



## **Common questions about National 5 and Higher Dance**

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# 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.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ 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](#).

## How does scaling work in National 5 Dance?

To help calculate a candidate's overall mark in a course assessment component, SQA have launched a new scaling calculator for the current 2018-19 session.

This can be used as an aid to calculate the total mark for National 5 Dance.

The calculator is available to download from the <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/2904.6880.html> page.

If you have any queries please contact our Data Services team by e-mailing [national.qualifications@sqa.org.uk](mailto:national.qualifications@sqa.org.uk)

## 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.

## **What does the term ‘style-specific 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. It is important when candidates are describing style-specific steps that the step can be executed correctly from the description. This is not a new requirement: it was previously assessed in the *Dance: Technical Skills* unit.

## **What is expected of a candidate response on development methods in section 1?**

Candidates should understand the development methods they have used to enhance both their technical and performance skills. There are many methods candidates can apply, for example: self-evaluation, peer-evaluation, watching a model performer, taking additional technique classes, stretching programme, balance exercises, technical exercises or practising using mirrors.

## **In section 3, what should be included in a candidate response on spatial elements?**

Spatial elements was previously known as ‘use of space’. The terminology has changed for a consistent approach between National 5 and Higher. Spatial elements include: all the ways that a choreographer has used the space — including formations, levels, directions, proximities, pathways, spatial patterns or floor plans. Candidates should understand the spatial elements that have been applied in the piece, and the relationship to the choreographic intention.

## **If a candidate does not answer the introduction question(s) in sections 2 and/or 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(s), 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.

# Higher course assessment

## How is the Higher 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 two sections. All questions are compulsory and candidates are expected to use dance terminology throughout.
- ◆ Practical activity — this has two parts, the choreography and the choreography review. Candidates create and present a group dance, for a minimum of three dancers excluding self, lasting a minimum of 2 minutes and a maximum of 3 minutes.
- ◆ Performance — this is two tutor-choreographed technical solos in contrasting dance styles. 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 [Higher course specification](#).

## How does scaling work in Higher Dance?

To help calculate a candidate's overall mark in a course assessment component SQA have launched a new scaling calculator for the current 2018-19 session.

This can be used as an aid, to calculate the total mark, for Higher Dance.

The calculator is available to download from the <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/2904.6880.html> page.

If you have any queries you can contact our Data Services team by e-mailing [national.qualifications@sqa.org.uk](mailto:national.qualifications@sqa.org.uk)

## Question paper

### What does the question paper for Higher Dance involve?

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

The question paper has two sections:

- ◆ section 1: dance appreciation in context (24 marks)
- ◆ section 2: study of a professional choreography (16 marks)

All questions are compulsory and candidates are expected to use dance terminology throughout. Candidates have 2 hours to complete the question paper. It is worth 40 marks, which is 30% of the overall course grade.

### Are candidates expected to answer questions on historical influences for one or two dance styles?

Candidates should have secure knowledge and understanding of the influence of historical, social and cultural developments in one selected dance style. This should include in-depth

knowledge about: influential choreographers, historical events, race, gender or any cultural influences that have helped to develop the selected dance style.

In section 1, candidates should be able to compare two contrasting dance styles in terms of: key characteristics, steps, performance style and technical requirements.

**For section 1, do candidate have to write about the same styles they used for the solo performances?**

No. Candidates may have a particular strength in a dance style that they have chosen to perform for the solo performance. However, they may also be studying a different style, depending on the style the teacher is delivering. This allows for personalisation and choice for candidates.

If candidates are using the same style this is considered to be good practice, as it helps candidates to gain a greater knowledge and understanding of the selected dance styles, but it is not a requirement of the course.

**Is there a recommended list of professional choreographies to use for the question paper?**

Please refer to appendix 3 of the course specification for an extensive list of recommended choreographies suitable for section 2 at Higher level. Please contact SQA for further support or guidance.

# 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. The VA and the designated centre assessor watch the performances together and collaboratively mark after each performance.

A VA and one designated centre assessor mark the choreography collaboratively.

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 visiting assessment day. Candidates who are part of the sample must have their choreography review marked by the centre 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. After the VA has had a chance to read the choreography reviews, the VA and the designated centre assessor meet and agree the marks. When there is agreement between the VA and the designated centre assessor on assessment decisions and marks, these marks are final. If there is not an agreement on marks, the VA marks are final.

The exception to this would be when a candidate chooses to deliver a verbal presentation as part of their assessment. This can be recorded or presented live. If the presentation is recorded before visiting assessment, the designated centre assessor can mark this in advance of the day. If this is presented live, centre staff must inform the VA in advance of visiting assessment that additional time is required to review the live verbal presentation.

## How much time is allocated to the visiting 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 designated 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. Designated 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. Visiting assessment is for the external assessment of certain course components — for National 5 and Higher Dance these are 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. Every centre is visited each year — this is different from verification which samples centres from year to year. Verification is about confirming the internal assessment decisions made by centres.

## **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 designated centre assessor discusses the potential sample with the VA, which allows for planning to start.

On the day of visiting assessment, the VA and the centre assessor mark the sample of 12 candidates collaboratively. This sample allows the designated assessor to agree on a range of marks in line with 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. The sample should contain a range of abilities and dance styles. 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 designated 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 designated centre assessor to discuss and mark written evidence, mood boards, and 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.

## **For Higher, how can lighting be used in a non-theatre environment?**

If a candidate uses lighting in a studio or gym setting they can use torches, up-lighting, or lamps. Candidates must use two theatre arts chosen from: lighting, set, props, theatrical make-up and costume in their choreography.

## **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.

# 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](#).

## Can I send SQA my prelim papers for checking before my pupils sit it?

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

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

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

Please note that SQA's specimen question paper or an SQA past paper in its entirety cannot be accepted if it is the only evidence submitted for exceptional circumstances. These papers and associated marking instructions are in the public domain and can be accessed by candidates.

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