

Petitioner submission of 27 January 2023

PE1982/B: Review funding arrangements for higher education to help ensure more funded places are available for Scottish ballet dancers at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

I would like to respond to the Scottish Government's submission.

I agree that the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland is a small specialised institution and it has autonomous jurisdiction over its own affairs.

However, to specifically address the single argument in this case; that there are simply not enough places available for Scottish young dancers who have been trained and have specialised for many years to a point of readiness at a high standard equalling at the very least that available in the rest of the UK, due to the exemplary funding by Glasgow City Council in support of the arts.

Some dispensation by the Scottish Government must be available to intervene in internal institutional matters in this case to ensure institutions are not discriminating against Scottish Students for the purpose of their fiscal interests. To simply allocate 5 places out of a total of 25 places to the entirety of the Scottish dance population is an outrage. The deal struck with the Scottish Government serves to provide the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with a means of increasing its business turnover. It certainly does not represent the country whose name it uses for its branding purposes. The 5 places available to Scottish students are then merely a token gesture, a licence perhaps, to allow them to operate. It does not solve the problem of providing places for our young elite who may not have the financial resources and financial means to actually seek this level of education elsewhere.

However, it does provide an open door for students from all over the world as long as they have a chequebook to buy their way into a cultural service that Scotland surely should benefit from?

Merely because they have the means to do so; by allowing students from other parts of the UK and other parts of the world to fill 80% of the places we are seeing our own students deliberately discriminated

against. Talented young Scottish dancers have no option but to leave the country whether they have the means to pay or not, declined by The Royal Conservatoire “of Scotland “.

Has it been taken into account that perhaps some students might wish to stay in Scotland even if it means that they would have to pay the same rates as other parts of the United Kingdom? Limited scholarships if you will? I then consider that the admissions would increase domestically. This is about money pure and simple.

It seems that they are not even offered this possibility. They are immediately discriminated against purely because of the country of their birth and their perceived entitlement to funding.

Can you reasonably state that 5 places available for the entirety of the Scottish student dance population is sufficient? Perhaps even 10 might be sufficient? A small incremental increase in the scheme of things? We are talking very small numbers here.

I have no argument with you that international students and those from other parts of the UK are welcome. We welcome the contribution that these students make to our society, culture and economy but by using this in your response there is an implication that I have some kind of xenophobic or racist motivation for my argument.

This is entirely not true. My family are multi-ethnic but all born within Scotland and raised within the Scottish education system. I do not desire that any of my children get preferential treatment because they are Scottish; I only ask that they have an open and even playing field in which to compete.

According to the current situation there is no such open and evening playing field. Scottish students by definition of their nationality and their birth are discriminated against within their own country pure and simple.

If I was required to pay a contribution towards the education of my children because there weren't enough places or suchlike, then I would possibly be able to find the money to do so. However, that would also be asking me to discriminate against those who could not afford to do this and therefore that argument should not be entitled to exist.

I do find this last statement in your response quite insulting as it implies that I have some sense of racist motivation which I am deeply offended by.

I would request that you pass on my argument to The Royal Scottish Conservatoire and request that they provide me with information on any remedial action they plan to put in place.