

## Dance: Technical Skills

**SCQF:** level 6 (9 SCQF credit points)

**Unit code:** J28C 76

### Unit outline

The general aim of this Unit is to develop refined technical skills in contrasting dance styles for solo and/or group dance performances. Dance techniques will be explored before being applied in tutor-choreographed dance sequences and performance. Safe dance practice will also be developed and applied. Learners will develop knowledge and understanding of the social and cultural factors influencing dance, and will also apply critical thinking skills when developing knowledge and understanding of dance styles and practitioners. They will evaluate their own work and that of others.

Learners who complete this Unit will be able to:

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of contrasting dance styles
- 2 Apply technical dance skills in contrasting dance styles

This Unit is available as a free-standing Unit. The Unit Specification should be read in conjunction with the *Unit Support Notes*, which provide advice and guidance on delivery, assessment approaches and development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Exemplification of the standards in this Unit is given in *Unit Assessment Support*, available on the SQA secure site.

## **Recommended entry**

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by one or more of the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ free-standing Units in Dance at SCQF level 5

## **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. For further information, please refer to the *Unit Support Notes*.

# Standards

## Outcomes and assessment standards

### Outcome 1

The learner will:

#### 1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of contrasting dance styles by:

- 1.1 Comparing the technical skills and characteristics of two contrasting dance styles
- 1.2 Analysing the social and cultural influences on one selected dance style

### Outcome 2

The learner will:

#### 2 Apply technical dance skills in contrasting dance styles by:

- 2.1 Demonstrating refined technical skills and principles of two contrasting dance styles
- 2.2 Performing two tutor-choreographed dance sequences in contrasting dance styles
- 2.3 Applying knowledge of safe dance practice when demonstrating technical dance skills
- 2.4 Analysing and evaluating technical dance skills in own and another's work

## Evidence Requirements for the Unit

Assessors should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their learners, to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used.

Evidence will be a combination of written and/or oral and performance evidence. Evidence may be presented for individual Outcomes or it may be gathered for the Unit as a whole by combining assessment holistically in one single activity. If the latter approach is used, it must be clear how the evidence covers each Outcome.

Learners will be required to provide evidence of:

- ◆ detailed comparison of the technical skills and characteristics of two contrasting dance styles
- ◆ analysis of how social/cultural factors have influenced a selected dance style
- ◆ the ability to demonstrate refined technical skills in two contrasting dance styles
- ◆ the ability to apply technical and performance skills when performing dance sequences in two contrasting dance styles, each sequence must last a minimum of 1 minute and a maximum of 1 minute and 30 seconds.
- ◆ application of safe dance practice
- ◆ the ability to analyse and evaluate technical and performance skills demonstrated by self, peers and/or others

Dance styles assessed in this Unit will be chosen by the assessor.

Exemplification of assessment is provided in *Unit Assessment Support*. Advice and guidance on possible approaches to assessment is provided in the *Unit Support Notes*.

# Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will 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 must be built into the Unit where there are appropriate opportunities.

## **3 Health and wellbeing**

- 3.1 Personal learning
- 3.3 Physical wellbeing

## **4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship**

- 4.3 Working with others

## **5 Thinking skills**

- 5.3 Applying
- 5.4 Analysing and evaluating

Amplification of these is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills should be at the same SCQF level of the Unit and be consistent with the SCQF level descriptor. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work is given in the *Unit Support Notes*.

# Appendix: Unit support notes

## Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing this Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- ◆ the *Unit Specification*
- ◆ the *Unit Assessment Support packs*

## Developing skills, knowledge and understanding

Teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

## Approaches to learning and teaching

Teachers and lecturers should maintain current knowledge and understanding of recommended practices in the delivery and assessment for this subject area, to assure learning and teaching is advanced with modern approaches that will engage candidates and develop essential skills in techniques as they prepare for assessment at an appropriate time in delivery.

In the Dance: Technical skills Unit there are two outcomes to be achieved by developing and applying technical dance skills in two contrasting dance styles.

This unit provides an opportunity for the candidates to develop their knowledge and understanding of a selected dance styles including social, cultural, historical developments and influence of key choreographers. Candidates will also compare the technical and performance requirements in two contrasting styles.

For Outcome 1, candidates should be encouraged to develop knowledge and understanding of the selected dance styles by researching leading practitioners, technical and performance requirements and model performer to consolidate learning. This can be approached in a variety of ways including research tasks, newspaper article, presentation or a centre devised booklet with the knowledge gained by candidates consolidating on the skills being developed practically in the dance studio. A great deal of information is available on the Internet. Recordings of established dance companies and individual performers are readily available that can be useful for learning and teaching. Teachers/lecturers may ask candidates to research the historical developments of one selected dance style focusing on cultural and social development and present the findings in a format suitable to the candidates needs such as an essay, presentation or talk.

Attending live performances of established dance companies is an excellent way of exposing the candidate to key practitioners and model performers and at the same time possibly giving them the opportunity to experience other components of performance. The type of live performance could vary in accordance with the styles of dance selected, for example if Highland dance is the selected style attending a Tattoo or a Highland Dance Competition could be valuable.

In Outcome 2, the candidate will develop technical dance skills and apply this to two dance sequences in contrasting styles; therefore, it is advised that enough time is given to gaining technical skills before the candidate is asked to perform a sequence. Confidence in their ability to perform the skills will give the candidate freedom to work on presentation and performance skills. Candidates are required to evaluate their own work and the work of others to develop their understanding of dance skills and model performance. Teachers/lecturers could encourage feedback on strengths, areas for improvement and development methods to improve or maintain skills.

There are a number of dance styles to choose from, including but not limited to ballet, contemporary, jazz, Irish, hip hop, tap and Highland. Whichever styles are studied, the candidate should follow structured technique classes, building up from basic technical exercises, to longer movement sequences incorporating techniques learned in classwork and centre work, ensuring safe dance practice is followed at all times, particularly in relation to warm up, cool down, attire, environment and correct technique(s).

It is important to emphasise the importance of key skills across all dance styles, as these principles lay the basis for competence as below:

Technical principles:

- ◆ use of turnout/parallel
- ◆ posture
- ◆ alignment
- ◆ centring
- ◆ balance
- ◆ control
- ◆ stamina
- ◆ strength
- ◆ flexibility
- ◆ fluidity and smooth transitions

Performance skills:

- ◆ timing
- ◆ musicality
- ◆ quality
- ◆ dynamics
- ◆ self-expression
- ◆ sense of performance
- ◆ projection
- ◆ concentration and focus
- ◆ spatial awareness

To acquire and develop fundamental technical and performance skills in two contrasting styles, candidates should experience regular structured technique classes which are specific to the styles being studied this should include:

- ◆ warm up with technical exercises
- ◆ centre work and/or barre work
- ◆ stretches at the barre, in the centre or on the floor
- ◆ corner work/traveling
- ◆ combining sequences which travel
- ◆ amalgamated technical sequences
- ◆ development of performance skills
- ◆ cool down
- ◆ regular feedback would be encouraged

The following advice should be considered when creating technical sequences:

- ◆ 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 which has clear time signature

## Resources

Candidates may develop their learning further by reading, researching, watching live performances, taking part in dance classes etc. The following list of practitioners and influential choreographers could help you direct your candidates to other places for learning.

### Websites and dance companies

- ◆ Ballet Boyz
- ◆ Courses Careers UK
- ◆ Creative Scotland
- ◆ Dance UK
- ◆ DV8
- ◆ Foundation for Community Dance
- ◆ London dance (dance companies, reviews, jobs)
- ◆ National Dance Resource Centre
- ◆ National Dance Teachers Association
- ◆ New York City Ballet
- ◆ Rambert
- ◆ Royal Ballet
- ◆ The Stage (newspaper for dance and theatre)
- ◆ Scottish Ballet
- ◆ Scottish Dance Theatre
- ◆ YDance
- ◆ Youth Dance England

### Influential choreographers include:

Alvin Ailey, Richard Alston, George Balanchine, Ashley Banjo, Pina Bausch, Matthew Bourne, Christopher Bruce, Merce Cunningham, Siobhan Davies, Isadora Duncan, Bob Fosse, Itzik Galili, Martha Graham, Gregory Hines, Doris Humphrey, Shobana Jeyasingh, Akram Khan, Rudolf Laban, José Limón, Edouard Louk, Gillian Lynne, Ashley Page, Jasmin Vardimon.

Dance Teachers Associations also have websites which contain valuable information, as listed below:

- ◆ BATD — British Association for Teachers of Dance
- ◆ CDET — Council for Dance Education and Training
- ◆ ISTD — Imperial Society for Teachers of Dance
- ◆ IDTA — International Dance Teachers Association
- ◆ RAD — Royal Academy of Dancing
- ◆ SDTA — Scottish Dance Teachers Alliance
- ◆ SOBHD — Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing
- ◆ UKA — United Kingdom Alliance

Candidates are required to demonstrate complex technical skills in structured dance classes in two contrasting dance styles. The following tables containing suggestions of techniques in a range of styles that may be applicable at SCQF level 6.



## Sample classwork

Appropriate classwork for a number of styles is shown below. These can be used to set technical exercises, but they are by no means prescriptive. Teachers and lecturers can demonstrate correct technique through regular classes, by holding technique workshops led by industry professionals, or making use of online resources that show the correct technique in regard to the style being studied.

<b>Classical ballet</b>	
<b>Barre</b>	<b>Centre</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ demi and full pliés, with port de bras</li> <li>◆ combined battement tendu and glissé</li> <li>◆ rond de jambe à terre, with varying speeds</li> <li>◆ battement fondu, with port de bras</li> <li>◆ battement frappé — to second</li> <li>◆ développé en croix</li> <li>◆ fouetté of adage</li> <li>◆ grand battement</li> <li>◆ port de bras with forwards and sideways bend</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ positions of the feet — first, second, third, fourth and fifth</li> <li>◆ positions of the arms — first, second, third, fourth open and crossed, fifth</li> <li>◆ port de bras, with use of épaulement, croisé and ouvert</li> <li>◆ battement tendu and glissé, with port de bras and changing directions</li> <li>◆ temps lié – en avant, en arrière, à la seconde</li> <li>◆ chassé – en avant, en arrière, à la seconde and passé</li> <li>◆ arabesques and attitudes</li> <li>◆ développé devant</li> <li>◆ single pirouette — from fifth or fourth</li> </ul>
<b>Travelling steps</b>	<b>Allegro</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ pas de bourrée, devant, derrière, dessous and dessus</li> <li>◆ balances de côté, en avant and en arrière, turning</li> <li>◆ glissade devant, derrière, dessous and dessus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ sauté, échappé, changements (jumps in first, second, fourth and fifth)</li> <li>◆ assemblé dessus and dessous</li> <li>◆ jeté ordinaire — devant and derrière</li> <li>◆ coupé — dessous and dessus</li> <li>◆ temps levé in first arabesque</li> <li>◆ pas de chat with port de bras</li> <li>◆ sissonne fermée</li> <li>◆ grand jeté</li> </ul>

***Contemporary — incorporating alignment, use of centre, and turnout/parallel***

<b>Centre work</b>	<b>Floor exercises</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ lateral spine curves</li><li>◆ high release</li><li>◆ spirals</li><li>◆ contractions</li><li>◆ roll downs — parallel, first and second</li><li>◆ pliés in parallel, first, second and third with upper body curves</li><li>◆ tilts</li><li>◆ tendus and footwork in parallel and turnout en croix</li><li>◆ grand battements en croix</li><li>◆ développé en croix</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ swings</li><li>◆ curves</li><li>◆ high release</li><li>◆ tilts</li><li>◆ falls</li><li>◆ rolls</li><li>◆ second position</li><li>◆ transitions from standing to floor and reverse</li></ul>
<b>Swings</b>	<b>Travelling steps that incorporate runs and changes of direction</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ combinations of swings with rolls to floor and jumps</li><li>◆ swings and lunges with upper body curves</li><li>◆ standing swings</li><li>◆ figures of eight</li><li>◆ ski swings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ triplets with turns and spirals</li><li>◆ turns</li><li>◆ leaps</li><li>◆ skips</li><li>◆ strikes</li><li>◆ sparkle jumps</li><li>◆ movement phrases using directions, floor patterns and floor work</li></ul>

<b>Highland</b>		
<b>Warm-up</b>	<b>Basic positions</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ jumps in first, second, third, fourth and fifth positions</li> <li>◆ springs from foot to foot</li> <li>◆ hopping right and left foot</li> <li>◆ combinations of the above</li> <li>◆ combinations of the above using hand positions — first, second, third, fourth and fifth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ standing in first position and point in second, third, fourth, fifth — both feet</li> <li>◆ hopping and using the same positions as above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ standing in first position and working foot to second aerial, third aerial, third rear aerial, mid fourth and mid fourth aerial, fourth intermediate, fourth intermediate aerial</li> <li>◆ hopping and using the same position as above</li> </ul>
<b>Basic movements and steps</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ shedding</li> <li>◆ backstepping</li> <li>◆ toe and heel</li> <li>◆ rocking</li> <li>◆ cross-over</li> <li>◆ pas-de-basque</li> <li>◆ open pas-de-basque</li> <li>◆ highcutting</li> <li>◆ brushing</li> <li>◆ shuffles</li> <li>◆ shakes, double shakes, shakes and rock</li> <li>◆ hop brush beat beat</li> <li>◆ leap</li> <li>◆ strathspey</li> <li>◆ highland reel</li> <li>◆ spring points</li> <li>◆ assemblé and travel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ propelled pivot turn</li> <li>◆ side travel</li> <li>◆ balance</li> <li>◆ travelling balance</li> </ul>	

<b>Jazz</b>	
<b>Warm-up</b>	<b>Centre work</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ roll downs</li> <li>◆ isolations using head shoulders, ribs, hips, feet</li> <li>◆ lunges</li> <li>◆ foot exercises</li> <li>◆ preparation for jumps — first, second, fourth position</li> <li>◆ cardiovascular movements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ use of feet and legs — parallel/turnout/turn in — first, second, fourth position</li> <li>◆ use of arms — first, second, third, fifth position</li> <li>◆ tendus and glissés developing use of arms, speeds, facing, directions</li> <li>◆ jazz pliés (parallel/turnout — first, second, fourth position and arms)</li> <li>◆ isolations sequence to include: head, shoulders, ribs, hips — develop use of speeds and qualities</li> <li>◆ ripples including dolphin and snake movements, contractions and releases</li> <li>◆ preparation for développé and développés in first and second</li> <li>◆ single pirouettes</li> <li>◆ pas de bourrée with turning</li> <li>◆ kicks (both flick and high), circular kicks, hitch kicks — develop use of arms and facings</li> </ul>
<b>Travelling steps</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ elevation including step hops, sautés, jetés, flick jetés, attitude leaps with varying body and arm positions, directions</li> <li>◆ turns including open turns and jazz turns</li> <li>◆ step ball change, cross ball change, flick ball change with use of facing and directions</li> <li>◆ jazz walks with use of direction</li> <li>◆ straight leg kick combinations: including forwards; back and side with use of arms; directions; and develop height</li> <li>◆ combination of travelling movements with varying body and arm positions, develop intricacy using speeds and directions</li> </ul>	

<b>Tap</b>	
<b>Warm-up</b>	<b>Close work</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ springs and tap springs</li> <li>◆ toe taps</li> <li>◆ tap step ball change</li> <li>◆ tap step heel</li> <li>◆ tap heel ball</li> <li>◆ shuffle ball change</li> <li>◆ hop</li> <li>◆ flap</li> <li>◆ stomp</li> <li>◆ ball and heel beats</li> <li>◆ buffalo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ shuffles, front, side, back</li> <li>◆ toe flam</li> <li>◆ five beat cramp roll</li> <li>◆ stamps</li> <li>◆ pull backs</li> <li>◆ crawl</li> <li>◆ paddles to varying rhythms</li> <li>◆ double time step, with break (pick up of shuffle)</li> </ul>
<b>Travelling steps</b>	<b>Turning steps</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ five beat riffs</li> <li>◆ pick up change</li> <li>◆ shuffle spring</li> <li>◆ pick up hop shuffle step</li> <li>◆ pick up spring shuffle step</li> <li>◆ drop pick up change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ step turn step</li> <li>◆ pencil turn</li> <li>◆ step ball change turning</li> <li>◆ single pirouette</li> </ul>

<b>Hip hop</b>	
<b>Warm-up</b>	<b>Centre</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ roll downs</li> <li>◆ isolations — shoulder, rib and hip</li> <li>◆ cardiorespiratory movements</li> <li>◆ cardiorespiratory movements incorporating dynamic arm movements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ lunges</li> <li>◆ side stretches</li> <li>◆ pliés</li> <li>◆ weight transference movements such as front, back and step ball change and step knee lifts in second position</li> <li>◆ slide and glide</li> <li>◆ top rock</li> <li>◆ ripples</li> <li>◆ dolphins</li> <li>◆ popping and locking</li> <li>◆ heel groove</li> <li>◆ freeze</li> <li>◆ tutting</li> <li>◆ Bart Simpson</li> <li>◆ cabbage patch</li> <li>◆ Scooby Doo</li> <li>◆ shoulder lean</li> <li>◆ The Reebok</li> </ul>
<b>Floor work</b>	<b>Travelling steps</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ core work</li> <li>◆ planks</li> <li>◆ push-ups</li> <li>◆ floor slides</li> <li>◆ four step</li> <li>◆ pin drop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ hip hop walks</li> <li>◆ glides</li> <li>◆ combinations from centre and floor work</li> </ul>

Good technique could also be exemplified through either live or recorded performances, or through self-evaluation or peer evaluation. Candidates could compare their performance to that of a model performer. Candidates could further develop their understanding of good technique by evaluating each other regularly as part of classwork — working with a partner and identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

## Approaches to assessment and gathering evidence

Teachers/Lecturers should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their candidates, to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used.

Evidence for this Unit is likely to include a combination of written, oral and recorded performance evidence. An approach could be an oral presentation, accompanied by photographs and/or recorded clips. In the above methods of assessment, much of the information could be attained through independent study and research. The work can be presented for assessment in a variety of formats depending on the preferences of centres and candidates, if this covers all essential Evidence Requirements for the Unit.

### Outcome 1

Assessment evidence can be gathered through a variety of learning activities for this outcome, for example:

- research project and presentation
- essay
- centre devised worksheets or booklet
- newspaper report

### Outcome 2

A suitable method of assessment would be an observation checklist of specific technical and performance skills for each style. A recording could be used as supporting evidence. Evidence would need to demonstrate:

- ◆ the ability to accurately demonstrate the technical skills
- ◆ understanding of technical skills
- ◆ ability to utilise performance skills

For safe dance practice candidates are required to apply the skills already learned to perform two sequences, each in contrasting dance style.

A suitable method of assessment for Outcome 2 would be a teacher/lecturer choreographed sequence in each dance style. The performances could be filmed in small groups or individually for evidence, it is good practice to give the candidates opportunities to perform sequences as a solo performance. The film could also be used to aid the candidates in evaluating their own work. The performance could be evaluated using the following criteria:

- ◆ accuracy of technical skills
- ◆ centre, balance, posture and alignment
- ◆ stamina, strength and flexibility
- ◆ quality and dynamics
- ◆ performance quality
- ◆ timing and musicality
- ◆ self-expression
- ◆ ability to evaluate their own work



The sequences could be assessed by recording a solo performance and marking against an observation checklist, or during a live performance of the solo.

## **Combining assessment within Units**

As Units are delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers/lecturers will have more flexibility to develop approaches to delivering and assessing the Units as these will not need to be related to Course assessment. When assessment within the unit is holistic teachers and lecturers should take particular care to track the evidence for each individual outcome.

## **Equality and inclusion**

This unit is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the assessment arrangements web page: [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

## Administrative information

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**Superclass:** LB

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## History of changes to National Unit Specification

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	Page 1 — Clarification of Unit outline to reflect changes made to Outcomes and Assessment Standards.  Page 3 — Changes to Outcomes and Assessment Standards to clarify requirements and need for contrasting dance styles. Clarification of Evidence Requirements to reflect changes made to Outcomes and Assessment Standards.	April 2014
3.0	Level changed from Higher to SCQF level 6.	September 2018
4.0	Unit code updated.  Timing added to clarify the required duration of contrasting dance styles.	September 2019
4.1	Unit support notes added.	June 2020

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