread out over the course of three years, based on the current form (since 2013) of the programme of the Training Cycle as a three-year curriculum.

3 Assessment per generic quality guarantee

This chapter presents the evaluation by the assessment committee of the four generic quality guarantees, which the NVAO Assessment Framework is comprised of. The committee has reproduced the criteria for each generic quality guarantee. For each generic quality guarantee the committee presents (1) a brief outline of its findings based on the programme documents, documents provided by the institution and the site visit, (2) the considerations the committee has taken into account and (3) the conclusion of the committee. The committee presents a conclusion for each of the four generic quality guarantees.

3.1 Intended exit level (generic quality guarantee 1)

With respect to level, orientation and content, the intended exit level reflects the current requirements that have been set for the programme by the professional field and/or discipline from an international perspective.

Outline of findings

Vision and culture of PARTS

Developing a system ankered in practice, PARTS has been closely linked to the artistic practice and vision of Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker. Nowadays, the school has created its own eclectic vision. With the dynamic system in place and the level of (external) input, the school is able to continually reconfigure. Students affirm that the presence and influence of De Keersmaeker - teaching intensively for the first time in this cycle – is felt as a point of reference, while PARTS is also influenced by other choreographers and follows its own path. The focus is on different processes (although not exhaustive), so students become equipped to adapt to new situations and techniques. This versatility is seen as an intrinsic value in itself. The school is also shaped by its students; with every cycle a fresh start is made. In the latest generation, a stronger female intellectual voice is heard, diminishing the differences between the sexes. For students, PARTS offers a diverse community culture as well as a profound learning experience, developing a students' taste, confidence and knowledge, and gradually expanding on this, with students being able to choose the repertoire. The teaching staff describes the culture as unique; the notion of discipline and work ethic is quite rare, especially in combination with the individual space for students, the strong peer culture among them and the receptivity and sensitivity of the school to what is relevant, under the guidance of the deputy director.

Aims of the programme

The recognition of a professional bachelor's programme fits the tendency of the school to create continuity and structure. The current application reflects the experience that PARTS has built up. Content and structures have been re-evaluated and where necessary adapted to new insights. The institutionalisation of the programme is seen as helpful by the highly diverse work field, to facilitate a cross-over between adjacent fields (e.g. research/education on an academic level). Furthermore, in the future, an academic master's programme – in association with a university – would offer added value to a professional bachelor's degree, by (further) bridging the gap between school and the work field and contributing to diverse career perspectives. In the opinion of the professional field PARTS has fit the academic criteria from the beginning onwards, integrating theory and practice, sharing knowledge and visibly contributing to the field. A recognised diploma would be a positive development. Simultaneously, the field would very much like to see the continuation of the current practice, supporting students and giving them the opportunity to finish the programme, in spite of, for instance, technical problems.

Selection

The extensive selection process is clearly presented by PARTS. Auditions take place every three years. The first phase includes 20-30 auditions in Brussels, Europe and around the world. The programme focuses on a wide influx of students from various nationalities. It is designed for 45 students in each cohort. All applicants need to have passed the full audition procedure. Additionally, they need a diploma of secondary studies and have to be aged between 17 and 23 in the year the cycle starts, although the audition committee can grant exceptions to this. Students also need to have a sufficient mastery of English (B2+ level) or are obliged to follow an intensive English course of 6 weeks in Belgium before the start of the programme.

Exit level

The programme defines fourteen course-specific learning outcomes, related to four areas of competences: creativity and performance, theory and reflection, communication and interprofessional collaboration and transfer to the professional world. Next to the general standards, students can set particular goals for themselves to reach through individual, tailor-made pathways and can go on to be either a dancer, a choreographer or a dance maker; alumni indicate they value these options. As for most students (for the large part, still very young), three years is too short to develop a creative practice, students interested in making work can continue their studies in the Studios cycle, a 2-year programme that focuses exclusively on choreographic research and creation.

All stakeholders feel that acquiring a recognised diploma has become more important, as the dance field has developed. Internationally, the diploma can function as a 'quality stamp' for students applying for scholarships and will help in a working environment, since dancers are being recruited all over the world. The diploma is also relevant for work in the educational field (e.g. teaching in music/dance schools), and for the pursuance of a (research) master's degree elsewhere, although some of the former students already have gained access to further studies on a master's and PhD level. As discussed with the committee during the site visit, a logical next step would be to look into the possibility of offering a formalised master's programme by PARTS. Both former and current students see the master's programme as a possible enrichment of their artistic work, offering more in-depth learning and research opportunities, and integration of knowledge. For some, this is an option to pursue later on in their careers, where one's artistic work can benefit from the mentorship and connections/interaction with the professional field offered by the school.

In general, PARTS alumni have been very successful in starting a career in the professional dance world as well as in other (related) fields (e.g. teaching dance), with many of them having taken up important positions in Belgium and abroad. Alumni stress the high standards of the school. They felt very stimulated by the careers of artists who graduated earlier. The employers the committee interviewed corroborated that they employ many students from different generations, who are very skilled at different levels: they are technical, with an open mind, able to adapt, have their own personality and a strong sense of creativity.

Cultural diversity

Students and alumni value the cosmopolitan aspect of the programme, with the relevant mixture of cultures and the close proximity of Brussels, which as the crossroads to Europe, renders a lot of potential. PARTS works with scholarships on a global level. The school pays explicit attention to diversity. The cultural diversity in the school is also highly valued, and is important for the field. The dance community is international with Belgian students auditioning all over Europe and vice versa. Currently, the composition of the (mostly young and white) student group, although from different nationalities and backgrounds, does not entirely reflect the national diversity aimed for. The aim is to focus on a Western perspective on contemporary dance with possible influences of dance cultures from around the world and to find a way to relate to the diversity in Flanders and in the professional field.

International students may come to PARTS to learn *different* dance styles than their own and are influenced by what they learn.

Teachers try to integrate diversity in their classes, taking into account the diverse population of the school and a variety of contexts, embracing different viewpoints, alongside the western canon. This approach is shared with new teachers. In the creation of work by students, there is ample room for diversity: not only in developing one's own work, according to personal interests, but also in evaluating the work of others in mentoring groups. Students feel they are moving forward as a group, learning from each other.

Orientation and workfield developments

In the three-year Training Cycle no programmatic distinction is made between 'practical technical' sections of the programme reserved for dancers and those related to 'artistic content', reserved for future choreographers. PARTS explicitly aims to broadly train students in both disciplines, since the separation between dancer and choreographer has faded in the current contemporary dance scene: as artists, both of them share the responsibility for co-creation in the artistic process.

During the site visit, representatives from the professional field were very positive about the extent to which developments in the field of Dance are reflected in the programme's profile. The broad approach of the programme corresponds with the developments in the contemporary dance scene, where more stress is put on the word *maker* (dancer as co-creator), although the term *choreographer* is still being used. As stated by the employers, the current generation of dancers has a broad, integrated profile.

International benchmark

Through intensive contact with the professional field (including the former students) from which it also recruits its teachers, PARTS remains aware of their perspective on the programme. In addition, a comparison was made between the working of PARTS to several similar programmes in Europe (in Germany, Austria, France, Great Britain, Finland, Sweden and Denmark). The findings of this first international benchmark were presented in an extensive annex to the application file (Benchmarking of higher education programmes for contemporary dance in Europe (2010-2016) – presentation of the data), placing the student populations, programmes, personnel, facilities and alumni careers of nine European higher education providers for contemporary dance in a comparative perspective, as far as data were available. PARTS is very cautious in drawing conclusions on the basis of this, since more data need to be gathered in follow-up studies and the institutions cannot be easily compared because they operate in different environments. One of the cautious conclusions is that PARTS is comparatively strict in the sense that it 'fails' students if they do not work sufficiently (this is rarely related to skills, but instead to aspects as working ethics and social relations). It also stands out because of its very large teaching staff, which works exclusively with short contracts.

Considerations

The committee is positive about the learning outcomes, that represent the bachelor's level and fit the design of the programme as a flexible, student-oriented curriculum. The learning outcomes are highly relevant according to new and dynamic markets, stressing individuality in relation to artistic profiling and new collective work formats. They include relevant aspects of diverse practices, ethics and communication, preparing for a sustainable (international) career. The profile and focus of the programme correspond with the developments in the contemporary dance scene, and are adapted if needed. The committee is very positive about the flexible and versatile nature of the programme, giving students the opportunity to create their own pathways. The programme supports the individual development and the ability to take responsibility for this continuous development.

There is a well-thought-out and justified vision on the level at which students from a professional bachelor's programme in Dance should graduate. The intended level prepares students to either continue as a dancer, choreographer or dance maker; or continue their studies in the Studios cycle or elsewhere. To the committee, the documented success of graduates is of major importance for guaranteeing the quality of the programme and the connection of the intended exit level with the demands of the international work field. Over the last twenty years, PARTS has proven that talented, professional and technically and artistically remarkable alumni were able to find important positions at the top of the artistic, international dance scene and develop internationally acclaimed careers. PARTS is feeding and inspiring a clearly defined and developed international professional work field which is carried by a network of influential festivals, venues and coproducers.

The committee concludes that the intended standard of artistic practice upon graduation is high and aligns with practice-based bachelor's programmes elsewhere in Europe. The continuity of the programme can be (further) ensured by the formalisation of it. The committee suggests that the school consider including the post-modern movement in the programme in a more extensive way, as this facilitates the link with other cultural backgrounds, thus creating broader opportunities and taking into account different stakeholders.

Conclusion

The committee assesses the generic quality guarantee 1 *Intended exit level* as satisfactory.

3.2 Teaching-learning environment (generic quality guarantee 2)

The teaching-learning environment enables the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Outline of findings

Content of the programme

The programme's design is built around dance training, consisting of *daily technique classes* that offer a fundamental training with an emphasis on contemporary dance and the history of dance, and *project-oriented periodical workshops* by guest teachers, in which the techniques are applied in an artistic context. The training course is constructed around the (non-systemised) release technique, offering room for different interpretations and complements. Classical ballet is used as a functional frame of reference. Besides the dance training there are daily Body Studies courses (amongst others yoga), which help develop and sustain a healthy dance practice. In addition, attention is paid to music, theatre and basic theoretical training. Dance is approached from the broad perspective of the performing arts as a whole. Throughout the programme, improvisation and composition (i.e. choreography) are basic components. Composition is addressed in yearly creation assignments (solo, trio, group work). In the first year, the basic techniques of composition are taught; e.g. students are given the tools to deconstruct and recompose pieces. Later on, these are used in the repertoire studies, the workshops with guest choreographers and the students' creations, in which students also draw from input from personal experiences. For students, the programme offers enough tools to question and position oneself, especially with the focus on a personal profile in the third year. They appreciate the chances they have to collaborate and propose projects, and to find their artistic voice, with support from the school.

Contextual learning helps to relate the theory to practice, which are intertwined. Since around half of the study time is spent on collective dance training, the time for theoretical lessons is limited. There is a minimum of theoretical knowledge students should meet, like dance history.

Next to this basic knowledge, students study several theoretical fields (like philosophy) during theory sessions. However, the aim is not to study the theoretical content in itself, but to learn how to think in a theoretical way and to learn how to relate their thinking to theory. Students should feel comfortable with theory when they graduate and should be able to use theory in their practice. Developing skills in both theory and practice is seen as the most challenging aspect in the curriculum and has been a continuous debate from the beginning onwards, upon which the curriculum has evolved. The first generation of students succeeded in developing skills in combining both. A challenge for the future is choosing the right focus.

Learning objectives

The course descriptions in the annexes (ECTS files for the 1st year) illustrate how the themes and areas of competence lead to a coherent programme. For each course, the study objectives are related to the learning outcomes of the programme. Continuity in (the building up of) the learning lines is, amongst other things, provided by the teachers that are in close contact with students for a longer period of time and observe their progress closely. The individual development also depends on personal choices (as a dancer/maker etc.). As multiple techniques are taught by multiple teachers and both the tutors and teachers (all artists) lead by example, a holistic body is created. The aim is that students can articulate their own outcomes within the school's given framework.

The school is confident about the connection between the learning outcomes and the professional field, but adds that defining outcomes is very artificial in a way, since students keep learning: it is an ongoing process without a final stage. Students indicate that the programme is challenging and intensive, but achievable. It requires full-time dedication; the learning process continues in between regular classes and after school hours, when there is time to reflect upon and re-evaluate information. Alumni conclude that students are given the tools to take responsibility for their own learning processes.

Educational forms

For the large part, students follow the same collective programme in the first and second year. As they progress through the programme, there are more individual options. Thus, the learning methodologies reflect the balance between collectivity and individuality, also present in today's contemporary dance. Teaching methodologies involve show and do, guided visualisation, project work, personal projects and lectures/discussions. Students are offered maximum space and guidance to explore and expand their creative identities, as well as regular opportunities to showcase personal (or group) work to a wider audience.

Pedagogically speaking, PARTS has an intuitive basis and adapts to the needs of the students, the goal being their development. In the classroom, basic skills are acquired, not so much through instruction as through discussion/negotiation (a proposal from a teacher receives feedback). Consistent attendance and discipline are key factors; attendance is registered and constitutes a large part of the evaluation of students; a conscious decision on the part of the school, since in the work field work ethics is a prerequisite.

Organization of the programme and staff

Most of the courses operate with a concentrated timetable, e.g. five times a week during 1-6 weeks. The students are divided in (two to six) parallel, varying sub-groups. Different teachers – most of them teach and guide a single period – work along the same principles and learning outcomes. The design of the programme is based on diverse input, such as dialogues with the teachers, which are translated to the programme. Also, the programme develops in interaction with the professional field. Students are introduced to the aims and contents of a course by their teacher in the first class. The team responsible for the structure and content of the programme (steering meeting) consists of the deputy director, the coordinator and the tutors plus relevant teachers.

In the composition of its international teaching body, PARTS aims for a balance between continuity and renewal. The programme can be kept up-to-date thanks to the freelance teachers, who almost exclusively are artists with an active practice in the field of contemporary arts (dance and choreography, but also theatre and music). The application file contains an appendix with short biographies of teachers, faculty members and pedagogical staff of the cycle 2016-2019. The CV's illustrate a richness of practical experience as dancers, choreographers and teachers, and in the broader field of performing arts. Apart from the teachers who participate in the deliberation committee, teachers do not take up any other duties besides teaching in the limited amount of time they are present during the year (the average teaching time in 2017-2018 was +/-50 hours).

Most of the teachers have an established teaching practice with years of experience, as part of their artistic practice. The guidance of the visiting teachers is limited, since around two-thirds of them teach on a one-time basis (approx. 40 of the 60 teachers per year). Students appreciate having different teachers that are able to adapt to the work field and offer different approaches and perspectives on dance and styles. In their eyes the guest teachers are quite well informed about their progress. In the case of parallel groups, faculty members may select teachers that use similar working/teaching methods.

Since a few years, every teacher is assessed by three random student after finishing a course, who form an articulated opinion (initially, all students were invited to evaluate all teachers, but the response rate was far too low for meaningful conclusions). The evaluations are part of the dialogue with teachers. If necessary, measures are taken, such as attendance of classes by the coordination team. Since the team knows all students, they usually pick up on possible problems in an early stage. Students state that they are being heard, and (critical) remarks are taken on board.

Tutoring of students

The overall development of the students is monitored by the *tutors*, who maintain close relationships with the students and observe (daily) classes. Both tutors work half-time with all students; one during the morning block (daily classes) and one during the rest of the day (workshops with teachers who visit for one or several weeks). While working on creations, students are guided by a personal *coach* who can be a member of the coordination team or the faculty, a teacher or an external. A coach can give specific feedback during a writing or creation process and fulfils an important role in the guidance of students.

Students in general feel supported and well guided. They meet with their tutors on a regular basis, at least once every semester to discuss their general development. The tutors can serve as an intermediary between students and teachers, synthesising information and offering advice to both parties if needed. Their task is twofold: to give regular feedback to the students and to be present on a day-to-day basis, providing ad hoc assistance. Feedback on students' progress is also given by the teachers in class, in the context of transparency.

Facilities and budget

The PARTS building contains two classrooms and five dance studios, differing in sizes. All studios have a sprung floor, dance carpet and a mirror wall. One studio can be darkened and has basic equipment for theatre lighting. One of the classrooms can also be used as a small studio. Additional studio space can be rented in Rosas. In 2018, the Ministry of Education granted PARTS a budget of 2.500.000 euro to build three extra studios. This extension will be finished in the summer of 2022. It will mainly serve the further development of the Studios programme, but will also be available for the Training cycle.

There is a strong connection to the professional field, not only through the teachers, but also through an intensive (practical and pedagogical) collaboration with De Keersmaeker and her company Rosas, with whom the school shares its premises, together with music ensemble Ictus. Furthermore, there are good connections with organisers from the field of contemporary dance in Belgium and Europe. This network of partners plays a role in hosting and promoting PARTS auditions, in presenting the work of PARTS students (e.g. in theatres and on festivals), and in providing opportunities for PARTS graduates.

The financial situation of PARTS is particular, in the sense that it is funded by the Government of Flanders since two decades and with this, as a non-registered organisation, forms a relative exception. Currently, funding is arranged through a 5-year-agreement running to 2021. The recognition of the Training programme as a professional bachelor will have no financial implications; the existing funding will be maintained. Future funding will rely on new management agreements. An additional 125.000 euros have been allocated to the school from budget year 2019 onwards, which will help set a more structural base for the training as well as for the future programme. A detailed budget is presented in the appendix of the application file (Budget 2019 and multiannual budget 2020 - 2021).

Considerations

The committee is very positive about the programme's composition, which she finds coherent and structured. A strong aspect is the underlying perspective of performing arts as a whole, which encompasses related disciplines, such as music and theatre. The curriculum as well as the design of the programme are well balanced and the result of a thorough and precise development throughout the twelve cohorts of the Training Cycle that have preceded this accreditation. The programme's foundation, dance training with a focus on release technique, provides a relevant structure, scope and direction for the development of dance artists. The learning outcomes of the programme are translated into concrete learning goals for each module. The learning methodologies are diverse and seem in balance with the learning outcomes in the different aspects of the curriculum. Furthermore, the input of stakeholders (e.g. students, teachers, work field) is systematically incorporated in the programme.

In the curriculum, there is an interesting balance between artistic practice and theory (*practice in thinking*), between dancing techniques and composition/creation, and between mandatory courses and selectable options. The build-up of the programme works towards a more individual path for students in the third year, where a lot of freedom is added and more responsibility is requested. Students are adaptive and are provided with tools to develop as artists (e.g. critical analysis, compositional theories). The committee applauds the articulated emphasis on transfer of knowledge. It encourages the school to incorporate literature about developing theory into the study material for the theoretical component of the programme.

Another strong element of the school is the unique, enthusiastic and balanced international teaching staff. Despite the fact that many teachers are briefly visiting, there is coherence and continuity in the teaching methods used. Stability is especially provided by the small permanent staff. The teachers, tutors and coaches are all connected to and experienced in the work field of arts. The students are taught in small groups with intensive personal guidance by different teachers and a lot of formative feedback to guide their development, supplemented by the support of their coaches and tutors. Finally, the facilities are excellent and will be further improved with the expected renovation and enlargement of the school, funded by the Ministry of Education.

The committee sees a unique school, with its own culture and diverse artistic learning community. PARTS offers students an inspiring environment, closely related to the practical field. Its connections with the international work field provide additional possibilities for students and alumni for further development and employment.

Conclusion

The committee assesses the generic quality guarantee 2 *Teaching-learning environment* as satisfactory.

3.3 Exit level to be achieved (generic quality guarantee 3)

The programme has an adequate assessment, testing and examination system in place to ascertain whether the intended learning outcomes are being achieved.

Outline of findings

The evaluation model of PARTS is quite concise and relies primarily on permanent and qualitative evaluation in the concentrated learning environment. In principle, exams are not utilised, with the partial exception of the theory course. Permanent evaluation is provided by the teachers within each course and through a daily follow-up by the tutors, who regularly observe the classes. The evaluation of the learning process of a student is key, rather than the evaluation of the end result: assessment is considered a part of the students' learning process and of the development process in education. It is therefore a very crucial part of the programme. In this light, theory is seen as a practice that needs to be exercised as well, through active participation in the classes and the reflective process of writing an essay. In consultation with the theory teachers, it has been decided to give an appreciation based partly on the work and participation of a student in the classroom, and partly on a paper. Through this paper, a connection can be made with the learning outcomes.

Self-reflection is a recurrent part of testing within the training programme: at the end of each semester, each student writes a brief self-evaluation, reflecting on their performance, their learning goals etc. In doing so, students monitor their own learning process, competences, objectives and/or their own actions in practice. This self-evaluation is not part of the quoting system, but can influence the decision process of the deliberation committee. At the end of each semester there is a formal phase of evaluation, when the gathered information is assessed by the committee. The basis of this evaluation procedure are the conclusive reports of the teachers (and mentors) on all students at the end of each teaching period, giving feedback and focussing on the students' process and results, and translating this into a quote along a scale of five, ranging from negative to excellent. The tutors, with their bird's-eye view, also write conclusive reports on a student's work in the fields of Dance Training, Dance Workshops and Student Creation, with a quote per field (for the quoting system, the courses are divided into five different fields). The role of the tutors in the evaluation procedure of several fields (except Theory) is substantial.

All reports mainly focus on feedback to help students realize their potential. The quotes are used by the deliberation committee to scan the results; they are primarily meant to make the process of deliberation more efficient. On the basis of the combined material, the committee writes a general conclusion and can impose extra work if necessary. Evaluation reports tend to be constructive and concrete, indicating aspects of improvement. Students all have an individual talk with a member of the deliberation committee about their results afterwards.

Dance schools may use the same requirements, but will select different students. Thus, evaluation criteria exhibit a formal as well as informal aspect. The fact that several teachers assess students in various fields, provides a certain amount of continuity of evaluation and limits the subjective character of the assessments.

Considerations

Based on the detailed information in the application file and the information provided during the site visit, the committee concludes that the programme uses a well-developed system of assessment that is balanced, thorough and believes in an integral assessment that defines the development of students. The various assessment forms relate well to the course content, so that each competence is tested in an appropriate manner. The assessment by different teachers guarantees reliability in the long term. However, the committee encourages the programme to ensure that the relation between the (integrated) criteria and the learning outcomes is sufficiently transparent, and to make more explicit how these outcomes are evaluated.

The committee appreciates the system for the students' self-evaluation. Also valued are the daily follow-up by tutors in combination with the formal evaluation each semester and the quantitative evaluation, as a relevant tool for the students that corresponds well with the intentional goal of the system. Students' development is constantly monitored by the tutors and coaches. The committee is confident that students receive ample feedback in order to facilitate their learning process. The permanent evaluation is motivating for students to constantly improve their performance. At the same time, they get precious time to develop. The committee is impressed with the students' mindset and ethics, and the shared vision of staff and students to continually improve and develop. The aforementioned factors, in combination with the role of the deliberation committee, guarantee the adequacy of the evaluation system.

Conclusion

The committee assesses the generic quality guarantee 3 *Exit level to be achieved* as satisfactory.

3.4 Set-up and organization of the internal quality assurance (generic quality guarantee 4)

The set-up and the organization of the internal quality assurance are aimed at systematically improving the programme with the involvement of the relevant stakeholders.

Outline of findings

PARTS is a small-scale institution with a small permanent staff and a flexible pool of freelancers. Although it does not have a standardised system of internal quality control, it is concerned with quality control on a structural basis, based on mutual trust of teachers and students, as a self-critical and flexible institution. Since the foundation of the school, attention has been paid to optimising the functioning of the programme, which has led to the optimisation of policy instruments, the surveying of teachers and students, the flexible steering and adaptation of the programme.

The permanent instruments of quality control involve the following bodies or elements: Board of directors, steering meeting, staff meeting, Faculty meeting, student/staff meeting, plenary meeting, weekly briefings, teacher's reports, evaluations by students, exit talks and involvement of graduates and the professional field. The committees all meet on a regular basis. The *Board of directors* fulfils an important role in the long-term development (e.g. strategic positioning) of the school. The *steering meeting* convenes three times per month and manages the daily pedagogical policy, follows up on individual problems of students and discusses issues regarding the general planning and concepts of the programme. Responsible for the daily organisation (planning, production, student affairs) of the work is the staff. The *staff meeting* takes place on a weekly basis and is presided by the deputy director. The *Faculty* meets three to four times a year (plus on an individual basis with the coordination team) and consists of eight advisors, who are closely connected to the programme.

Each advisor oversees a specific dimension of the programme (e.g. dance training, student creation), including content of individual courses, the general direction of the programme, the evaluation procedure etc. The *weekly briefings* facilitate two-way communication between the coordinator/tutors and the students, who can ventilate problems and questions about planning/organisation or other topics. Both students and staff can put topics on the agenda of the *student/staff meeting* which takes place roughly every two months, with a focus on organisational aspects. Among the participants are the coordinator, the responsible for student affairs and a group of five student representatives from the Training and Studios programmes.

The *deliberation committee* can decide to expel a student in certain rare cases (with one negative or two problematic judgments or if a student has received three warnings, e.g. a student that has been absent too often). However, the school obviously prefers not to have to invoke this policy, since all students are selected through a tough audition process in the first place and are deemed to have potential. In one case, a student with a negative evaluation could still continue the programme. While the student was lacking in ambition, he maintained a high level. Tutors are in constant dialogue with the students; they will mitigate and support them through the tough programme, for instance when confronted with cultural differences. Along the way, they will acquire similar values. In the current cycle, only two out of 46 people decided to leave, which is rather unique (the drop-out is usually maximum one-third, over a whole cycle).

There is no formal procedure for appeal in place for students to invoke in case of a disagreement, but the school indicates that adaptations can be made to formalise the existing practice. More importantly, students feel they are free to express their concerns at any time. Students who want to appeal against an evaluation of a teacher or tutor or a decision of the deliberation committee, can do this in writing with the Faculty. In one case a student appealed and could finish school.

The responsible for student affairs and their general wellbeing might fulfil the role of trust person in the future, as a member of the staff team. She is in close contact with the students and tutors on a daily basis and has an independent role, not being a teacher or assessor. Two former students, who were trained (funded by PARTS), function as confidence persons for students and are presented actively. With the future trust person, students could take up more general/pedagogical issues etc.

Considerations

The committee has established that the quality assurance system of PARTS complies with the set quality standards. Although internal quality policies could be more formalised, for instance by appointing a trust person, they are well laid out, systematic and transparent. Since its foundation, PARTS has developed a frame of layered governance and care that ensures a consistent coverage of all parties involved in the quality control of the organisation. Through the coherent consultation structure – with a clear division of tasks between different bodies – teachers and students, as well as administration, board and other staff members, can contribute to the internal quality system. The interaction between the committees facilitates coordination and alignment of policies and procedures. Furthermore, the school has a wide variety of meaningful connections and is in close dialogue with the professional field; permanent input of the field is provided through the faculty meeting.

The involvement of students in the organisation of the program is ensured by the student/staff meetings, the plenary meetings and the weekly briefings. Also, the periodical evaluations by students and exit talks contribute to the permanent optimisation of the programme.

The fact that PARTS works with cohorts facilitates an ongoing and evolving (self-) evaluation; it offers the opportunity to develop and digest feedback over a longer period of time (three year cycle) and enables the school to make timely adjustments if necessary. Thus PARTS establishes itself as a learning and adapting organisation.

Conclusion

The committee assesses the generic quality guarantee 4 *Set-up and organization of the internal quality assurance* as satisfactory.

4 Assessment procedure

4.1 The procedure

NVAO received a request for an initial accreditation procedure regarding the proposed Professional Bachelor in Dance. The request was submitted by P.A.R.T.S. (Performing Arts Research and Training Studios) on 27 October 2018.

NVAO has convened a committee of experts. The committee consisted of:

- Prof. dr. B. (Bart) Verschaffel (chair);
- Prof. of Choreography E. (Efva) Lilja (member);
- Drs. J.L.M. (Jan) Zoet (member);
- Mrs. J. (Jade) Brouns (student member).

On behalf of the NVAO, Dr. Dagmar Provijn, NVAO policy advisor, was responsible for the process-coordination. Carlijn Braam MA, secretary, drafted the experts' report.

The committee's composition reflects the expertise deemed necessary by NVAO (please refer to Annex 3: Composition of the committee). All the committee members as well as the secretary have signed a statement of independence and confidentiality.

The committee based their assessment on the generic quality guarantees and criteria described in the NVAO Assessment framework for the initial accreditation of higher education programmes in Flanders 2015-2021, dated 28 May 2015.

The following procedure has been undertaken. The committee members studied the documents (please refer to Annex 5: Documents reviewed) with regard to the proposed programme. Their first impressions were sent to the secretary of NVAO, who listed these remarks and questions, to be clarified during the site visit.

Based on their preliminary findings, the committee held a preparatory meeting on 23 January. During this meeting, the committee discussed their findings and listed a number of questions to be put to the programme's representatives during the site visit. The site visit took place on 23 January at the P.A.R.T.S. campus (Schedule of the site visit). The discussions during the site visit allowed the committee to obtain a somewhat more in-depth view of the programme's main characteristics and the programme's dominant features.

Immediately after the site visit, the committee shared their assessments for the generic quality guarantees of the NVAO Assessment framework. These assessments were based on the findings during the site visit, building upon the review of the programme documents.

Following the visit, the secretary drew up a draft report and sent this to the committee members. The committee members forwarded their comments and amendments. These comments have been included in the text by the secretary, and the report was finalised on 4 March 2019.

4.2 Committee report

The first chapter of this report is the executive summary of the report.

The second chapter gives a brief description of the programme including its position within P.A.R.T.S. and within the Flanders higher education system.

The committee presented its assessments in the third chapter. The programme has been assessed using the generic quality guarantees in the NVAO Assessment framework for the initial accreditation of higher education programmes in Flanders. For each of the generic quality guarantees the committee presented an outline of their findings, considerations and a conclusion.

The *outline of the findings* are the objective facts as found by the committee in the programme documents, in the additional documents and during the site visit. The committee's *considerations* are the committee's evaluations with regard to these findings. The *considerations* presented by the committee logically lead to a concluding assessment.

The committee concludes the report with a table containing an overview of their assessments per generic quality guarantee.

5 Overview of the assessments

The committee presents their assessments per generic quality guarantee, as outlined in chapter 3, in the following table.

Generic quality guarantee	Assessment
1 Intended exit level	Satisfactory
2 Teaching-learning environment	Satisfactory
3 Exit level to be achieved	Satisfactory
4 Set-up and organisation of the internal quality assurance	Satisfactory
Programme as a whole	Satisfactory

Annex 1: General information institution and programme

Name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, website institution	P.A.R.T.S. - Performing Arts Research and Training Studios vzw Van Volxemlaan 164 1190 Brussels, Belgium 0032 344 55 98 mail@parts.be http://www.parts.be
Status institution	Not yet registered ¹
Name association	-
Name, function, telephone, e-mail address of contact person	Theo Van Rompay, deputy director
Name programme (degree, qualifications of the degree, specification of the degree)	Bachelor in Dance
Level and orientation	Professional Bachelor
Title that holders of the degree earned from this programme can place with their name	Bachelor in Dance
(Part of a) Field of study, fields of study in which the programme is classified	Music and performing arts
The ISCED name of the field of study in which the programme is classified	0215 music and performing arts
Corresponding programme(s) (Flanders if any, or neighbouring countries)	Professionele Bachelor Dans, AP Artesis Plantijn Hogeschool, Antwerp
Languages used to teach	English
Location in which the programme is offered	Brussels, Belgium
Length of the programme expressed in credits	180
New programme in Flanders	No

¹ When applying for the initial accreditation of this programme, the institution was not registered yet. The application for initial accreditation serves as a first step in the process of registration. Once the institution is registered and the programme is accredited, both facts will be published on www.hogeronderwijsregister.be.

The post-graduate study opportunities and the possible post-graduate courses (bachelor)/ The required previous qualifications and admission requirements (master)

Studios cycle (2 years) for choreographers/makers. This programme will be redefined and renewed from 2019-20 onwards. Currently it is not recognized as a Master programme.

Students will be able to subsequent programmes abroad who accept Bachelors in Dance (whether or not with the condition of following a switching programme).

Annex 2: Discipline-specific learning outcomes

1. Knows and practises a wide variety of dance techniques;
2. Can apply different techniques in an integrated way, in order to shape his/her own expression in the context of a dance production or in his/her specialisation;
3. Can develop, shape and express an artistic concept under supervision;
4. Can situate and frame the international performing arts field, the broader artistic/cultural field (including other disciplines) and society;
5. Can reflect critically on the basis of a dance theoretical framework;
6. Is aware of his/her contribution to an artistic creation, can communicate about it and enter into dialogue with a (target) audience;
7. Has the discipline, organizational self-reliance and critical attitude to support and continue to develop his/her (own) artistic practice;
8. Can enter into various collaborations and interactions with other artistic disciplines and practices.

Programme-specific learning outcomes

Creativity and performance

1. Mastery of one's own body from a technical, physical and artistic point of view in order to achieve the highest artistic level and to develop one's profile as a dancer;
2. Innovative, personal and creative interpretation of different styles, repertoires and approaches of contemporary dance;
3. Contribution to the development (conception, composition, creation) of diverse innovative choreographic processes within the framework of a production or creative process in general, in contexts with different definitions of authorship;
4. Development of training measures adapted to one's own needs and health as well as as well as the requirements of the productions/creative processes;
5. Ability to define, communicate, organize and realize a choreographic creation process (autonomous or in a context authored by others).

Theory and reflection

6. Critical evaluation of one's own artistic practice and that of peers; ability to situate artistic work in a larger social and theoretical context;
7. Development of theoretical and methodological knowledge from various disciplines (philosophy and critical theory, sociology, art history) and autonomous implementation of these in daily artistic practice;
8. Successful integration of knowledge from other artistic disciplines (music, theatre, etc.) in its own practice and in interdisciplinary projects.

Communication and interprofessional collaboration

9. Action in complex (technical, etc.) and/or interdisciplinary (music, dramaturgy, etc.) contexts;
10. Collaboration with all partners in an artistic process/production with participants from multi-national backgrounds;
11. Communication with peers and general or specific target audience about contemporary dance and the positions and practices they enact in it;

12. Respect for professional ethics and professional practices and customs on and off the stage.

Transfer to the professional world

13. Positioning as an artistic personality in the national and international professional world;
14. Launching, management and realization of various artistic projects (solo, etc.) in the field of contemporary dance;
15. Exercise of artistic authority and assumption of leadership responsibility to lead a group as part of a contemporary dance project.

Annex 3: Composition of the committee

The composition of the committee that assessed the quality of the Professional Bachelor in Dance of P.A.R.T.S. (Performing Arts Research and Training Studios) was as follows:

Prof. dr. Bart Verschaffel (Eeklo, 1956) studied Philosophy. He obtained the Diploma of Medieval Studies (KU Leuven, 1980) and a PhD in Philosophy (KU Leuven, 1985). He taught at the University of Antwerp (UIA), the KU Leuven, and the Rijksacademie voor Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. He has been a full-time professor at Ghent University since 2002 and teaches architectural theory and architectural criticism. He mainly publishes in the field of cultural philosophy, architecture and art theory, and aesthetics. Bart Verschaffel was program leader for the Discourse & Literature section of Antwerp 93 European Capital of Culture, scriptwriter of a series BRTN television documentaries about visual art realized by Jef Cornelis, and as expert and director involved in art education and art institutions (including Jan Van Eyck Academy Maastricht, Sint-Lucas Kunsthogeschool Brussel). He received the Culture Prize from the Flemish Community for Art Criticism in 2002. He is the director of the VANDENHOVE Centre for Architecture and Arts / UGent, and a member and currently vice-president of the Class of the Arts of the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Sciences and Arts.

Prof. of Choreography Efva Lilja, Efva Lilja is an artist, professor of choreography and activist, working with performances, visual art, film and writing. From 1985 to 2005 she was Artistic Director of the E.L.D. Company based in Stockholm, producing work in more than 35 countries around the world. Author of 11 books, lecturer and a forerunner within artistic research, with an active role as a member of various international bodies. She has been decorated and received a number of prizes and awards. 2003 appointed Professor of Choreography, 2006-2013 the Vice-Chancellor at DOCH, the University of Dance and Circus in Stockholm. 2014 the Expert Advisor on Artistic Research at the Ministry of Education and Research in Sweden. From 2016 Artistic Director of Dansehallerne in Copenhagen. Full CV on www.efvalilja.se.

Drs. Jan Zoet, Jan Zoet is the Director of the Academy of Theatre and Dance at AHK in The Netherlands. Before he was the director of the theatre of Rotterdam. He also was the founder of the interdisciplinary Productiehuis Rotterdam and the theatre festival the International Choice by the theatre of Rotterdam, which won the Prize of Theatre Criticism in 2005. In the eighties and nineties Zoet worked as a producer, playwright and professional and artistic leader for various companies and festivals, including Theatregroup Hollandia and Mickery. He was active in numerous boards, and committees in the cultural sector, including the VPRO, Toneelgroep Amsterdam, the Prins Bernhard Cultural Fund and the Fund of Performing Arts. During and after his studies in Dutch language and literature and Theatre Studies at the University of Leiden (1984), Zoet worked as a theatre critic.

Jade Brouns, MSc in Educational Sciences, KU Leuven, Belgium and trained student committee member NVAO – cohort 2017.

On behalf of the NVAO, Dr. Dagmar Provijn, NVAO policy advisor, was responsible for the process-coordination. Carlijn Braam MA, secretary, drafted the experts' report.

Annex 4: Schedule of the site visit

The site visit by the committee to the programme was conducted on 23 January 2019 as part of the external assessment procedure regarding the Professional Bachelor in Dance of P.A.R.T.S.

08:30-11:30	Preliminary meeting of the committee
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11:30-12:00	Lunch
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12:00-12:30	Meeting with the Board and the Director
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- Hugo De Greef
- Kees Eijrond
- Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker
- Theo Van Rompay
- Jens Buysschaert
- Charlotte Vandevyver

12:45-14:00	Meeting with programme coordination group/development team
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- Theo Van Rompay
- Jens Buysschaert
- Steven De Belder
- Manon Santkin
- Sandy Williams
- Els De Meyer

14:30-15:30	Meeting with intended teaching staff
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- Salva Sanchis
- Marie Goudot
- Christine De Smedt
- Kuno Bakker
- Tom Pauwels
- Bojana Cvejic

15:45-16:30	Meeting with students and alumni
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Students Generation XI (2013-2016)

- Anika Edström Kawaji
- Frank Gizycki
- Maya Oliva

Students Generation XII (2016-2019)

- Papa Ibrahima Faye
- Sidney Rafael Galdino Dos Santos
- Julia Rubies Subiros
- Joshua Antiporda Serafin
- Mooni Van Tichel

16:30-17:00	Facility tour
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17:15-18:00	Meeting with representatives of the professional field
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- Guy Gypens
- Matthieu Goeury
- Charlotte De Somviele
- Claire Croize
- Kristien De Coster
- Patrick Bonte

18:15-18:45	Optional second meeting with the programme coordination group
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18:45-20:00	Closed meeting of the committee
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Annex 5: Documents reviewed

The programme management presented the following documents in an annex to the application file:

- Domain-specific learning results as approved by the NVAO and their English translation;
- Course-specific learning results;
- Professional profiles of the previous generation of graduates (2013-2016);
- Selection of professional biographies of 50 graduates 1995-2014;
- Overview of the curriculum PARTS Training cycle with ECTS credits, contact hours and self study;
- Speculative timeline for the cycle 2019-2022;
- ECTS files for the 1st year (60 ECTS);
- Selection of students;
- Short biographies of teachers, Faculty members and pedagogical staff of the cycle 2016-2019;
- Projects with the professional field 2009-2019;
- Budget of the Training cycle 2019-2021;
- Management agreement between the Ministry of Education and PARTS (2017-2021) (in Dutch);
- Benchmarking of higher education programmes for contemporary dance in Europe (2010-2016).

Annex 6: List of abbreviations

NVAO	Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organization (Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie)
PARTS	Performing Arts Research and Training Studios

