

NextGen: HN unit specification

Classical Ballet (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: JCVY 47

SCQF level: 7 (16 SCQF credit points)

Valid from: August 2026

This unit specification provides detailed information about the unit to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It is for lecturers and assessors and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver and assess the unit.

Published: June 2026 (version 1.0)

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Unit purpose

This unit enables learners to develop skills in classical ballet, specifically:

- fundamental skills and techniques
- artistry and performance

Entry is at your centre's discretion. We recommend the unit to learners who have completed one or more of the following:

- Dance at SCQF level 6
- Higher Dance

Learners study this unit as part of Higher National Certificate (HNC) Dance. They can also study it on a stand-alone basis.

Learners who complete the unit may progress to further studies and/or work in the dance or performing arts industries.

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

1. demonstrate fundamental skills and techniques in classical ballet
2. demonstrate knowledge of classical ballet vocabulary
3. demonstrate classical ballet skills and techniques in performance
4. apply critical reflection and knowledge, highlighting awareness of key skills and practices

Evidence requirements

The standard of evidence for the outcomes should be consistent with the SCQF level of the unit.

Outcome 1

Learners must demonstrate fundamental skills and techniques in classical ballet.

They must:

- participate in classical ballet classes that include barre work, centre practice, pirouettes, adage, petit allegro, allegro and grand allegro
- perform a prepared class without tutor demonstration
- demonstrate co-ordination, control and accuracy of line
- perform with an awareness of rhythmical frameworks and accents
- demonstrate appropriate interpretation of musical phrasing and dynamics

To assess learners' competence, you observe their participation in classes, in which they demonstrate the knowledge and skills required for this outcome.

You must complete an assessor checklist and record the assessment for evidence. You must clearly label each learner, for example, with a badge or a sheet of paper attached to their clothing, using either a number or a letter system. Each learner's label must be clearly visible on the recording. No more than eight learners should be in each recording.

Outcome 2

Learners must demonstrate knowledge of classical ballet vocabulary. They must:

- describe the components of a minimum of three classical ballet movements
- perform a minimum of three short contrasting enchainments without tutor demonstration

To assess learners' competence, you assess the accuracy of their description of a minimum of three classical ballet movements. You also observe the accuracy of their performance of a minimum of three unseen enchainments.

You must complete an assessor checklist. You may record the assessment for evidence.

Outcome 3

Learners must demonstrate classical ballet skills and techniques in a performance.

They must:

- participate in a live performance of classical ballet
- perform tutor-set choreography
- demonstrate effective use of the performance space
- demonstrate artistic expression and communication

To assess learners' competence, you assess their performance of a tutor-set choreography lasting a minimum of 1 minute. This may be an extended enchainment or classical ballet dance performed as a solo or in a group.

You must complete an assessor checklist and record the assessment for evidence.

You must clearly label each learner, for example, with a badge or a sheet of paper attached to their clothing, using either a number or a letter system. Each learner's label must be clearly visible on the recording. No more than eight learners should be in each recording.

Outcome 4

Learners must apply critical reflection and knowledge, highlighting awareness of key skills and practices. They must:

- participate in a professional discussion, demonstrating their self-reflection and understanding of key skills and practices.

To assess learners' competence, you assess their reflections and responses through a professional discussion lasting a minimum of 5 minutes.

You must complete an assessor checklist. You may record the assessment for evidence.

Knowledge and skills

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • posture, alignment and turnout • placement and control • line • weight placement and transference • port de bras • complete co-ordination • varied dance rhythms and time signatures • musical phrasing and dynamics, and how they enhance performance 	<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate correct posture, alignment and turn out • demonstrate effective weight placement and transference in both static and travelling enchainments • move with fluid co-ordination, demonstrating an appropriate understanding of line • perform with an awareness of rhythmical frameworks and accents • demonstrate appropriate interpretation of phrasing and dynamics
<p>Outcome 2</p> <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • classical ballet vocabulary • the components and purpose of classical ballet vocabulary 	<p>Outcome 2</p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurately respond to and demonstrate unseen enchainments when given the classical ballet terminology • describe the components and purpose of individual movements within classical ballet vocabulary

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 3</p> <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diverse expressive movement qualities • synthesis of artistry and technique • spatial awareness • projection and communication with the audience 	<p>Outcome 3</p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interpret and express a range of movement qualities while performing classical ballet • integrate technique and expressive artistic qualities in the performance of classical ballet • perform with appropriate spatial awareness • project and communicate with an audience to convey mood, emotion or character
<p>Outcome 4</p> <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the importance of reflection • the importance of listening skills • how to analyse and evaluate their personal technical and artistic performance • ways to evaluate their focus and approach • how to identify and implement strategies leading to personal development 	<p>Outcome 4</p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyse and reflect on their technique and performance skills in classical ballet • evaluate the effectiveness of their focus and approach in the studio • set targets for their progression • identify and implement strategies to achieve personal goals

Meta-skills

You must give learners opportunities to develop their meta-skills throughout this unit. We have suggested how to incorporate the most relevant ones into the unit content, but you may find other opportunities.

Self-management

This includes focusing, integrity, adapting and initiative. The most relevant are:

- focusing:
 - remaining focused throughout classes and performance assessments
 - retaining and applying feedback in a consistent way to build on technical and artistic development
- integrity:
 - contributing in a positive way to class (or rehearsals)
 - being punctual and prepared for class (or rehearsals)
- adapting:
 - working with others
 - responding to new and challenging enchainments and choreography
 - responding and adjusting to varying musical rhythms and tempos
 - adapting enchainment or movement phrases (choreography) to work in different performance spaces
- initiative:
 - creating and developing movement phrases
 - instigating individual and group development tasks

Social intelligence

This includes communicating, feeling, collaborating and leading. The most relevant are:

- communicating:
 - engaging with tutors and fellow dancers
 - engaging in reciprocal feedback tasks
 - communicating through expressive movement qualities
- feeling:
 - developing empathy with fellow dancers
 - demonstrating empathetic responses to music and tone
 - demonstrating empathetic responses to character and mood
 - developing synchronicity with the emotional states of other dancers
 - demonstrating inclusivity in practice
- collaborating:
 - working with fellow dancers to develop movement phrases
 - working with fellow dancers to resolve challenges within movement phrases
 - absorbing and applying direction from a choreographer or tutor

Innovation

This includes curiosity, creativity, sense-making and critical thinking. The most relevant are:

- curiosity:
 - exploring self-expression
 - exploring musical response

- creativity:
 - developing artistry through creative and musical expression
 - exploring emotions through movement
- sense-making:
 - understanding terminology
 - analysing vocabulary
- critical thinking:
 - reviewing and reflecting on personal performance
 - strategising for achievement of long-term goals

Literacies

This unit provides opportunities to develop the following literacies.

Communication

- presenting and performing
- expressing emotion and feelings through movement
- working with others

Digital

- researching
- communicating and documenting

Learning for Sustainability

Throughout this unit, you should encourage learners to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of sustainability.

This includes:

- a general understanding of social, economic and environmental sustainability
- a general understanding of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- a deeper understanding of subject-specific sustainability
- the confidence to apply the skills, knowledge, understanding and values they develop in the next stage of their life

The following SDGs are particularly relevant to this unit:

- 3 good health and wellbeing
- 4 quality education

Delivery of unit

This is a mandatory unit in HNC Dance.

The notional time for delivery and assessment is 80 hours. The amount of time you allocate to each outcome is at your discretion.

We recommend that you run this unit throughout the duration of the HNC Dance course.

You can integrate and cross-assess this unit with the following mandatory and optional units at SCQF level 7:

- Choreographic Practice
- Dance Injury Prevention, Wellbeing and Health
- Contemporary Dance
- Jazz Dance
- Commercial Dance
- Dance Teaching Skills

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

Content and context for this unit

This unit is designed to develop learners' classical ballet technique, musicality and artistry. It provides opportunities for learners to increase their knowledge of classical ballet vocabulary, alongside their technical understanding and ability to describe the components and purpose of individual movements.

Learners develop strength, stamina, flexibility and control through participating in regular, studio-based classes. These classes are designed to help learners develop technical and artistic skills in a safe and supported environment.

Learners develop enhanced musicality and artistry through exploring musical phrasing, interpretation and expression.

Through reflective tasks, learners can analyse their strengths and areas for development, increasing autonomy in their practice.

Learners increase their knowledge and understanding of the importance of safe practice in dance through warm up, cool down and developing their technical understanding.

You should use subject-appropriate language when delivering the unit. The following list of vocabulary is not exhaustive, but an indication of the level learners should be working at.

Barre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demi-plié and grand plié in first, second, fourth and fifth position • battement tendu, glissé and jeté, devant, derrière and to second • rond de jambe à terre and en l'air, en dehors and en dedans • battement fondu devant, derrière and to second at 45 degrees • battement frappé and petit battement • grand battement and grand battement en cloche • développé devant, derrière and à la seconde • first and second arabesque • attitude derrière • demi-grand rond de jambe and grand rond de jambe en dehors and en dedans • fouetté of adage • relevé devant, derrière and passé • pas de bourrée piqué • posé en avant, en arrière and de côté
Port de bras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • including use of effacé, écarté and croisé, devant and derrière • incorporating temps lié, chassé and posé
Centre practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • battement tendu en croix • grand battement en croix • rond de jambe à terre • pas de bourrée devant, derrière, dessous and dessus
Pirouettes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • double pirouette en dehors from fourth position • pirouette en dehors from fifth position • pirouette en dedans from fourth position en fondu • pirouette en dedans from fifth position • posé pirouette en dedans

Adage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • développé devant, derrière and à la seconde • first, second and third arabesque • attitude derrière • fouetté of adage from à la seconde to arabesque • demi-grand rond de jambe en dehors
Petit allegro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sauté in first, second and fourth positions • changement • soubresaut • échappé sauté to second and fourth • balancé en avant and en arrière and de côté • pas de bourrée devant, derrière, dessus and dessous • petit assemblé devant and derrière • sissonne ordinaire devant and derrière
Allegro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assemblé dessous and dessus • jeté ordinaire derrière • sissonne fermée de côté dessous and dessus • pas de chat
Batterie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • échappé sauté battu fermée • changement battu • entrechat quatre
Grand allegro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grand jeté en avant
Révérence	

Resources

Classes, workshops and assessments should take place in an appropriate location, such as a dance studio, gym hall, assembly hall or stage. We recommend the location has:

- a wooden or sprung floor
- adequate heating
- a sound system
- audio and visual equipment

Staff teaching this unit should have subject expertise in dance and be qualified to at least SCQF level 8 or equivalent. They should have knowledge of safe dance practice, including appropriate:

- posture
- alignment
- warm up and cool down
- hydration
- clothing, footwear and hair styling

Approaches to delivery

The overall unit delivery time is a notional 80 hours of contact time for delivery and assessment. We expect learners to carry out a further 80 hours of self-directed study.

Demonstrate fundamental skills and techniques in classical ballet (outcome 1)

Learners must demonstrate a complete ballet class, following a traditional structure:

- barre
- centre practice
- port de bras
- adage
- petit allegro
- allegro
- grand allegro

Learners should take part in ballet classes to develop a comprehensive vocabulary before learning set exercises and enchainments to present at assessment.

Throughout the assessed class, learners should demonstrate they can maintain correct posture, alignment and turnout. They should also be able to demonstrate secure weight placement and transference. Learners should move with fluidity and co-ordination, demonstrating an appropriate understanding of line.

You should introduce learners to a range of strengthening and training exercises such as Progressing Ballet Technique, Franklin Method or Floor Barre.

Learners should accurately maintain correct rhythm and timing. Learners should also demonstrate appropriate musical phrasing and dynamics.

Learners should take part in exercises designed to enhance their understanding of musical structure. You should introduce them to varied time signatures and dance rhythms such as waltz, march, gallop and mazurka.

Learners should explore the impact of different dance rhythms on a movement or phrase.

Learners would benefit from working with an accompanist in class or for a workshop.

Learners should regularly take part in technical classes throughout the course to optimise progression and ensure safe practice.

You should encourage learners to record their work to help with reflection and evaluation, and engage in reciprocal peer feedback tasks to enhance their learning.

Demonstrate knowledge of classical ballet vocabulary (outcome 2)

Learners should engage in a range of exercises to expand their knowledge and understanding of classical ballet vocabulary.

Learners must also describe the components of a minimum of three classical ballet movements.

They should have a comprehensive understanding of the vocabulary of the step they are performing, and be able to break down and describe the components of fundamental movements.

Researching reference texts — such as the Royal Academy of Dance's *The Foundations of Classical Ballet Technique* and *The Progressions of Classical Ballet Technique*, or *Classical Ballet Technique* by Gretchen Ward Warren — could help develop learners' understanding.

Learners should engage in individual or group activities to create, describe and define simple, contrasting enchainments.

Demonstrate classical ballet skills and techniques in a performance (outcome 3)

Learners must perform a tutor-set choreography lasting a minimum of 1 minute. This may be an extended enchainment or classical ballet dance performed as a solo or in a group.

Learners must demonstrate performance skills, artistry and communication with an audience. They should explore:

- expressive movement qualities
- synthesis of artistry and technique
- the use of space in performance
- projection
- communication with the audience

The performance does not need to have a large public audience. Learners could perform to each other.

You should introduce learners to a range of recorded and, where possible, live classical ballet performances.

You should encourage learners to research the work of significant choreographers and companies and their influence on classical and modern ballet. They could include:

- American Ballet Theatre
- Bolshoi Ballet
- Estonian National Ballet
- The Joffrey Ballet
- Mariinsky Ballet
- New York City Ballet
- Northern Ballet
- Paris Opera Ballet
- The Royal Ballet
- The Royal Danish Ballet

- Scottish Ballet
- Vienna State Ballet
- Kyle Abraham
- Frederick Ashton
- George Balanchine
- August Bournonville
- Michel Fokine
- Amy Hall Garner
- Christopher Hampson
- Lev Ivanov
- Lauren Lovette
- Kenneth MacMillan
- Wayne McGregor
- Bronislava Nijinska
- Ashley Page
- Justin Peck
- Marius Petipa
- Alexei Ratmansky
- Jerome Robbins
- Christopher Wheeldon

You should encourage learners to record their work to help with reflection and evaluation, and engage in reciprocal peer feedback tasks to enhance their learning.

Apply critical reflection and knowledge, highlighting awareness of key skills and practices (outcome 4)

Learners must participate in a professional discussion, lasting a minimum of 5 minutes, demonstrating their self-reflection and understanding of key skills and practices.

The conversation should be centred around the learners' progress, strengths, areas for development and strategies to achieve personal goals.

Approaches to assessment

Use your professional judgement when observing learners in class and assessments to ensure all knowledge and skills are evidenced and consistent with the SCQF level of the unit.

Evidence can be generated through a range of assessment types. For this unit we recommend performance, and oral or written.

You must record assessments for outcomes 1 and 3, and retain them as evidence with your assessor observation checklist. You may record the assessments for outcomes 2 and 4, but this is not mandatory. You can combine assessment of outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

Demonstrate fundamental skills and techniques in classical ballet (outcome 1)

For their assessment, learners must demonstrate sound and secure classical ballet technique through a complete ballet class without tutor demonstration or verbal instruction. Learners must also demonstrate a sound and secure understanding of rhythm, dynamics, accents and expressive musical phrasing.

Practical demonstration must include:

- barre
- centre practice
- port de bras
- adage
- petit allegro
- allegro
- grand allegro

You assess learners on an ongoing basis and in a prepared demonstration class.

Demonstrate knowledge of classical ballet vocabulary (outcome 2)

For their assessment, learners must perform a minimum of three contrasting movement phrases responding to tutor instruction of classical ballet vocabulary and without seeing a physical demonstration.

Movement phrases should be from different sections of class, with each lasting between 16 and 32 dancers' counts.

Learners must take part in an oral or written assessment where they describe the components and purpose of three movements within classical ballet vocabulary.

You assess learners' knowledge and understanding of classical ballet vocabulary.

Demonstrate classical ballet skills and techniques in a performance (outcome 3)

For their assessment, learners must perform a tutor-set choreography lasting a minimum of 1 minute. This may be an extended enchainment or classical ballet dance performed as a solo or in a small group. You assess their skills in:

- expressive movement qualities
- synthesis of artistry and technique
- use of space in performance
- projection
- communication with the audience

Apply critical reflection and knowledge, highlighting awareness of key skills and practices (outcome 4)

For their assessment, learners must participate in a professional discussion, lasting a minimum of 5 minutes, demonstrating their self-reflection and understanding of key skills and practices. You assess their ability to:

- analyse and reflect on their technique and performance skills in classical ballet
- evaluate their focus and approach in the studio
- set targets for progression
- identify and implement strategies to achieve personal goals

Equality and inclusion

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

You must consider the needs of individual learners when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and those with additional support needs is available on the [assessment arrangements web page](#).

Information for learners

Classical Ballet (SCQF level 7)

This information explains:

- what the unit is about
- what you should know or be able to do before you start
- what you need to do during the unit
- opportunities for further learning and employment

Unit information

This unit enables you to develop fundamental skills in classical ballet. It provides opportunities for you to increase your knowledge of technique and artistry, and develop a deeper understanding of classical ballet vocabulary.

We recommend the unit if you have completed one or more of the following:

- Dance at SCQF level 6
- Higher Dance

During the unit, you:

- learn fundamental knowledge and skills of classical ballet techniques
- learn about rhythm, dynamics, musical response and phrasing
- learn to identify and understand the components of classical ballet vocabulary
- apply performance skills and artistry in performance
- engage in reflective practice to enhance performance

You are assessed through some or all of the following:

- performance and in-class observation
- oral assessment
- written assessment
- question-and-answer sessions

When you finish the unit, you may wish to progress to further studies and/or work in the dance or performing arts industries.

Meta-skills

Throughout this unit, you develop meta-skills that are useful for the dance and performing arts sector.

Meta-skills are transferable behaviours and abilities that help you adapt and succeed in life, study and work. There are three categories of meta-skills: self-management, social intelligence and innovation.

Self-management

You develop the meta-skill of focusing throughout classes and performance assessments, and when implementing feedback.

You develop integrity by being punctual and prepared, and making a positive contribution to classes and rehearsals.

You develop adapting when working with others, and when you respond to new choreography, rhythms, tempos and performance spaces.

You develop initiative by creating and developing movement phrases, and instigating group and individual tasks.

Social intelligence

You develop the meta-skill of communicating when you engage with tutors and fellow dancers, and express yourself through movement.

You develop feeling through having empathy with fellow dancers when you dance together. You also develop empathetic responses to music, tone, character and mood. You also develop feeling by demonstrating inclusivity in your practice.

You develop collaborating when you work with fellow dancers, and receive direction from your choreographer or tutor.

Innovation

You develop the meta-skill of curiosity by exploring self-expression and your response to music.

You develop creativity through creative and musical expression, and by exploring emotions through movement.

You develop sense-making by learning, understanding and analysing terminology.

You develop critical thinking when you review and reflect on your personal performance, and plan how to achieve long-term goals.

Learning for Sustainability

Throughout this unit, you develop skills, knowledge and understanding of sustainability.

You learn about social, economic and environmental sustainability principles and how they relate to the dance and performing arts sector. You also develop an understanding of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).

Administrative information

Published: June 2026 (version 1.0)

Superclass: LB

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date

Please check [our website](#) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this unit.

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