



# Common questions about National 5 and Higher Dance

## Contents

National 5 course assessment	1
Visiting assessment	4
General questions	7

# National 5 course assessment

## How is the National 5 Dance course assessed?

There are three course assessment components:

- ◆ Question paper — this assesses candidates' ability to demonstrate the skills, knowledge and understanding from across the course. The question paper has three sections. All questions are compulsory and candidates are expected to use dance terminology throughout.
- ◆ Performance — this is a tutor-choreographed technical solo in a selected dance style. It must last a minimum of 1 minute and 30 seconds and a maximum of 2 minutes. The solos should contain steps which can be found in the [National 5 course specification](#).
- ◆ Practical activity — this has two parts, the Choreography and the Choreography Review. Candidates create and present a dance for two people, excluding self, lasting a minimum of 1 minute and 30 seconds and a maximum of 2 minutes.

## How does scaling work in National 5 Dance?

To calculate a candidate's overall mark in a course assessment component, we take the number of marks the candidate achieves in that component, divide it by the number of marks available in that component and then multiply this by the scaled mark.

The table below shows the marks available and scaled marks for each course assessment component.

Component	Marks available	Scaled mark
Question paper	30	20
Practical activity	65	45
Performance	35	35

### Example

A candidate achieves 15 of the 30 marks available in the question paper. The scaled mark for the question paper is 20. Their overall mark for the question paper is  $15 \div 30 \times 20$ , ie 10 marks.

## Question paper

### When do candidates sit the question paper for National 5 Dance?

The question paper for National 5 Dance is part of SQA's annual exam diet. Centres are issued with the exam timetable each year. Candidates sit the exam under SQA exam conditions.

### What does the question paper for National 5 Dance involve?

The question paper requires candidates to draw on and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding and the purpose and aims of the National 5 Dance course. Questions sample the skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment listed in the [course specification](#).

The question paper has three sections:

- ◆ Section 1: Evaluating Personal Performance
- ◆ Section 2: Knowledge and Understanding of a Chosen Dance Style
- ◆ Section 3: Evaluation of Professional Choreography

All questions are compulsory and candidates are expected to use dance terminology throughout. Candidates have 1 hour to complete the question paper. It is worth 30 marks, which is 20% of the overall course grade.

### In Section 1, should candidate responses refer to generic dance skills and steps that span styles?

Section 1 is based on personal reflection of a dance style candidates have studied throughout the course and they can respond on any dance style. They may reflect on their dance experience outside of school. We would advise teachers to encourage candidates to reflect on their personal performance in a dance style studied throughout the course, for example for their course assessment performance.

### What does the term 'key generic dance steps' mean?

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key steps and characteristics of the dance style they have selected in Section 2. Candidates should be encouraged to include style-specific steps in their responses rather than generic dance steps that can be performed in many dance styles. This is not a new requirement: it was previously assessed in the *Dance: Technical Skills* unit.

### If a candidate does not answer the introduction question in Sections 2 and 3 (with no allocated marks), can they still gain marks in the questions which follow?

The purpose of the introduction to Sections 2 and 3 is to help the marker understand the candidate's thinking. This is particularly important for Section 3 as choreography is very subjective and personal opinions may vary on the theme and/or intention. If a candidate does not give a response to the introduction question, the marker still marks the candidate's subsequent responses. Teachers should encourage candidates to answer the introduction questions. Teachers could include introduction questions in practice papers or exam revision to familiarise candidates with this format.

## **Will SQA check my centre-devised prelim?**

SQA does not check centres' prelim papers. Teachers should use the [specimen question paper and course specification](#) to generate appropriate questions and exam preparation material.

## **Can I use the specimen question paper for my centre's prelim?**

No, the specimen question paper is on SQA's website and is therefore available to candidates.

## **Higher course assessment**

### **How is the Higher Dance course assessed?**

There are two course assessment components:

- ◆ Performance — the candidate performs two contrasting tutor-choreographed technical solos, which should both last a minimum of 1 minute and 30 seconds and a maximum of 2 minutes. The solos should contain steps which can be found in the [Higher course support notes](#).
- ◆ Practical activity — this has two parts, the Choreography and the Choreography Review. Candidates create and present a dance for a minimum of three people, excluding self, lasting a minimum of 2 minutes and a maximum of 3 minutes.

### **For the Higher course assessment, can a candidate use work that has previously been internally assessed in the *Dance: Choreography* and *Dance: Technical Skills* units?**

The Higher performance solos, as described above, should be choreographed by the tutor in a dance style that has already been studied. Although the dance may be informed by and developed from the dance performed for unit assessment, it should be more technically directed and sophisticated for course assessment.

# Visiting assessment

## What is the assessment model for National 5 and Higher Dance performance and choreography?

Dance is externally assessed by the visiting assessment model, where a visiting assessor (VA) assesses a sample of 12 candidates. (In centres where there are fewer than 12 candidates, the VA assesses all candidates.) SQA's VA and the centre assessor mark live performances simultaneously and collaboratively.

The centre decides which member of staff carries out the role of centre assessor — this is usually the Dance teacher.

On visiting assessment day it is important that centres adhere to exam conditions. This ensures there are no distractions for candidates during their performances and while they are preparing.

Please note that the **Choreography Review** is also part of the assessment day. Sampled candidates must complete the work for their Choreography Review in advance of the VA visit. The completed Choreography Reviews must be available to the VA along with a completed candidate mark sheet on the assessment day. The VA and the centre assessor mark the Choreography Reviews collaboratively and agree the marks.

The exception to this would be when a candidate chooses a live verbal presentation for assessment. Centre staff must inform the VA in advance of the visit if additional time needs to be allocated for this type of presentation.

## Should Choreography Reviews be sent to SQA before the visiting assessment day?

Centres should not send Choreography Reviews to SQA prior to the visiting assessment day. Choreography Reviews should be marked by the centre before the visiting assessment day. All reviews selected for the visiting assessment sample should be made available to the VA along with a completed candidate mark sheet on the assessment day.

## How much time is allocated to this assessment visit and when will it take place?

The Dance visiting assessment period is from February to May each year and one day is allocated to each centre. This is a very wide window and centre staff can negotiate their one-day visit with the VA for a time which suits the centre and candidates best. If centres present at both National 5 and Higher levels, they are allocated one day per level.

Centres should allocate time for the VA and the centre assessor to discuss written evidence and mood boards and to watch DVDs.

If the centre is presenting a full sample of 12 candidates, this takes a full school day. Centre assessors should be prepared to assess any remaining candidates on another day, in the following two-week period.

## **Is the visiting assessment process the same as verification?**

The visiting assessment process is quite different from verification. Verification is about confirming the internal assessment decisions made by centres.

Visiting assessment is for the external assessment of certain course components; in the case of National 5 and Higher Dance, the performance and the practical activity. Marks are assigned to each of these components by the VA. This counts towards the overall grade for the course.

## **How does the process work?**

An SQA-appointed VA is allocated to each centre for one day per level regardless of the number of candidates presented. The process starts with an initial phone conversation between centre staff and the VA to set up the assessment date. The centre assessor can discuss the potential sample with the VA and planning can start. On the day, the VA and the centre assessor mark the sample of 12 candidates collaboratively and the VA guides centre staff to the national standard. The agreed marks will stand for the sample of 12, and these marks are final.

## **Who selects the sample of 12 candidates?**

Centre staff select the sample and they should aim to select a range of candidates of mixed ability. Being in control of the sample selection means that staff can plan in a practical way and it means that they have until the day of the visiting assessment to finalise the sample and to substitute other candidates where necessary.

## **What happens to the candidates who are not in the sample?**

As soon as possible after the VA's visit, the centre assessor must assess all remaining candidates according to the national standards endorsed by the VA and in line with the assessment decisions made for the sample of 12. The timing of this is up to each centre, but best practice would be to do this as soon as possible after the VA's visit so that no candidate is advantaged or disadvantaged by time passing. Assessment of all remaining candidates must take place within **two working weeks** of the VA's visit.

## **What if a candidate is absent during that two-week period?**

If a candidate has continued to be absent because of, for example, a medical condition and the two-week period for assessment has passed, centre staff must contact SQA's Assessment Arrangements team ([aarequests@sqa.org.uk](mailto:aarequests@sqa.org.uk)).

## **Should candidate performances be filmed during the VA's visit?**

Centres may choose to record their performances during the VA's visit, although this is not mandatory. For more information, please refer to: [post-results services: recording of Music, Drama and Dance visiting assessment](#).

## **Does each candidate perform both their technical solo and choreography consecutively?**

No. The solos should be grouped together according to dance style. Following all solo performances, the candidates will return to introduce and present their choreography.

## **Do candidates need to be present for the choreography section of the practical activity?**

Yes. For the choreography section of the practical activity, the candidate must introduce their own choreography, give a brief description of the theme and introduce the dancers who are going to be involved in the choreography. At National 5, the dance should last between 1 minute and 30 seconds and 2 minutes and should be choreographed for two dancers excluding self. At Higher, the dance should last between 2 and 3 minutes, for a minimum of three dancers.

The Choreography Review can be presented in a variety of formats, including oral presentations, written reports, videos, or a combination of these approaches.

Centres should allocate time for the VA and the centre assessor to mark written evidence and mood boards or to watch DVDs. Candidates should be present to give a brief introduction that covers the use of theme/stimulus, devices and structure. This should be no longer than 2 minutes.

## **What should candidates wear for their solo performances on the visiting assessment day?**

The VA must be able to clearly see candidates' bodies so that correct alignment and posture is visible.

## **What are the advantages of the visiting assessment model in Dance?**

The model of assessing a sample of 12 candidates has operated successfully in National 5 and Higher Dance, and in other practical subjects, for some time. Dance teachers find this collaborative marking model supportive and constructive as national standards are shared and understood.

This type of visiting assessment means that for National 5 and Higher Dance, every centre is visited each year: this is different from verification which samples centres from year to year.

# General questions

## **Is there a way of recognising positive achievement for a candidate who may not achieve the National 5 Dance course?**

As there is not a National 4 Dance course there is no recognising positive achievement arrangement for National 5 Dance candidates. However, candidates who do not achieve the National 5 Dance course can still gain the freestanding units, *Dance: Choreography* and *Dance: Technical Skills* at SCQF level 5. Alternatively, the National Progression Award in Dance at SCQF level 4 may be an appropriate option. More information about this qualification can be found [on our website](#).

## **Can Dance candidates access SQA's results services?**

Our results services support candidates when an exceptional circumstance has affected exam performance or when there is concern about a grade. For information about SQA's results services, please visit the dedicated section of our [website](#).

National Qualification questions and answers can be found on the [frequently asked questions section](#) of SQA's website.