

# Guidance for delivering the dance element of Musical Theatre exams

## Introduction

This document is intended as guidance for delivering the dance section in PAA Musical Theatre exams (performance component). It is **not** an RSL requirement that you follow this guidance.

The dance steps listed below are suggestions only. It is **not** an RSL requirement that you use these steps within your choreography, and marks will not be awarded specifically for using these steps.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to select the most appropriate music and dance steps/ performance choreography for the student's grade and level in the context of their class/school setting.

Musical theatre is a very broad genre that offers a variety of dance styles. You should choreograph a dance that fits with the style, character and mood of the musical chosen. The style and the mood of the music and dance routine should allow for as much expression as possible, creating a performance that fulfils requirements for technique, musicality, characterisation and communication. The choreography should show a connection between the music and movement, telling a story through the dance, and displaying an awareness of character and performance.

## Steps that can be included within your dance performance

Step	Description	Suggested levels
<b>Marches</b>	On the spot or travelling	Premiere - Debut
<b>Heel digs</b>	Extending the leg out to the front or side, placing heel on the floor	Premiere - Debut
<b>Step digs</b>	Step to the side and place the other foot on the ball of the foot	Premiere - Debut
<b>Ball change</b>	A transfer of weight from one foot to the other, often performed quickly. The "ball" refers to the ball of the foot, which is the thick muscular pad just below the toes	Premiere - Debut
<b>Skips</b>	Alternating hops from one to the other or with steps in between	Premiere - Debut
<b>Sways</b>	Legs apart, swaying from side to side	Premiere - Debut
<b>Box step / jazz square</b>	A dance step often used in musical theatre consisting of a step forward followed by a step across and then two steps back. All steps form a sort of box / square shape once completed	Premiere – Grade 3
<b>Opposition</b>	The natural movement of the arms while dancing. The arms are most often in the opposite position of the feet or legs (ie. if your right foot/leg is forward, your left arm is forward)	Premiere – Grade 3
<b>Step ball change</b>	Travelling step adding a step before the ball change	Premiere – Grade 3
<b>Drag runs</b>	Long runs leaving the foot to drag behind	Premiere – Grade 3



<b>Grapevine</b>	A series of steps that move sideways with a side, back, side, front pattern	Premiere – Grade 5
<b>3-step turn</b>	Taking three consecutive steps while turning in one direction	Premiere – Grade 8
<b>Pivot Turn</b>	One foot steps in front and then the body turns (without replacing or moving the feet) to face the opposite direction	Premiere – Grade 8
<b>Kick ball change</b>	Kick with one leg followed by two quick changes of weight from one ball of the foot to the other	Premiere – Grade 8
<b>Shimmy</b>	Shoulder shaking: alternating in a rapid motion	Premiere – Grade 8
<b>Isolations</b>	Movement of only one part of the body	Premiere – Grade 8
<b>Jumps</b>	Taking off from two feet and landing on two feet in parallel and second	Premiere – Grade 8
<b>Port de bras</b>	A movement or series of movements made by passing the arm or arms through various positions	Premiere – Grade 8
<b>Head-roll</b>	A head roll is letting the head move around its entire circular access in a controlled but relaxed fashion while the body stays aligned and in position	Grades 1-5
<b>Drag</b>	A step to the side with a drag	Grades 1-5
<b>Sways</b>	Legs apart, swaying from side to side	Grades 1-5
<b>Shoulder rolls</b>	Isolating the shoulders and rolling them together or one at a time	Grades 1-5
<b>Step hops</b>	Step on one foot and hop travelling	Grades 1-8
<b>Axel turn</b>	A spinning rotation in which the dancer performs a knee bend and kick in the air before bringing the legs together again on the ground	Grades 1-8
<b>Charleston</b>	A front-to-back weight shift accompanied by a forward kick, often performed with a partner and with arm motions and sometimes jazz hands	Grades 1-8
<b>Chasse / gallops</b>	Step together step	Grades 1-8
<b>Dolphin</b>	This is a movement where the body flows in a snake type movement starting from the chest moving up	Grades 1-8
<b>Kicks</b>	This is a kick that throws the working leg in the air in a controlled manner, while the supporting leg and body stay properly aligned	Grades 1-8
<b>Pas de bourrée</b>	A back-side-front three step move in the floor pattern of an isosceles triangle	Grades 1-8
<b>Pirouettes</b>	Turns on one leg	Grades 1-8
<b>Leap</b>	A small jump from one foot to the other foot usually with an opening of the legs in the air	Grades 1-8
<b>Fan kick</b>	A kick in which the working leg makes a sweeping arc in front of the body	Grades 4-5
<b>Hitch kick</b>	A scissor-like movement where one leg is in the air while the other leg kicks up to pass it	Grades 4-5
<b>Jazz walk</b>	Many varieties but generally a turned out low walk using shoulder opposition	Grades 4-8



<b>Pas de bourrée turns</b>	A back-side-front three step move turning in a circle	Grades 4-8
<b>Chainés</b>	Consecutive half turns traveling and rotating in a single direction	Grades 4-8
<b>Pencil turn</b>	Pirouette with both legs straight	Grades 4-8
<b>Hip walk</b>	A basic jazz walk that jets the hips out in a circular movement with the arms rounded in back while in plié	Grades 4-8
<b>Hip-fall</b>	A controlled drop to the floor whether on knees or feet and a slide through till the body is on the floor on its side and one arm is straight out against the floor	Grades 4-8
<b>Stag leap</b>	A high forward leap in which the dancer imitates the actions of a male deer, with arms up and the knees bent like a prancing animal	Grades 6-8
<b>Barrel turn</b>	A spin that is executed by putting a leg forward, kicking off that forward leg, and using the outstretched arms as a means of gathering momentum for the spin. A barrel turn requires tight coordination between the feet and the arms for its success	Grades 6-8
<b>Round kick</b>	A kick in which the working leg makes a sweeping arc in front of the body	Grades 6-8

## Video resources

The links below are dance performances intended as helpful suggestions only:

### Premiere / Debut

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rt4\\_EB8hG0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rt4_EB8hG0)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GreZLzoKW1g>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjwT-iZrWg>

### Grades 1-3

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OI4bjyhTdY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LerIBRS7CbY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNzDuhIRfFQ>

### Grades 4-5

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEnUueF3r30>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZQFbO7qxjo>

### Grades 6-8

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WV8MYoJWb8M>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZB5RLvcLNo4>