

## Dance: Choreography

**SCQF:** level 5 (9 SCQF credit points)

**Unit code:** J28D 75

### Unit outline

The general aim of this Unit is to provide learners with the skills and knowledge required to plan and create a piece of choreography. Learners will develop and apply knowledge and understanding of choreographic structures, devices and spatial elements and use self-expression and problem solving to create a dance from a chosen theme. They will learn about the impact of theatre arts within choreography by appreciating professional practice, and evaluating their own work and that of others.

Learners who complete this Unit will be able to:

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of choreographic principles
- 2 Apply choreographic principles to create a piece of choreography

This Unit is available as a free-standing Unit. The Unit Specification should be read in conjunction with the *Unit Support Notes*, which provide advice and guidance on delivery, assessment approaches and development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Exemplification of the standards in this Unit is given in the *Unit Assessment Support*, available on SQA's secure website.

### Recommended entry

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by one or more of the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ free-standing Dance Units at SCQF level 4

## **Equality and inclusion**

This Unit Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. For further information, please refer to the *Unit Support Notes*.

# Standards

## Outcomes and assessment standards

### Outcome 1

The learner will:

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of choreographic principles by:**
  - 1.1 Demonstrating knowledge of theme and stimulus as appropriate to a dance for two people that includes choreographic structures, devices and spatial elements
  - 1.2 Explaining the impact of theatre arts in choreography
  - 1.3 Evaluating the impact of choreographic principles used in dance

### Outcome 2

The learner will:

- 2 Apply choreographic principles to create a choreographed dance for two people by:**
  - 2.1 Investigating a chosen theme/stimulus
  - 2.2 Planning a short choreography for two people using choreographic structure, devices and spatial elements
  - 2.3 Developing and presenting the short choreography for two people
  - 2.4 Evaluating the choreographed dance

## Evidence Requirements for the Unit

Assessors should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their learners, to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used.

Evidence can be a combination of performance, written and/or oral evidence. Evidence may be presented for individual Outcomes or it may be gathered for the Unit as a whole through combining assessment holistically in one single activity. If the latter approach is used, it must be clear how the evidence covers each Outcome.

For this Unit, learners will be required to provide evidence of:

- ◆ knowledge, understanding and evaluation of a range of choreographic principles including: theme/stimulus, choreographic structure, devices and spatial elements, and relevant theatre arts
- ◆ research and planning skills to investigate a theme/stimulus and plan a choreography
- ◆ use of choreographic structure, devices and spatial elements to develop and present a choreography lasting a minimum of 1 minute and a maximum of 1 minute and 30 seconds
- ◆ self-evaluation skills

Exemplification of assessment is provided in the *Unit Assessment Support*. Advice and guidance on possible approaches to assessment is provided in the *Unit Support Notes*.

# Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this Unit. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Unit are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the Unit where there are appropriate opportunities.

## **1 Literacy**

1.3 Listening and talking

## **3 Health and wellbeing**

3.1 Personal learning

3.3 Physical wellbeing

## **4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship**

4.3 Working with others

## **5 Thinking skills**

5.3 Applying

5.4 Analysing and evaluating

5.5 Creating

Amplification of these is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills should be at the same SCQF level as the Unit and be consistent with the SCQF level descriptor. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work is given in the *Unit Support Notes*.

# Appendix: Unit support notes

## Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing this Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

- ◆ the *Unit Specification*
- ◆ the *Unit Assessment Support packs*

## Developing skills, knowledge and understanding

Teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

## Approaches to learning, teaching

Teachers and lecturers should maintain current knowledge and understanding of recommended practices in the delivery and assessment for this subject area, to assure learning and teaching is advanced with modern approaches that will engage candidates and develop essential skills in choreography as they prepare for assessment at an appropriate time in delivery.

In the *Dance: Choreography* Unit there are two Outcomes to be achieved. Candidates should take part in choreographic workshops to develop their understanding of a range of choreographic principles and skills to inspire creativity. Candidates will investigate a selected theme/stimulus in order to plan, create and develop a duet that will be presented for assessment. Candidates are required to evaluate their own work and the work of others in this unit.

Teachers/lectures should help to build candidates confidence in the choreographic process before they are expected to work independently on creating a duet, it would aid the learning experience if candidates had opportunities to work in pairs during workshops to develop skills and knowledge before working with their two dancers. It is important that candidates create a plan with initial ideas for the use of choreographic principles before starting to create movements rather than incorporating structure, devices and spatial elements as an afterthought.

A suggested list of choreographic principles includes:

### **Choreographic skills, structures, devices and spatial elements**

- ◆ improvisation skills and creative interpretation for a range of theme/stimulus
- ◆ structure: narrative, binary, ternary
- ◆ devices: motif development, unison, canon, mirroring, partner work, retrograde, repetition, contact improvisation
- ◆ spatial elements: pathways, shape, size, levels, proximities

Candidates should be encouraged to explore movements and create motifs that express their style and ideas or concept, rather than using steps from a particular style (eg ballet, hip hop or jazz). They could be led through activities that explore the basic elements of dance:

- ◆ actions - gesture, jump, turn, fall, stillness
- ◆ space - levels, pathways, proximities, formations
- ◆ time - beat, tempo, length, phrasing, increase or decrease speed
- ◆ dynamics - sharp, soft, fluid, strong, suspended, staccato

Motifs form the basis of a choreography and can be repeated and developed to communicate intentions. Rather than continually inventing new movements for a dance, once a motif has been developed, variations can be used to develop it into a final piece of choreography to reinforce the theme. By varying the motif the choreographer is making the dance unique.

Candidates can vary the motifs in a number of ways, including:

- ◆ using different parts of the body
- ◆ adding or changing direction
- ◆ changing the size
- ◆ changing the level
- ◆ increasing or decreasing the speed
- ◆ changing the dynamics or quality

### **Developing movement from a stimulus**

It can be challenging for candidates to understand the creative process and apply original and imaginative movement ideas that convey a theme as the tendency can be to put together set technical steps therefore it is recommended that choreographic tasks ignite the imagination and set the scene for what teachers/lecturers mean by the use of a stimulus, creative movement and ways to communicate meaning through choreographic principles for a duet. Candidates should be given opportunities to explore and respond to a range of stimulus including visual, written and/or recorded during choreography workshops. A suggested list of stimuli is included below:

- ◆ pictures, music/sound, photographs, individual words, statue, colours, personal experience, poem, media article, film, documentary, pieces of professional choreography

### **Professional choreography**

It is essential that candidates are provided with opportunities to watch live or recorded professional choreographers' works in order to appreciate and analyse theme / stimulus and principles used to develop knowledge and understanding while inspiring the candidates' creative ideas. Learning and teaching may focus on the following:

- ◆ creativity and the choreographer's interpretation of the theme/stimulus
- ◆ choreographer's skills adopted to create, develop and present a piece of choreography
- ◆ impact of structure, devices and spatial elements
- ◆ impact of music and sound, theatre arts

### **Choreographic structure**

Choreographic structure refers to how the motifs and sections are linked together. Motifs are typically known as motif A, motif B and motif C for ease of explaining the well-known structures. Using choreographic structures can be a helpful way for candidates to put their ideas in order. They should use them in a way that is appropriate to the theme/stimulus that their dance is trying to convey.

Candidates may find the following table helpful.

<b>Structure</b>	<b>Description</b>
Binary (A, B)	Commonly used in dance composition. The first section A is contrasted by a new section B, but both have a common thread which binds one to the other. Each section may have contrasting elements, but there must be something similar in nature too.
Ternary (A, B, A)	A conventional and satisfying form because going back to the beginning 'rounds it off'. The return to section A can be achieved by exact repetition of the initial section, or by reversing, highlighting parts, changing a few elements and changing the order of the elements. They must be closely linked, while section B forms the contrast.
Narrative form (A, B, C)	Narrative is a choreographic structure that follows a specific storyline and should have a beginning, a middle and an end.

### **Choreographic devices**

There are many devices for developing a motif. Devices appropriate to SCQF level 5 include repetition, retrograde, unison, canon, mirroring, partner work, and contact improvisation.

Candidates might find the following information helpful.

<b>Repetition</b>
Repeating significant movement(s) to reinforce the theme, it can repeat the exact same way or may change direction and/or position on the stage. A direct repeat can be effective if the choreographer is trying to communicate or reinforce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ a meaning or idea</li> <li>◆ a feeling of boredom or tedium</li> <li>◆ a sense of pattern in an abstract piece</li> </ul>
<b>Retrograde</b>
Retrograde is reversing the order in which a motif is performed, like rewinding a film, and can produce work that is more abstract but still relates to the theme.
<b>Unison</b>
When dancers are performing the same movements at the same time and so it can reinforce the theme behind the movement.
<b>Mirroring</b>
This is when dancers copy each other, face-to-face, move-for-move, as if they are reflections of one another.
<b>Partner work</b>
Partner work involves working with another person's personal space, possibly with lifts, sharing weight or making contact.



<b>Canon</b>
The simplest form of canon is when dancers perform movements or a motif one after the other.
<b>Contact improvisation</b>
During contact improvisation, physical contact between two dancers is maintained while movement is improvised. One person leads and the other follows, but the dynamic between people can shift constantly.

### Spatial elements

Candidates might find the following information about spatial elements helpful.

Definitions of spatial elements	
Personal space	Space around you or on the spot
General space	Around the room/performing space
Levels	High, medium and low
Direction	Forwards, backwards, sideways, up, down, diagonal
Body shape	Wide, narrow, rounded, twisted, symmetrical, asymmetrical
Size	Large or small
Proximity	Near or far
Pathways	Straight, curved, angular, circular

### Resources

Candidates may develop their learning further by reading, researching, watching live or recorded performances, taking part in dance classes. Please see the following information of companies and influential choreographers that would be useful resources for learning and teaching.

### Websites and dance companies

- ◆ Creative Scotland
- ◆ Dance UK
- ◆ DV8 Physical Theatre
- ◆ Foundation for Community Dance
- ◆ Londondance (dance companies, reviews, jobs)
- ◆ National Dance Resource Centre for Dance
- ◆ New York City Ballet
- ◆ Rambert
- ◆ Royal Ballet
- ◆ Scottish Ballet
- ◆ Scottish Dance Theatre
- ◆ The Stage (newspaper for dance and theatre)
- ◆ YDance
- ◆ Youth Dance England

### **Leading choreographers include:**

Alvin Ailey, Richard Alston, George Balanchine, Ashley Banjo, Pina Bausch, Matthew Bourne, Christopher Bruce, Jack Cole, Merce Cunningham, Siobhan Davies, Isadora Duncan, Bob Fosse, Itzik Galili, Martha Graham, Gregory Hines, Doris Humphrey, Shobana Jeyasingh, Akram Khan, Rudolf Laban, José Limón, Edouard Louk, Gillian Lynne, Matt Mattox, Henri Oguike, Ann Reinking, Wade Robson, Ashley Page, Shane Sparks, Paul Taylor, Jasmin Vardimon.

Dance Teachers Associations also have websites which contain valuable information, as listed below:

- ◆ BATD — British Association of Teachers of Dancing
- ◆ BDC — British Dance Council
- ◆ CDET — Council for Dance Education and Training
- ◆ IDTA — International Dance Teachers' Association
- ◆ ISTD — Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing
- ◆ One Dance UK
- ◆ RAD — Royal Academy of Dance
- ◆ SDTA — Scottish Dance Teachers' Alliance
- ◆ SOBHD — Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing
- ◆ UKA Dance — United Kingdom Alliance of Professional Teachers of Dancing and Kindred Arts

## **Approaches to assessment and gathering evidence**

Teachers/lecturers should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, and understanding of their candidates, to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence for the unit.

Evidence for the Unit will be a combination of written, oral and/or recorded performance evidence. Evidence may be presented for individual Outcomes or it may be gathered for the Unit as a whole through combining assessment holistically in one single task. If the latter approach is used, it must be clear how the evidence covers each Outcome. Some suggested methods of gathering evidence are detailed below.

Evidence for the *Dance: Choreography* Unit could be generated by filming a pair or group performance in which candidates can demonstrate understanding of choreographic principles; this could be marked using an observation checklist in which details of the evidence are given. Alternatively, candidates may watch a professional performance or attend a live performance by a choreographer and analyse and evaluate the choreographic principles used, presenting their work in any suitable format. Research, plans and evaluation for their own choreography might be presented in a variety of formats including booklet, written, presentation or audio evidence.

Candidates could also be asked to keep a log in relation to choreographic workshops, to demonstrate knowledge of choreographic principles and may also contain plans for creating a dance for two people. This could meet the requirements of both outcomes 1 and 2 in the Choreography unit, as well as helping candidates to develop reflective practice which would help them progress forward onto the full course award in National 5 Dance.

A suitable method of assessment could be short task-based practical performances led by the teacher/lecturer. These could be recorded in pairs for evidence. Evidence needs to demonstrate an understanding of:

- ◆ Theme/stimulus
- ◆ choreographic devices
- ◆ structures
- ◆ spatial elements
- ◆ theatre arts

## **Combining assessment within Units**

As Units are delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers/lecturers will have more flexibility to develop approaches to delivering and assessing the Units as these will not need to be related to Course assessment. When assessment within the unit is holistic teachers and lecturers should take particular care to track the evidence for each individual outcome.

## **Equality and inclusion**

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

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the assessment arrangements web page: [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements).

# Administrative information

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**Superclass:** LB

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## History of changes to National Unit Specification

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	Unit code updated.  Outcome 1 ; Assessment Standard 1.1 - References to 'spatial patterns' amended to 'spatial elements' for clarity.  Outcome 2: Assessment Standard 2.2 – Spatial elements added  Timing added to clarify the required duration of choreography.	September 2019
2.1	Unit support notes added.	June 2020

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