



National Unit specification

General information

Unit title: Dance Improvisation: An Introduction (SCQF level 6)

Unit code: H73L 46

Superclass: LB

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Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to introduce learners to the skills and techniques in improvisation for dance, together with a basic understanding of the performance skills for improvisation. As well as technical improvisation skills and techniques, this Unit involves learners performing a short self-choreographed dance piece.

This is a free-standing Unit and is also within NC in Dance at SCQF level 6 which is designed for learners interested in pursuing a career in dance.

On achievement of this Unit, possible progression opportunities may include Units such as *Contact Improvisation* at SCQF level 7 (ie HNC) and other further courses of study which lead to recognised achievement at a high level of dance performance.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the Unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Demonstrate a range of skills and techniques within improvisation for dance.
- 2 Apply a range of skills and techniques within improvisation for dance.
- 3 Demonstrate performance skills and techniques for dance improvisation through a self-choreographed dance.

Credit points and level

1 National Unit credit at SCQF level 6 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6)

National Unit specification: General information (cont)

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Recommended entry to the Unit

Entry is at the discretion of the centre. There are no requirements for learners to have previous experience in this subject however experience in movement or dance at SCQF level 5 or equivalent would be beneficial.

Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes for this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

Context for delivery

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

Equality and inclusion

This Unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

National Unit specification: Statement of standards

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Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

Outcome 1

Demonstrate a range of skills and techniques within improvisation for dance.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Demonstration of improvisation through movement exploration or enquiry.
- (b) Exploration of innovative movement responses is demonstrated.
- (c) Exploration of spatial awareness of self and others is demonstrated.
- (d) Creation of improvisation movement in response to a given theme and stimuli

Outcome 2

Apply a range of skills and techniques within improvisation for dance.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Exploration of use of levels is demonstrated.
- (b) Exploration of the use of repetition is demonstrated.
- (c) Exploration of use of directions, facings and space is demonstrated.
- (d) Development of a motif or movement is demonstrated.
- (e) Connecting with other(s) is demonstrated.

Outcome 3

Demonstrate performance skills and techniques for dance improvisation through a self-choreographed dance.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Creation of an improvisational task or dance choreographed by learner.
- (b) Performance of an improvisational task or dance choreographed by learner.
- (c) An internal focus of performance is demonstrated.
- (d) An external projection of performance is demonstrated.
- (e) A commitment to movement execution is demonstrated.

National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

The Outcomes of this Unit are designed to be practical therefore the Evidence Requirements should be primarily practical.

Outcome 1

Evidence Requirements for all PCs are through the performance of a minimum of two separate movement improvisations which last 30 seconds each and:

- ◆ one improvisation must be in response to a theme developed by tutor/assessor.
- ◆ one improvisation must be in response to given stimuli developed by tutor/assessor.

Performance of each improvisation must include:

- ◆ Innovative movement responses
- ◆ Individual movement vocabulary
- ◆ Self-expression
- ◆ Spatial awareness

Outcome 2

Evidence Requirements for all PCs are through the performance of a minimum of two separate movement improvisations which should last 30 seconds each and:

- ◆ one improvisation must be in response to a theme developed by tutor/assessor.
- ◆ one improvisation must be in response to given stimuli developed by tutor/assessor.

Performance of each improvisation must include:

- ◆ Use of levels
- ◆ Use of repetition
- ◆ Inclusion of motif or movement
- ◆ Use of direction, facings and space
- ◆ Connection with other(s)

Outcome 3

Evidence Requirements for PC3 (a): learners are to provide a short outline of their self-choreographed improvised dance. This could take a variety of formats including a short verbal presentation.

National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence Requirements for all other PCs are through the performance of learner's self-choreographed improvised dance which should last approximately 1 minute. This performance must include:

- ◆ Use of performance skills
- ◆ Internal focus
- ◆ External projection
- ◆ Committed execution of movement
- ◆ Two other elements covered in Outcomes 1 and 2

Videoed evidence of all performances is required with the performances undertaken in supervised conditions. And to ensure authenticity of learners' work during performances, mirrors must be covered or learners must not be facing mirrors.

It is possible to assess this Unit holistically but it is recommended that Outcomes 1 and 2 are achieved prior to Outcome 3.



National Unit Support Notes

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Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

Outcome 1

This is suited to task-based work that enables the learners to explore thinking creatively about improvisation.

It is recommended to approach the Performance Criteria from various types of tasks as this can provide a range of opportunities for learners to explore creativity in improvisation for dance.

Tasks for exploration of spatial awareness of self and others could include:

- Task 1: Select someone in the room which you are going to maintain eye contact with. Aim to never let this eye contact break. Be careful not to knock into others.
- Task 2: Holding hands with a partner, travel to the other side of the room without breaking contact, without touching anyone else.
- Task 3: Select someone in the room, but they don't have to also select you, you are going to improvise whilst trying to maintain the same distance between your selected partner, and at the same time avoiding any physical contact with others.
- Task 4: Find a group of three to create a spatial relationship forming a triangle, you must always remain in a triangle whilst you are moving. This can become smaller and bigger but must remain a triangle in relation to one another. Be mindful of others.
- Task 5: On a piece of paper draw a spatial pathway. Implement your pathway whilst doing little hops and skips, be careful to avoid others. Ensure you complete your journey. You may need to pause to allow others to pass you before you continue.
- Task 6: Find someone to 'imitate' until they notice you are moving with them, and once they do, you then select someone else. You can be as close or distant to the person you are imitating as you choose.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Outcome 2

This is suited to providing the learners opportunities to apply their skills and knowledge through improvisation. Providing specific tasks that relate to the PCs will help support the learners understanding and application.

Tasks for exploration of use of levels could include:

- Task 1: Travel across to the other side of the room whilst remaining very low. So you never come to sitting level.
- Task 2: Travel across to the other side of the room whilst remaining at seated level.
- Task 3: Travel across to the other side of the room whilst remaining at squat level.
- Task 4: Travel across to the other side of the room whilst remaining at standing level.
- Task 5: Travel across to the other side of the room whilst remaining higher than standing level.
- Task 6: Travel across to the other side of the room whilst moving between very low and very high use of levels.

Tasks could then be delivered simultaneously with another task, eg combine Tasks 1 from both Outcome 1 and Outcome 2, eg:

- ◆ Select someone in the room which you are going to maintain eye contact with. Aim to never let this eye contact break. Be careful not to knock into others, at the same time move across the room remaining at squat level.

Tasks for demonstrate connecting with others could include:

- ◆ Elements of partner work such as supports, partner balancing, lifts, etc
- ◆ Connecting by means of non-contact tasks, eg leading, following, relating, flocking, etc

Outcome 3

The learners have the opportunity to demonstrate a range of skills and techniques in improvisation for dance, including creating a self-choreographed dance and then demonstrating their performance skills for dance improvisation.

Encouragement should be given to learners on the performance qualities, including aspects such as:

- ◆ physical performance of the movement
- ◆ focus
- ◆ projection
- ◆ if applicable the emotional/intentional aspects of their performance

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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The creation and performance of own improvisational dance (including at least two aspects from Outcomes 1 and 2):

- ◆ Learners can generate their own preferences as they have experienced a broad range of stimuli and tasks to improvise to (from Outcomes 1 and 2).
- ◆ It is recommended that the learners create or select a stimulus that inspires and motivates them to improvise through dance rather than being given a stimulus.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

Learners should be encouraged to develop their choreographic practice by undertaking both solo and group choreographic tasks.

All three Outcomes can be developed in conjunction with one another or progressively. And many of the Performance Criteria may be worked on simultaneously with another.

The tasks can:

- ◆ be set for solo and/or group work.
- ◆ involve more than one component at a time.
- ◆ be built upon each session to layer more components.
- ◆ be short and direct.

Throughout the delivery of the Unit, learners should be encouraged to develop their movement investigation, thus involvement and development can be assessed on an-ongoing basis. This will likely involve reaffirming feedback from the lecturer, building upon previously gained skills, as a continual mode of study. Demonstration of on-going understanding can be evidenced through observation checklists and/or video documentation.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

In order to achieve this Unit, learners are required to demonstrate practical evidence that they have met all PCs for each Outcome as specified in the Evidence Requirements. This Unit can therefore be assessed by practical assessments undertaken in supervised conditions.

The recommended approach is integration of assessment for all Outcomes which are met within class. However the Outcomes could also be met one-by-one or by combining any of the three Outcomes together.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Further guidance on assessment:

In Outcome 1, the assessor is looking for learners to:

- ◆ challenge their own movement habits and to investigate their own movement responses. This could include learners challenging themselves to respond in new and/or different ways, relevant to the given theme and/or task provided. This is about the level of enquiry and exploration rather than the demonstration itself.
- ◆ individualise their own movement material. This could include learners showing confidence to be themselves or different to others. Imitation will be limited as they find their own way of moving. They may find variations of the same movement. This is about the Outcome of their explorations.
- ◆ be aware of themselves in space and also of themselves in relation to others. This could include the learner having regard and consideration for others so the learner is therefore working safely, eg the learners move to avoid collisions; they gain eye contact with others, they move to accommodate someone to help them maintain their direction of travel.
- ◆ respond differently to a given theme or stimuli. This could include observation of the differing responses from the learner — as though they were completely different dances.

Learners can provide this evidence through the performance of a minimum of two separate movement improvisations which last 30 seconds each.

In Outcome 2, the assessor is looking for learners to:

- ◆ show a variation in choices and explorations of levels including low level (ie on/towards the floor level) medium level (ie in line with one's hips) and high level (ie standing and the space above one's head).
- ◆ explore and make choices on the use of directions, facings and use of space. Use of directions could include the learner moving horizontally, diagonally, circular, etc. Facings could include movement that is three-dimensional and faces the back, front, side, and diagonals. Use of space incorporates placement and travel, including upstage (centre, right, left), down stage, (centre, right, left), centre stage (centre, right, left).
- ◆ demonstrate simple movement that has been developed into more refined, complex or adapted movement. This is also a means of a varied repetition — although repetition can also be repeating a movement exactly the same.
- ◆ work with others in various ways. This can include consideration for others; one learner compromising their own movement in space to accommodate another learner, etc.

Learners can provide this evidence through the performance of a minimum of two separate movement improvisations which last 30 seconds each.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Dance Improvisation: An Introduction (SCQF level 6)

In Outcome 3, the assessor is looking for the learner to:

- ◆ provide an outline of a self-choreographed short improvised dance piece which will demonstrate understanding and learning.
- ◆ demonstrate two types of performance qualities, ie an internal focused performance (a very focused and engaged performer, committed to the execution of the movement and intentions if necessary and external projection (a strong projection and directed outward focus).
- ◆ maximise every movement, eg by travelling as far as they can, jumping as high as they can, being as precise as they can, etc.
- ◆ include the layering of the skills and techniques previously gained in Outcomes 1 and 2.

Learners can provide this evidence through:

- (a) a short oral presentation and
- (b) performance of a self-choreographed improvised dance piece, which lasts for approximately 1 minute. As well as including performance skills, internal focus, external projection and commitment of execution of movement, this performance must include two other elements covered in Outcomes 1 and 2.

It is possible to assess this Unit holistically but it is recommended that Outcomes 1 and 2 are achieved prior to Outcome 3.

Videoed evidence of all performances is required with the performances undertaken in supervised conditions. Assessors may use observational checklists to ensure all Evidence Requirements are covered. And to ensure authenticity of learners' work during performances, mirrors must be covered or learners must not be facing mirrors.

If necessary, learners could use a portfolio or log book to help support evidence of learning for each Outcome.

There must be opportunity for reassessment for each Outcome and Performance Criteria if required.

Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Dance Improvisation: An Introduction (SCQF level 6)

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

(a) Core Skills

Although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills in this Unit, there are opportunities to develop the following Core Skills.

Working with Others

◆ **Components: Working Co-operatively with Others and Reviewing Co-operative Contribution at SCQF level 5**

In the dance education environment/dance instruction, learners may have opportunities to develop skills in working with others such as, working in collaboration with others, eg in group dances; using interpersonal skills; taking responsibility for own contribution; reflecting on own personal learning; providing and/or accepting peer feedback etc. This Unit also provides specific opportunities for learners in working with others due to the importance of spatial awareness in improvisation where learners have to be aware of themselves — both in space and in relation to others. They also will be aware of the impact of their movements on others and by showing consideration for others in the group.

Problem Solving

◆ **Component: Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5**

In this Unit, learners are not to imitate dance movement — instead they have to challenge own movement habits through investigation then respond in new and different ways to given stimuli. For example, this can include variation in the choices of levels (ie low, medium and high); use of directions and different types of performance qualities (eg internal focus or external projection), etc. Also, using analysis and reasoning learners have opportunities develop more complex movements by refining or adapting simple movements.

◆ **Planning and Organising at SCQF level 5**

In Outcome 3, learners have the opportunity to plan, organise and demonstrate their own improvised dance piece. In order to pass the assessment they must complete this task which includes performance skills, internal focus, external projection and commitment of execution of movement plus some other elements covered in earlier Outcomes.

◆ **Component: Reviewing and Evaluating at SCQF level 5**

There are many opportunities for learners to review and evaluate their own performance and assess how well they are performing new and different dance movements to given stimuli. Elements of dance such as expression, communication, interpretation and projection depend strongly on the individuality of each performer and will benefit from self-review and self-evaluation on the part of the learner.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Dance Improvisation: An Introduction (SCQF level 6)

Communication

◆ **Component: Oral Communication at SCQF level 5**

In the dance education environment/dance instruction, learners have opportunities to develop good listening skills which may be evidenced by the performance of the learner in all three Outcomes of this Unit. Also assessment for Outcome 3 includes the production of an outline of a short self-choreographed dance piece which may be through a short oral presentation.

◆ **Component: Written Communication at SCQF level 5**

Opportunities may exist during the delivery of this Unit to develop reading skills where supporting documentation is provided for learners in written format (eg handouts on relevant terminology and improvisation dance vocabulary) to support observational learning. Also assessment for Outcome 3 includes the production of an outline of a short self-choreographed dance piece which may be in traditional written format or as a blog, etc

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

◆ **Component: Accessing Information at SCQF level 4**

During the delivery of this Unit, learners may be given opportunities to electronically access and collect relevant and appropriate information on improvisation using straightforward searches, using filtering techniques with appropriate criteria, keywords, etc. This could be helpful in identifying exemplary examples of the technical and artistic criteria required for this Unit.

(b) Overview of other Essential Skills

It is expected that learners will naturally develop broad, generic skills through this Unit. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Unit are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These may be built into the Unit where there are appropriate opportunities, some of which are identified below:

◆ **Literacy:** Opportunities exist for learners to develop their listening skills in class and in independent learning, in relation to their tutors, peers and audio-visual materials supporting class content. This may relate to information regarding course content regarding improvisation and/or feedback and guidance on their own learning (ie taking instruction about skills, performance and techniques, etc).

◆ **Health and Wellbeing:** The practical nature of this Unit encourages learners to take responsibility for their own personal learning, and further develop their physical wellbeing through training in the techniques and skills associated with improvisation. Class-based activities and performance opportunities encourage learners to develop further understanding of body/use of body in applying technique and skills (eg movement, expression, levels, motifs, projection, etc). Group-based activities offer opportunities for learners to develop their interpersonal skills for the benefit of themselves and others.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Dance Improvisation: An Introduction (SCQF level 6)

- ◆ **Employability, Enterprise and Citizenship:** Through the delivery and assessment, this Unit provides opportunities to develop skills in working cooperatively, in both class and performance contexts.
- ◆ **Thinking Skills:** The requirement to accurately replicate tutor-taught movement improvisations provides learners with opportunities to develop their capacity to retain and apply non-verbal and sequential complex information. Further there are opportunities for learners to develop their capacity for creativity in this Unit, eg creating and performing a self-choreographed improvised dance in Outcome 3.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for learners

Unit title: Dance Improvisation: An Introduction (SCQF level 6)

This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This Unit at SCQF level 6 is included in the National Certificate (NC) in Dance and is designed to introduce you to the skills and techniques in improvisation for dance, along with a basic understanding of the performance skills for improvisation.

This is a practical Unit so you will develop, practice and perform skills and techniques for movement and dance improvisation. You will also choreograph and perform your own short improvisational dance piece. There are opportunities to work both independently and with others in this Unit.

On achievement of this Unit you will be able to:

- ◆ demonstrate a range of skills and techniques within improvisation for dance.
- ◆ apply a range of skills and techniques within improvisation for dance.
- ◆ demonstrate performance skills and techniques for dance improvisation through a self-choreographed dance.

Aspects of what you will cover in this dance improvisation Unit include use of innovative movement (ie your own way of moving); self-expression; use of levels, directions, facings and space; use of repetition; internal focus and external projection of performance; performance skills; movement execution, etc. And you will have the opportunity to choreograph and perform your own short improvised dance.

Assessment for this Unit is practical. You will be advised of exact assessment arrangements by your teacher/tutor but there's likely to be practical assessments along the following lines which will be recorded:

- ◆ A demonstration of skills and techniques of dance improvisation through the performance of two short movement improvisations.
- ◆ Application of your skills and techniques of dance improvisation demonstrated through the performance of two short movement improvisations.
- ◆ A short presentation to outline your self-choreographed short dance and demonstration of your improvisational dance skills and techniques through the performance of this dance piece.

In addition to developing your skills in improvisation, there may be opportunities to development Core Skills in *Working with Others*, *Communication*, *Problem Solving* and *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*.

You do not have to have any previous improvisation experience to undertake this Unit but it would be helpful if you have experience in movement or dance at SCQF level 5 or equivalent.

On achievement of this Unit, you could progress to Units such as *Contact Improvisation* at SCQF level 7 (ie HNC) and other further courses of study which lead to recognised achievement at a higher level of dance performance.