

Further information on Higher Dance Course Assessment (December 2013)

Key points

The Higher Dance Course builds on the structure and focus of the National 5 course and creates many opportunities for personalisation and choice for learners. It provides opportunities for learners to be inspired and challenged by creating, demonstrating and appreciating dance. Learners will use knowledge and understanding of dance techniques and choreographic skills to inform their practice. They will also develop skills and appreciation of dance practice and relevant theatre arts.

The purpose of the course assessment is to assess the candidate's ability to integrate and apply skills, knowledge and understanding from across the Course content.

At Higher, Course assessment will have two components: Performance (70 marks) and Practical Activity (70 marks). Candidates will be required to demonstrate extended and refined technical and choreographic skills beyond those used to perform and create short movement sequences within the Units.

The performance will be of two tutor-choreographed technical solos, each combining technical and performance skills. Each solo will be worth 35 marks. This builds on the performance component at National 5, requiring candidates to perform two solos instead of one, and these to be more challenging than at National 5.

The practical activity will be the creation and review of a choreography. It will have two sections: Choreography, worth 35 marks, and Choreography Review, worth 35 marks. This is similar to the course assessment at National 5, but there is a requirement to choreograph a dance which uses principles in a more complex manner, is longer, and is for a minimum of three dancers. The choreography review requires more depth of reflection than at National 5.

Course assessment will total 140 marks.

Both components will be completed under supervision and control using guidelines specified by SQA.

Candidates will be assessed collaboratively by centres and a visiting assessor.

Higher Performance (publication by 31 March 2014)

In this component, candidates will perform two tutor-choreographed technical solos, each lasting 1.5 to 2 minutes. This will assess the following specific skills, knowledge and understanding specified in the *Course Assessment Specification*:

- ◆ Apply and combine technical skills and performance skills to perform solos in two dance genres.

A maximum of 35 marks will be awarded for each performance as follows:

- ◆ Application of skills to technique

- technical execution and use of turnout/parallel as appropriate to genre (5 marks)

- centring, balance, alignment and posture (5 marks)
- stamina, strength and flexibility (5 marks)
- spatial awareness and accurate recreation of choreography (5 marks)

◆ Application of skills to performance

- timing and musicality (5 marks)
- quality and dynamics (5 marks)
- self-expression, sense of performance, concentration and focus (5 marks)

(For further information from the current draft of the Performance, please see Appendix 1)

Higher Practical activity **(publication by 31 March 2014)**

In this component, candidates will create and review a choreographed dance for a group of dancers (excluding self) lasting 2 to 3 minutes. This will assess the following specific skills, knowledge and understanding specified in the *Course Assessment Specification*:

- ◆ Apply problem solving, critical thinking, interpretation and reflective practice to create and present a choreography for two dancers that will demonstrate an understanding of choreographic skills and communicate meaning and ideas.
- ◆ Review and evaluate work and identify areas for improvement.

This component has two Sections: Choreography and Choreography Review

Section 1: Choreography (35 marks)

In this section, candidates will create and present their choreographed dance. A maximum of 35 marks will be awarded for the final choreographed dance as follows:

- ◆ Use of theme or stimulus to create movement (5 marks)
- ◆ Use of choreographic structure (5 marks)
- ◆ Use of choreographic devices (12 marks)
- ◆ Use of space (5 marks)
- ◆ Use of music/sound (5 marks)
- ◆ Use of theatre arts (3 marks)

Section 2: Choreography Review (35 marks)

In this section, candidates review their work as a choreographer by explaining the relationship between their research, theme and an initial motif, explaining the reasons for the choreographic choices made, and evaluating their skills as a choreographer.

Appendix 1

Performance: choreographing the technical solos

The role of the tutor is to choreograph and teach the dances, and provide rehearsals, feedback and ongoing support for candidates during preparation prior to the assessment event.

The choreographed dances should not be exact copies of those performed for assessment in the Technical Skills Unit, but they can select from and build on the technical and performance skills developed in that unit.

The dances should be of a nature and standard achievable by grade C candidates, while also providing scope for grade A candidates to achieve full marks where they are capable of doing so. They should incorporate a range of style-specific steps and principles that enable candidates to demonstrate sustained technical skills. There should also be appropriate opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their performance skills.

When choreographing the dances, tutors should consult the Course and Unit support notes, which contain information about style-specific steps that might be included. Care must be taken to ensure that each dance is of a technical complexity appropriate to Higher level, and includes movements and technical steps that are listed in the Course and Unit support notes, or are equivalent to these.

Each solo should consist of integrated technical skills that clearly demonstrate co-ordination, control, dynamics, spatial awareness, and line. The choreography should challenge the learners at SCQF level 6 to demonstrate a cohesive use of strong technique, musicality and performance specific to the style being performed. Dances must be choreographed to enable the candidate to demonstrate that they can meet all the aforementioned criteria whilst maintaining a strong technique that incorporates correct posture, weight placement and alignment.

The dance styles selected for assessment must be recognisably different from each other in terms of technique and style. For example, hip hop and *classical* jazz would be an acceptably contrasting combination because hip hop could be described as grounded and urban, with a looser centre and lower centre of gravity than classical jazz, and does not require the specific articulation of the foot that classical jazz does. Other differences between these styles are that classical jazz involves more control, posture and extension than hip hop, as well as a more traditional alignment, weight placement and so on that hip hop does not require. However, hip hop and *street* jazz would not be appropriately contrasting as street jazz takes the elements from hip hop and fuses them with jazz, and as a result there are too many similarities between these styles.

Other combinations which exemplify styles with sufficiently different steps, characteristics and techniques include: tap and soft shoe Irish; highland and ballet; and highland and classical jazz.

Other examples of combinations which are **not** sufficiently contrasting include: tap and hard shoe Irish; highland and Scottish; and highland and soft shoe Irish.

The examples above are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive; there are many other possible combinations.

The following advice should also be considered when choreographing the solos:

- ◆ dances should be age-appropriate
- ◆ use style-specific steps and characteristics
- ◆ include movement sequences that use personal and general space
- ◆ create movement that uses a range of pathways on the floor and around the body
- ◆ vary the direction of the movements
- ◆ use floor work and movements which use different levels, or move between levels
- ◆ use whole body movements like jumps, turns and rolls, as well as smaller, more intricate body part specific movements
- ◆ vary dynamics, use different rhythms and speed, and a range of movement qualities
- ◆ consider using music that has clear time signatures

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