

NextGen: HN unit specification

Tap Dance (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: JG9I 47

SCQF level: 7 (8 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.

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Contents

Unit purpose	1
Unit outcomes	2
Knowledge and skills	4
Meta-skills	7
Literacies	9
Learning for Sustainability	10
Delivery of unit	11
Additional guidance	12
Equality and inclusion	19
Information for learners	20
Administrative information.....	23

Unit purpose

This unit enables learners to develop skills in tap dance, specifically:

- fundamental skills and techniques
- artistry

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 tap dance
2. demonstrate skills and techniques in travelling combinations
3. demonstrate tap dance skills and techniques in performance

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 tap dance. They must:

- participate in tap dance classes that include a tutor-prepared warm up and centre exercises
- demonstrate correct body alignment and weight placement
- demonstrate technical ability, co-ordination and control

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.

You can combine assessment for outcome 1 and outcome 2.

Outcome 2

Learners must demonstrate skills and techniques in travelling combinations. They must:

- demonstrate travelling combinations lasting a minimum of 8 bars repeatable, combining a minimum of four different tap technique elements
- demonstrate travelling combinations using floor patterns, and varying rhythm and tempo, including a minimum of four travelling elements
- demonstrate through their own choreography a rhythm set by the tutor to 3/4 or 4/4 timing
- demonstrate understanding and application of timings, phrasing, rhythms and style

Demonstration for travelling/corner work can be done in groups; however, learners must demonstrate rhythmical responses individually.

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

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

You can combine assessment for outcome 2 and outcome 1.

Outcome 3

Learners must demonstrate tap dance skills and techniques in performance. They must:

- participate in a live solo performance of tap dance
- perform tutor-set solo choreography
- demonstrate projection and style appropriate to chosen musical accompaniment
- demonstrate effective use of the performance space

To assess learners' competence, you assess their solo performance, which must last a minimum of 45 seconds.

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.

Knowledge and skills

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• tap vocabulary• alignment and posture• weight placement• rhythm and musicality• sound clarity	<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• accurately respond to and demonstrate tap steps when given the tap terminology• perform with an awareness of alignment and posture• demonstrate balance and control in both static and travelling steps• perform with the correct technique, demonstrating weight placement and ankle actions• move with consistent timing using style and personality• demonstrate 'light and shade' within tap dance movements• practise accuracy

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 2</p> <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • travelling combinations including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ step ball-change ○ pick-ups ○ pullbacks ○ buffalo ○ Suzie Q ○ Maxie Ford • tempo control • phrasing and style • progressions of steps • stagecraft 	<p>Outcome 2</p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate technical accuracy and produce clear, distinct sounds while travelling • maintain rhythmic control to keep a steady tempo while static or travelling • maintain and understand timing, rhythm and syncopation • apply core steps (such as pick-ups, pullbacks and time steps) in progressions, and connect steps smoothly • demonstrate directional accuracy while staying in formation, and adapt steps to the size of the performance space • apply dynamics and energy appropriately to express style
<p>Outcome 3</p> <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expressive movement qualities, including body control and co-ordination • how to synthesise technique and performance skills • spatial awareness • how to project and communicate with the audience 	<p>Outcome 3</p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perform using appropriate tap technique • maintain balance and smooth transitions during complex footwork sequences and tempos • synthesise technique and expressive artistic qualities in tap dance performance • perform with appropriate spatial awareness • project and communicate with the audience to convey mood, emotion or character

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
 - demonstrating commitment to detail and quality
- integrity:
 - contributing in a positive way to class (or rehearsals)
 - being punctual and prepared for class (or rehearsals)
 - respecting peers, tutors and the shared learning environment
- adapting:
 - working with others
 - responding to new and challenging amalgamations and choreography
 - accommodating changes to choreographic choices
- initiative:
 - creating and developing movement phrases
 - instigating individual and group development tasks
 - exploring ways to refine and extend movement vocabulary

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
 - contributing to group work
- 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 perform movement material
 - working with fellow dancers to resolve challenges
 - 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
 - exploring different movement possibilities
 - asking insightful questions to gain a deeper understanding of style and technique

- creativity:
 - developing artistry through creative and musical expression
 - exploring emotions through movement
 - adapting and developing set material
 - experimenting with tempo, dynamics and space
- 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 literacy.

Communication

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

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 an optional unit in HNC Dance.

The notional time for delivery and assessment is 40 hours. The amount of time you allocate to each outcome is at your discretion.

There are opportunities to integrate and cross-assess this unit with the following mandatory and optional units at SCQF level 7:

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

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

Content and context for this unit

This unit is designed to introduce learners to tap dance skills and techniques through performing tutor-choreographed exercises, amalgamations and solo performances. Learners should understand posture, weight placement, control, co-ordination, rhythm, musicality and performance in a tap dance context.

Learners develop technical, rhythmical and musical skills through performing choreographed exercises and amalgamations. To foster creativity and performance, you should encourage them to experiment with rhythm, dynamics and style, and to strengthen collaborative and reflective skills through ensemble/solo work and feedback.

Learners demonstrate a developing tap dance technique, including rhythm, timing, and choreography and performance skills. They also develop posture, balance, alignment and control, which assist with their technical and artistic skills.

As a minimum, learners should demonstrate two time signatures, for example, 3/4 and 4/4.

Learners should be able to demonstrate a 4-bar repeatable rhythmic response. They should first clap this, then dance it.

The following list is not exhaustive, but gives an indication of elements of tap dance techniques for outcomes 1 and 2:

Warm up

- knee flexion
- jumps
- springs

- hops
- ankle rotations
- taps: straight, forward, side and back
- shuffles: forward, side, back and criss-cross
- ball and heel beats
- crawls

Centre exercises

- shuffles: 2- and 3-beat and criss-cross
- riffs: 6- and 7-beat
- cramp rolls: 6-beat and cramp roll turns
- paddles, paradiddles
- pick-ups: two feet, first foot and pick-up changes
- wings: 3-beat from two feet (double) and one foot (single)
- time steps: single, double and triple time steps with time step breaks, commencing with both shuffle and pick-up

Travelling exercises

- tap steps and tap spring variations
- tap step ball-change exercises, including hops and shuffles
- pick-up step, pick-up heel step, pick-up heel shuffle heel step (all continuous travelling backwards)
- pick-ups (one foot) and pick-up changes (all continuous travelling backwards and in variations)
- shuffle pick-up changes
- pullbacks
- Maxie Ford variations
- Suzie Q variations
- buffalo variations
- step/spring toe-tap hop (straight or turning)

- waltz steps (straight or turning):
 - single: spring shuffle ball-change
 - double: tap spring shuffle ball-change

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

Books

- Feldman, A. (1996), *Inside Tap: Techniques and Improvisation for Today's Tap Dancer*, Princeton: Princeton Book Company.
- Hartley, D. (2018) *The Essential Guide to Tap Dance*, Marlborough: The Crowood Press Ltd.
- Hill, C.V. (2010), *Tap Dancing America: A Cultural History*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Washbourne, D. (1981), *Basic Tap Dancing*, London: Penguin.

Website

<http://www.tapdancingresources.com/videos/steps/by-name.htm>

Approaches to delivery

The overall unit delivery time is a notional 40 hours of contact time for delivery and assessment. We expect learners to carry out a further 40 hours of self-directed study.

Demonstrate fundamental skills and techniques in tap dance (outcome 1)

Learners participate in a tutor-led tap dance class incorporating the following elements:

- warm up
- technical exercises
- travelling exercises/corner work
- dance amalgamations
- rhythmical response
- solo dance

Learners perform a range of tap steps in a dance class setting, showing accuracy, clarity and control. Throughout the class, they must demonstrate the ability to keep time and show good rhythmical phrasing.

Learners are able to perform a sequence of exercises, minimum 8-bar repeatable, with confidence, projection and expression, while maintaining a good stance and body alignment.

Learners should maintain rhythm, phrasing and dynamics effectively.

Demonstrate skills and techniques in travelling combinations (outcome 2)

Learners demonstrate a range of tap dance steps, exercises and short sequences to show their technical skills and musicality. They should perform a minimum of three contrasting movement phrases responding to tutor instruction of tap dance terminology.

To extend their knowledge, learners should engage in a range of exercises without seeing a physical demonstration.

You should encourage learners to record their work to help with reflection and evaluation.

Movement phrases should be a minimum of 8 bars repeatable.

Learners should demonstrate a 4-bar repeatable rhythmic response. They should first clap this, then dance it.

Demonstrate tap dance skills and techniques in performance (outcome 3)

Learners present a tutor-taught tap solo to show creativity and performance qualities.

They should demonstrate performance skills that contain:

- precise interpretation of choreography
- rhythmic precision, musical expression and beat clarity
- spatial awareness and stagecraft in performance
- audience communication

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.

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

Learners should perform a tutor-choreographed tap dance solo. We recommend you combine the assessments for outcomes 1 and 2 to form a single assessment. This could take the form of a structured tap dance class.

You can assess outcome 3 as a single assessment. This could be in a studio or theatre setting.

Demonstrate fundamental skills and techniques in tap dance (outcome 1)

For the assessment, learners should demonstrate strong and reliable tap dance technique throughout a complete tap class without tutor demonstration or verbal guidance. Learners should also show a confident understanding of rhythm, maintaining correct body and leg alignment, and displaying technical proficiency.

Practical demonstration should include:

- warm up exercises
- technical exercises

Demonstrate skills and techniques in travelling combinations (outcome 2)

For the assessment, learners should perform a minimum of four contrasting travelling amalgamations.

Learners should demonstrate two time signatures, for example, 3/4 and 4/4.

Learners should demonstrate a 4-bar repeatable rhythmic response. They should first clap this, then dance it.

Practical demonstration must include:

- travelling exercises/corner work
- dance amalgamations

Demonstrate tap dance skills and techniques in performance (outcome 3)

For their assessment, learners perform a tutor-set choreography lasting a minimum of 45 seconds. This must be a solo. You assess their ability to demonstrate secure and precise tap technique with clear sounds and accurate footwork, including:

- technical accuracy
- rhythmic precision
- musicality
- variety of steps
- clarity of sounds
- spatial awareness
- stage presence

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

Tap Dance (SCQF level 7)

This information explains:

- what the unit is about
- what should you 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 tap dance. It provides opportunities for you to increase your knowledge of technique and artistry, and develop a deeper understanding of tap 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 skills and techniques of tap dance
- perform a range of tap steps with clarity and accuracy, responding to changes in tempo, time signatures and dynamics
- apply performance skills and artistry in performance
- engage in reflective practice to enhance performance

You are assessed through performance and in-class observation.

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, by demonstrating commitment to detail and quality, 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, challenging and changing amalgamations and choreography.

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 contribute to group work.

You develop feeling through having empathy with fellow dancers when you dance together. You 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 asking questions, and exploring self-expression, your response to music and different movement possibilities.

You develop creativity through creative and musical expression, by exploring emotions through movement, adapting and developing set material, and experimenting with tempo, dynamics and space.

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

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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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