

NextGen: HN unit specification

Commercial Dance (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: JWPU 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.

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Unit purpose

This unit enables learners to develop skills in commercial 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 commercial dance
2. demonstrate ability in a variety of commercial dance genres or styles
3. demonstrate commercial dance 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 commercial dance.

They must:

- participate in commercial dance classes that include co-ordination exercises and rhythmic-based arm combinations
- demonstrate ability to use isolations of different body parts (head, shoulders, chest, arms, hips and legs) with rhythm
- perform sequences that explore different textures and dynamics, including sharp, precise movement, rhythmic movement that explores groove, and soft flowing movement
- perform a variety of footwork sequences using different transfers of weight and change of direction
- demonstrate understanding of rhythm and musicality

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 ability in a variety of commercial dance genres or styles. They must:

- perform a minimum of three short, contrasting choreographed phrases (lasting a minimum of 40 seconds each)
- demonstrate correct technique from the chosen genres or styles
- demonstrate knowledge of past and current industry trends
- apply different qualities and performance skills to commercialise their dance

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. You may record the assessment for evidence.

Outcome 3

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

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

To assess learners' competence, you assess their performance in a tutor-set choreography lasting a minimum of 2 minutes. Learners can perform 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"> • isolation of individual body parts • arm placement and control • weight placement and transference • how different muscle engagements create different movement textures and dynamics • how filling the space between two movement points creates a groove • complete co-ordination • how to identify different rhythms within a piece of music • how different movement texture and dynamics are more aesthetically pleasing with certain sounds and rhythms 	<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • isolate their head, shoulders, chest, hips, arms and legs in time with the music • demonstrate correct placement and control when performing intricate arm combinations • demonstrate effective weight placement and transference when moving in a range of different tempos and movement qualities • create a groove between two movement points that coincides accurately with the music • move with fluid co-ordination, demonstrating an appropriate understanding of line • demonstrate a musical rhythm using dance steps • apply textures and dynamics to match that rhythm or sound
<p>Outcome 2</p> <p>Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how combining industry trends with a dance genre or style's technique can commercialise a piece of dance • how and when to use technique within a piece of commercialised choreography 	<p>Outcome 2</p> <p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dance with artistry and integrity, maintaining technique while using commercial principles to make their dance more accessible to a wider audience • combine different trends in the commercial dance industry with the appropriate dance techniques

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 commercial dance • integrate textures and dynamics with expressive artistic qualities in the performance of commercial dance • perform with appropriate spatial awareness • project and communicate with the 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 commercial dance • 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 choreography
 - responding and adjusting to varying musical rhythms and tempos
 - adapting movement phrases or 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 other mandatory and optional units at SCQF level 7:

- Choreographic Practice
- Dance Injury Prevention, Wellbeing and Health
- Classical Ballet
- Contemporary Dance
- Jazz 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' commercial dance technique, musicality and artistry. It provides opportunity for learners to increase their knowledge of commercial dance, alongside their technical understanding and ability to combine other dance techniques with past and current industry trends to commercialise their dance.

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 increased technical understanding.

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 commercial dance (outcome 1)

Learners must demonstrate a full commercial dance class, which could consist of:

- cardio warm up
- isolation technique exercise
- stretch exercises
- arm combinations
- footwork combinations
- co-ordination exercises
- rhythmic exercises
- choreographed combinations

Classes should consist of exercises that focus on isolating head, shoulders, chest, hips, arms and legs. Learners should demonstrate all these isolations at different tempos, in time with the music, and moving forwards, sideways and backwards.

Throughout the class, learners should demonstrate:

- the ability to learn a range of combinations and exercises with precision, clarity and artistic intention
- secure weight placement and transference
- fluidity and co-ordination
- an appropriate understanding of line

Learners should take part in unset commercial dance classes to develop a comprehensive vocabulary before learning set exercises and phrases to present at assessment.

Throughout the class, learners should demonstrate how to respond to different music with different dynamics and textures, showing a range of movement qualities and artistry.

Learners should accurately maintain correct rhythm and timing. They 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 different examples of current chart music and how to identify the different rhythms within a song.

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

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 ability in a variety of commercial dance genres or styles (outcome 2)

Learners must perform a minimum of three short, contrasting choreographed phrases.

The choreographed phrases should consist of contrasting genres or styles of dance, and then be combined with past and current movement trends to commercialise the choreography. This is commonly seen in the industry, leading to hybrid styles that do not stay within the technical parameters of the original genre or styles. Learners could combine different qualities and performance skills with the principles from outcome 1 to commercialise the dance.

This list is not exhaustive, but you could include the following styles (and potential hybrids):

- jazz (jazz funk, commercial heels)
- contemporary (lyrical)
- hip-hop (commercial hip-hop)

The following list is not exhaustive, but learners could study:

- jazz
- contemporary
- lyrical
- Latin
- tap
- street dance
- heels
- jazz funk

You should also encourage learners to research the influence of significant choreographers on the development of commercial dance genres or styles. They could include:

- Brian Friedman
- Dean Lee
- Christian Storm
- Kim Gavin
- Ashley Wallen
- Lukas McFarlane
- Luam Keflezgy
- Fatima Robinson
- Aisha Francis
- Kenrick Sandy
- JaQuel Knight
- Sean Bankhead
- Marty Kudelka
- Diana Matos
- Galen Hooks
- Sisco Gomez
- Lisa Spencer
- Carrie-Anne Ingrouille
- Elizabeth Honan
- Charm La'Donna

Learners should demonstrate an understanding of past and current commercial dance performance genres or styles.

They should demonstrate appropriate contrast in quality, style, intention and expression.

Learners could take part in workshops focusing on different styles relevant to commercial dance performance.

You should encourage learners to watch live and recorded performances of commercial dance to deepen their understanding of the breadth of genres and styles required in commercial dance performance.

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 commercial dance skills and techniques in performance (outcome 3)

Learners must perform a tutor-set choreography lasting a minimum of 2 minutes.

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

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

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 commercial dance performances.

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 and 2.

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

For their assessment, learners must demonstrate sound and secure commercial dance technique through a complete commercial dance class without tutor demonstration or verbal instruction.

Practical demonstration must include:

- cardio warm up
- isolation technique exercise
- stretch exercises
- arm combinations
- footwork combinations
- co-ordination exercises
- rhythmic exercises
- choreographed phrases

You assess learners on an ongoing basis on their ability to:

- maintain accurate rhythm and timing, and express artistry through musical interpretation and dynamics
- identify a musical rhythm within a song and accurately recreate that rhythm with movement
- use textures and dynamics to highlight the sound quality

Demonstrate ability in a variety of commercial dance genres or styles (outcome 2)

For their assessment, learners must perform a minimum of three short, contrasting choreographed phrases lasting a minimum of 40 seconds each.

You assess their ability to demonstrate stylistic quality, intention, artistry and expression in commercial dance that includes a range of different dance performance genres or styles combined with past and current commercial trends.

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

For their assessment, learners must participate in a live performance of a choreographed commercial dance, lasting a minimum of 2 minutes. You assess their skills in:

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

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 commercial dance
- 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

Commercial Dance (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 commercial dance. It provides opportunities for you to increase your knowledge of technique and artistry, and develop a deeper understanding of how to commercialise your dance.

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 commercial dance
- learn about rhythm, dynamics, musical response and phrasing
- learn to combine dance techniques with industry trends to commercialise your movement
- 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 the meta-skill of integrity by being punctual and prepared, and making a positive contribution to classes and rehearsals.

You develop the meta-skill of adapting when working with others, and when you respond to new choreography, rhythms, tempos and performance spaces.

You develop the meta-skill of 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 the meta-skill of feeling through having empathy for your 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 the meta-skill of 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 the meta-skill of creativity through creative and musical expression, and by exploring emotions through movement.

You develop the meta-skill of sense-making by learning, understanding and analysing terminology.

You develop the meta-skill of 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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