

Dance: Technical Skills

SCQF: level 5 (9 SCQF credit points)

Unit code: J28B 75

Unit outline

The general aim of this Unit is to develop technical skills in contrasting dance styles for solo and/or group dance performances. Dance techniques will be developed before being applied in teacher/lecturer-choreographed dance sequences. Learners will develop knowledge and understanding of the importance of health, fitness and safe practice when performing. They will develop knowledge and understanding of the factors influencing dance styles, and apply critical thinking skills to appreciate and evaluate dance technique.

Learners who complete this Unit will be able to:

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a selected dance style
- 2 Apply technical dance skills in contrasting dance styles

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:

- ◆ Freestanding Units in Dance 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 selected dance style by:

- 1.1 Describing the technical skills and characteristics of the selected dance style
- 1.2 Explaining the development of the selected dance style

Outcome 2

The learner will:

1 Apply technical dance skills in contrasting dance styles by:

- 2.1 Demonstrating the technical skills and fundamental principles of two contrasting dance styles
- 2.2 Performing two tutor-choreographed dance sequences in contrasting dance styles
- 2.3 Applying knowledge of safe dance practice when demonstrating technical skills
- 2.4 Evaluating technical dance skills used in their own and another's work

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 will be a combination of written and/or oral and 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 activity. If the latter approach is used, it must be clear how the evidence covers each Outcome.

Learners will be required to provide evidence of:

- ◆ knowledge and understanding of the development, technical skills and characteristics of a selected dance style
- ◆ technical skills in two contrasting dance styles through the performance of two dance sequences, each lasting a minimum of 1 minute and a maximum of 1 minute 30 seconds
- ◆ the application of safe dance practice
- ◆ skills in evaluating technical dance skills

Dance styles assessed in this Unit will be chosen by the assessor.

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.

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

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 and teaching

Teachers and lectures 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 techniques as they prepare for assessment at an appropriate time in delivery.

The Dance: Technical skills unit includes two learning outcomes to be achieved through gained knowledge and understanding of a selected dance style, also developing technical and performance skills in two contrasting dance styles.

For Outcome 1; it is essential candidates are provided with opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of a selected dance style through studying the developments from origins to present day, key characteristics and style specific steps that help to identify the style, and also the impact of influential choreographers. Teachers/lectures can utilise many different teaching approaches and tasks that are suitable for the candidates to achieve the assessment standards, examples include centre devised booklets, presentation, mood board or newspaper article on the selected style of dance.

It is important that candidates attend live performances or watch recorded performances of established dance companies and/or influential choreographers to allow candidates to consolidate knowledge and understanding of the stylistic features of the selected dance style and at the same time giving candidates the chance to study a model performer. The type of live performance appropriate for learning and teaching will depend on the styles being studied by centres.

For Outcome 2; candidates should be encouraged to gain knowledge of safe dance practice and apply this in classwork, while developing fundamental technical and performance skills through studying two contrasting dance styles. Candidates should participate in regular technique classes to acquire skills appropriate to SCQF level 5 and improve technique before learning sequences for assessment. Once technical skills are established teachers/lectures can encourage and develop candidate's overall performance skills. Throughout the delivery of this unit it is vital candidates are given opportunities to evaluate their own and others work, this will help to aid progress in personal performance.

Teachers/lecturers can select the two contrasting dance styles to study that are appropriate to the candidates, this may include but not limited to contemporary, jazz, ballet, hip hop, highland and tap. It is important that the technical sequences choreographed by the centre provide enough contrast for candidates to demonstrate varying skills and techniques. It is important candidates follow regular structured technique classes, building up from basic exercises to longer movement sequences that incorporate skills developed in centre work, ensuring safe dance practice is followed in relation to warm up, cool down, attire, alignment and correct technique(s).

Candidates should develop key skills across all dance styles, as these principles inform the basis for competence as detailed below:

Technical principles:

- ◆ use of turnout and parallel
- ◆ posture
- ◆ alignment
- ◆ centring
- ◆ balance
- ◆ control
- ◆ stamina
- ◆ strength
- ◆ flexibility
- ◆ fluidity and smooth transitions

Performance skills:

- ◆ timing
- ◆ musicality
- ◆ quality
- ◆ dynamics
- ◆ self-expression
- ◆ sense of performance
- ◆ projection
- ◆ concentration and focus
- ◆ spatial awareness

To acquire and develop technical skills in two contrasting dance styles, candidates should experience structured technique classes which are specific to the styles being studied this should include:

- ◆ warm up with technical exercises
- ◆ centre exercise and/or barre work
- ◆ floor exercises
- ◆ stretching at the barre, in the centre or on the floor
- ◆ traveling/corner work
- ◆ combining sequences which travel
- ◆ amalgamated technical sequences
- ◆ development of performance skills
- ◆ cool down
- ◆ regular feedback and evaluation would be encouraged

The following advice should be considered when creating technical sequences:

- ◆ include movement sequences that use personal and general space
- ◆ create movement that uses a range of pathways on the floor and around the body
- ◆ vary the direction of the movements
- ◆ use floor work and movements which use different levels, or move between levels
- ◆ use whole body movements like jumps, turns and rolls, as well as smaller, more intricate body part-specific movements
- ◆ vary dynamics, use different rhythms and speed, and a range of movement qualities
- ◆ consider using music which has clear time signature

Resources

Candidates may develop their learning further by reading, researching, watching live performances, taking part in dance classes etc. The following list of practitioners and influential choreographers could help you direct your candidates to other places for learning.

Websites and dance companies include:

- ◆ 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

Influential 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

Sample classwork

Appropriate classwork for a number of styles is shown below. These can be used to set technical exercises, but they are by no means prescriptive. Teachers and lecturers can

demonstrate correct technique through regular classes, by holding technique workshops led by industry professionals, or making use of online resources that show the correct technique in regard to the style being studied.

Jazz
<p>Warm-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ roll-downs ◆ isolations using head, shoulders, ribs, hips, feet ◆ lunges ◆ foot exercises ◆ preparation for jumps — first, second position ◆ cardiorespiratory movements
<p>Centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ use of feet and legs — parallel/turnout/turn-in — first, second position ◆ use of arms — first, second position ◆ tendus and glissés ◆ jazz pliés (parallel/turnout — first, second position) ◆ isolations sequence to include: head, shoulders, ribs, hips ◆ ripples including dolphin and snake movements ◆ preparation for développé and développés in first position ◆ preparation for pirouettes ◆ pas de bourrée ◆ kicks (both flick and high)
<p>Floor work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ stretches in first/second position, parallel and turnout ◆ core work ◆ contraction and high release ◆ sweeps and swings ◆ transitions from standing to floor and reverse
<p>Travelling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ elevation including step-hops, sautés, jetés ◆ turns including open turns and jazz turns ◆ step-ball-change, cross-ball-change, flick-ball-change ◆ jazz walks ◆ straight-leg kick combinations: including forwards/back and side ◆ combination of travelling movements

Contemporary
Warm-up:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ roll-downs ◆ isolations using head, shoulders, ribs, hips, feet ◆ lunges ◆ foot exercises ◆ preparation for jumps — first, second position ◆ cardiorespiratory movements
Centre work:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ lateral spine curves ◆ high release ◆ contractions ◆ roll-downs in parallel ◆ pliés in parallel and turnout (first and second position) ◆ tendus and foot work in parallel and turnout
Floor work:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ swings ◆ curves ◆ high release ◆ tilts ◆ transitions from standing to floor and reverse
Swings:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ standing swings ◆ figures of eight ◆ ski swings
Travelling which includes runs:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ triplets ◆ leaps ◆ skips ◆ turns ◆ movement phrases using directions, floor patterns and floor work

Hip hop
Warm-up:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ roll-downs ◆ isolations — shoulder, rib and hip ◆ cardiorespiratory movements ◆ cardiorespiratory movements incorporating dynamic arm movements
Centre:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ lunges ◆ side stretches ◆ pliés ◆ weight transference movements such as front, back and step-ball-change and step knee lifts in second position ◆ slide and glide ◆ top rock ◆ ripples/dolphins ◆ popping and locking ◆ heel groove ◆ freeze ◆ tutting ◆ Bart Simpson ◆ cabbage patch ◆ Scooby Doo ◆ shoulder lean ◆ The Reebok
Floor work:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ core work ◆ planks ◆ push-ups ◆ floor slides ◆ four step ◆ pin drop
Travelling:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ hip hop walks ◆ glides ◆ combinations from centre and floor work

Classical ballet
Barre:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ demi and full pliés ◆ battement tendu en croix ◆ battement glissé en croix ◆ battement fondu ◆ rond de jambe à terre ◆ développé devant and à la seconde ◆ grand battement
Centre:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ using positions of the feet in first, second and third positions ◆ positions of the arms — first, second, third, fourth (open and crossed), fifth ◆ port de bras en face ◆ battement tendu ◆ battement glissé ◆ preparation for pirouette (relevé, retiré position, relevé devant, quarter and half turns) ◆ first, second, third arabesque arm alignment with dégagé derrière ◆ chassé — en avant, en arrière, à la seconde and passé
Travelling steps:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ classical walks ◆ pas de bourrée, devant and derrière ◆ balance de coté ◆ glissade, devant and derrière ◆ couru
Allegro:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ sautés, échappé, changements (jumps in first, second, and third positions) ◆ preparation for assemblé — dessus and dessous ◆ petite assemblé ◆ petite jetés ◆ coupé — dessus and dessous ◆ temp levé in retiré derrière ◆ pas de chat

Tap
Warm-up:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ springs and tap springs ◆ toe taps ◆ tap-step-ball-change ◆ tap-step-heel ◆ tap-heel-ball ◆ shuffle-ball-change ◆ hop ◆ flap ◆ stomp ◆ ball and heel beats
Close work:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ shuffles front and side ◆ pick-ups on two feet ◆ four-beat cramp rolls ◆ paddles ◆ crawl ◆ single-time step, with break (pick-up or shuffle)
Travelling steps:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ four-beat riffs ◆ shuffle spring ◆ waltz step ◆ pick-up hop step ◆ pick-up spring step
Turning steps:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ step-turn-step ◆ pencil turn ◆ step-ball-change turning ◆ combinations from centre and close work

Highland
Warm-up:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ jumps in first, second, third, fourth and fifth positions ◆ springs from foot to foot ◆ hopping right and left foot ◆ combinations of the above ◆ combinations of the above using hand positions — first, second, third, fourth and fifth
Basic positions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ standing in first position and point in second, third, fourth and fifth — both feet ◆ hopping and using the same positions as above ◆ standing in first position and working foot to second aerial, third aerial, third-rear aerial, mid-fourth and mid-fourth aerial, fourth intermediate, fourth-intermediate aerial ◆ hopping and using the same positions as above
Basic movements and steps:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ bow ◆ shedding ◆ back-stepping ◆ toe and heel ◆ shake ◆ rocking ◆ cross-over ◆ pas de-basque ◆ open pas de basque ◆ high-cutting ◆ brushing ◆ shuffles ◆ hop brush beat beat ◆ shake shake down ◆ leap ◆ Strathspey ◆ highland reel ◆ spring points ◆ propelled pivot turn ◆ last shedding ◆ addressing the sword ◆ pointing ◆ crossing and pointing quick step ◆ side travel

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 Technical Skills unit.

Evidence for the Unit will be a combination of written, oral and recorded performance evidence with assessment checklists. 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. Some suggested methods of gathering evidence are detailed

Candidates could demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the selected dance style through historical research and a study of a professional dance performance, and present their findings in a report, mood board or presentation. There may be many opportunities for naturally occurring evidence through workshop-based tasks.

Evidence for some of the technique-based Assessment Standards in the *Dance: Technical Skills* Unit could be generated during technique classes in which candidates are assessed by observation, assessment checklist and/or filmed assessment in small groups with candidates clearly identified. Evidence would need to demonstrate:

- ◆ the ability to accurately perform technical skills
- ◆ understanding of technical requirements for each exercise and/or sequence
- ◆ ability to apply performance skills to technical exercises, centre work, traveling and technical sequences

For safe dance practice candidates are required to demonstrate knowledge of skills already learned in the unit through the performance of technical exercises and two sequences in contrasting dance styles.

A suitable method of assessment for Outcome 2 would be to film candidates performing tutor choreographed dance sequences in contrasting dance styles in small groups or individually, it is good practice to give candidates opportunities to carry out solo performances. This video would also be a useful aid to allow candidates to evaluate their technical and performance skills, candidates could evaluate the performance using the following criteria:

- ◆ technical accuracy
- ◆ centre, balance, posture and alignment
- ◆ stamina, strength and flexibility
- ◆ quality and dynamics
- ◆ timing and musicality
- ◆ self-expression

The sequences could be assessed by recording a solo performance and marking against an assessment checklist, or during a live performance.

Candidates could also be asked to keep a log in relation to the development of their technical and performance skills acquired through regular technique classes and use this to identify areas of strength and possible areas for development. This would meet the requirements of the evaluative parts of the 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.

Combining assessment across 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.

Administrative information

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Superclass: LB

History of changes to National Unit Specification

Version	Description of change	Date
2.0	Unit code updated.	September 2019
2.1	Unit support notes added.	June 2020

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