



# **Graded Examinations in Dance Grades 1-8**

**Specification**

**August 2024**

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### Qualification Titles in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

| Qualification Titles   | Total no. of units | Credit* | Guided Learning Hours | Total Qualification Time | Disciplines (offered in all grades except where indicated)                |
|--|--------------------|---------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Level 1 Award in Graded Examination in Dance: Grade 1</b>       | 1                  | 7       | 60                    | 70                       | Classical Ballet<br>Highland Dance  |
| <b>Level 1 Award in Graded Examination in Dance: Grade 2</b>       | 1                  | 7       | 60                    | 70                       | Modern Jazz Dance<br>Tap Dance  |
| <b>Level 1 Award in Graded Examination in Dance: Grade 3</b>       | 1                  | 7       | 60                    | 70                       | Legat System of Russian Ballet  |
| <b>Level 2 Award in Graded Examination in Dance: Grade 4</b>       | 1                  | 10      | 75                    | 95                       | National Dance<br>Character Dance   |
| <b>Level 2 Award in Graded Examination in Dance: Grade 5</b>       | 1                  | 10      | 75                    | 95                       | Freestyle Dance<br>Modern Theatre Dance (Grades 1-5 only)                 |
| <b>Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Dance: Grade 6</b> | 1                  | 13      | 90                    | 130                      | Lyrical Dance   |
| <b>Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Dance: Grade 7</b> | 1                  | 13      | 90                    | 130                      | Classical Indian Dance- Bharatanatyam                                     |
| <b>Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Dance: Grade 8</b> | 1                  | 13      | 90                    | 130                      | Kuchipudi<br>Kathak<br>Contemporary<br>Broadway Dance<br>Commercial Dance |

### Qualification Titles in Scotland

| Qualification Titles  | Total no. of units | Credit * | Guided Learning Hours |
|---|--------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| <b>Graded Examination in Dance (Highland) Grade 1 at SCQF Level 3</b> | 1                  | 7        | 60                    |
| <b>Graded Examination in Dance (Highland) Grade 2 at SCQF Level 3</b> | 1                  | 7        | 60                    |
| <b>Graded Examination in Dance (Highland) Grade 3 at SCQF Level 4</b> | 1                  | 7        | 60                    |
| <b>Graded Examination in Dance (Highland) Grade 4 at SCQF Level 4</b> | 1                  | 10       | 75                    |
| <b>Graded Examination in Dance (Highland) Grade 5 at SCQF Level 5</b> | 1                  | 10       | 75                    |
| <b>Graded Examination in Dance (Highland) Grade 6 at SCQF Level 6</b> | 1                  | 13       | 90                    |
| <b>Graded Examination in Dance (Highland) Grade 7 at SCQF Level 6</b> | 1                  | 13       | 90                    |
| <b>Graded Examination in Dance (Highland) Grade 8 at SCQF Level 6</b> | 1                  | 13       | 90                    |

\*Credit ratings apply for England, Wales and Northern Ireland through the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) and in Scotland through the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

## Section A: Qualification Summary

This is the RSL specification for Graded Examinations in Dance Grades 1-8. This specification is designed to give teachers and candidates practical information on the graded examinations in dance offered by RSL in partnership with three dance awarding organisations:

- The Russian Ballet School (Legat System of Russian Ballet, National Dance)
- The Professional Teachers of Dancing (Classical Ballet, Modern Jazz Dance, Tap Dance, Lyrical Dance, Freestyle Dance, Modern Theatre Dance)
- UKA Dance (Classical Ballet, Modern Jazz Dance, Tap Dance, Highland Dance\*)
- Griffin College London (Classical Indian Dance – Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathak)
- Oriental Fine Arts Academy of London (Classical Indian Dance – Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathak)
- I-Path (Classical Ballet, Modern Jazz Dance, Tap Dance, Lyrical Dance, Contemporary, Broadway Dance, Commercial, Character)

\*Highland Dance is also accredited by SQA Accreditation in Scotland.

If you have any general queries about these qualifications or any other RSL qualifications, then please do not hesitate to call us on 0845 4604747 or email us at [info@rslawards.co.uk](mailto:info@rslawards.co.uk). Queries relating to specific content and assessment can be addressed to the relevant Awarding organisation (contact details in Section E).

### A.1 Aims and objectives

The qualifications aim to promote enjoyment of movement as a form of physical exercise, encourage personal self-confidence and group awareness and develop a general appreciation of dance. Graded examinations in dance also aim to motivate and encourage candidates of all ages and levels through a system of progressive mastery and to provide a form of physical training that is safe, alongside the development of artistic appreciation. The qualifications are not only beneficial to those studying dance as a recreational pursuit, but also support entry to working as a professional dancer or teacher of dance and prepare for further learning by helping candidates to develop their skills enabling them to progress to the next level.

The objectives are:

- To focus delivery and assessment on dance performance skills;
- To enable progression to subsequent graded examinations in dance and to further and higher education courses and/or employment opportunities such as professional dancer, dance teacher, choreographer, dance notator; dance historian, lecturer in dance and facilitator in community dance.
- To develop related competencies such as motor control, health and safety awareness, self-expression, physical fitness and stamina, discipline, mental ability and confidence.

### A.2 Progression

The dance graded examinations provide an academic pathway into the industry for dancers. It can be argued that graded examinations by themselves are not strictly speaking 'vocational' in that they are not absolutely essential for entry into the world of professional dance. However, they remain a positive means of determining progress and enable students to learn the necessary techniques to

gain entry to FE and HE courses. Graded examinations operate according to a well-established methodology of 'progressive mastery'. They allow dancers to be tested in discrete stages in the development of a wide range of skills. They tend to be more rigorous than other types of exams and for that reason industry is confident that achievement at the highest level gained by candidates of graded examinations will have the skills necessary to perform or work in other areas of the industry.

### **A.3 Qualification Structure**

A graded examination in dance consists of a series of pre-prepared and/or unset elements, undertaken as dance sequences as specified in the relevant dance awarding organisation syllabus.

## **Section B: Assessment Information**

### **B.1 Assessment Methodology**

All assessment of these qualifications is external and is undertaken by examiners appointed, trained and standardised by the partner awarding organisations. Further information on assessment, including grading criteria can be obtained from the relevant dance awarding organisation.

All qualifications will be graded pass, merit, distinction.

### **B.2 Expectations of Knowledge, Skills and Understanding**

The graded examination system is one based on the principle of 'progressive mastery': each step in the exam chain demonstrates learning, progression and skills in incremental steps. Successful learning is characterised by a mastery of the fundamentals of the skills demanded in each grade. Candidates will complete a set of dance sequences (the complexity and variety of which are determined by which qualification is being attempted), to the required standards. These technical and performance skills set a firm platform for further technical and artistic development by the candidate.

Expectations of knowledge, skills and understanding for each grade are set out in Appendix A.

### **B.3 Quality Assurance**

All dance graded examinations are standardised according to the processes and procedures laid down by the individual dance awarding organisations and monitored by RSL.

## **Section C: Candidate Access and Registration**

The qualifications will:

- be available to everyone who is capable of reaching the required standards
- be free from any barriers that restrict access and progression
- offer equal opportunities for all wishing to access the qualifications

There are no prerequisites for other qualifications to be completed, and no specified prior knowledge, skills or understanding required prior to taking a graded dance qualification. It is expected, however, that for successful learning, the skills demanded in each grade are likely to be mastered before progressing to the next grade.

Procedures for candidate registration for graded dance examinations can be obtained from the individual awarding organisations.

## **Section D: Policies**

### **D.1 Complaints and Appeals**

Full details of RSL's Complaints and Appeals policies can be obtained from RSL's head office, or can be found at [www.rslawards.co.uk](http://www.rslawards.co.uk)

Please note that a separate complaints process exists for qualifications taken in Scotland, in which candidates may take their complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). For more information please see the policy at [www.rslawards.co.uk](http://www.rslawards.co.uk)

### **D.2 Equal Opportunities**

RSL Ltd is committed equal opportunities in the management of its qualifications in which individuals are selected and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities without regard to race, religion, colour, sex, age, national origin, disability or sexual orientation, and are given equal opportunities within the company. The aim of this policy is to ensure that no candidate entering an examination receives less favourable treatment on grounds not relevant to good candidate practice.

RSL's full Equal Opportunities Policy can be found at [www.rslawards.co.uk](http://www.rslawards.co.uk)

### **D.3 Malpractice**

RSL and its partner dance awarding organisations treat any allegations of malpractice seriously. Any incidence which deliberately contravenes regulations and compromises the integrity of the assessment process must be reported to the relevant dance awarding organisation in the first instance. All instances of malpractice are monitored by RSL and will be subject to investigation via RSL's Malpractice Policy should these not be resolved by the individual awarding organisation. RSL's Malpractice Policy can be found at [www.rslawards.co.uk](http://www.rslawards.co.uk)

### **D.4 Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration**

Candidates with special educational needs or disabilities may apply to the dance awarding organisation for a reasonable adjustment to be made to their examination if this is appropriate. Similarly, candidates with a temporary indisposition or disability can apply for a special consideration to be taken into account on the day of the examination.

## **Section E: Contacts and Support**

All correspondence should be directed to:

### **RSL Awards Ltd**

Harlequin House  
7 High Street  
Teddington  
TW11 8EE  
Tel: 0845 460 4747  
Email: [info@rslawards.co.uk](mailto:info@rslawards.co.uk)

### **Russian Ballet Society**

26 Triq il-Ghasel  
STA Margherita  
Mosta  
MST2523  
Malta  
Email: [russianballetsociety@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:russianballetsociety@hotmail.co.uk)  
Website: <http://www.russianballetsociety.co.uk>

### **The Professional Teachers of Dancing**

The Studios  
Morcombelake  
DT6 6DY  
Contact via website at <http://www.professionalteachersofdancing.co.uk/contact>

### **UKA Dance**

Centenary House  
38-40 Station Road  
Blackpool  
FY4 1EU  
Email: [info@ukadance.co.uk](mailto:info@ukadance.co.uk)  
Website: <http://ukadance.co.uk>

### **Griffin College London**

Unit - 1, Durbar Industrial Estate,  
Durbar Avenue,  
Coventry, CV6 5QF  
Tel: 02477113598, 07740100981, 07480757792  
Email: [admin@griffincollege.org.uk](mailto:admin@griffincollege.org.uk)  
Website: <https://www.griffincollege.org.uk/>

### **Oriental Fine Arts Academy of London ( OFAAL)**

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Harrow  
HA1 3PH  
UK  
Tel: +44 208 109 0243  
Email: [admin@ofaal.org](mailto:admin@ofaal.org)  
Website: <https://www.ofaal.org>



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## Appendix A – Expectations of knowledge, skills and understanding for each grade

*These descriptors are taken from those developed by the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre in conjunction with their member organisations which include RSL, PTD, RBS and UKA Dance. They apply to graded examinations in dance across all genres.*

| General descriptor   | Knowledge statement (the holder....)   | Skills statement (the holder can....)  | Grade benchmark statements   |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Achievement at <b>level 1</b> reflects the ability to understand and use and apply basic knowledge, understanding and skills in a chosen dance genre.</p> | <p>Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of technical and performance skills in a chosen dance genre with developing precision and control.</p> | <p>Demonstrate basic techniques through using a developing vocabulary of movement in a chosen dance genre.</p> <p>Demonstrate the ability to interpret music with a sense of appropriate timing and rhythm for their chosen dance genre.</p> <p>Perform with increasing confidence and awareness to an audience.</p> | <p>At <b>Grade 1</b> candidates demonstrate the fundamental basic knowledge of the vocabulary and technical skills for their chosen genre including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timing and rhythm</li> <li>• Musicality</li> <li>• Co-ordination</li> <li>• Posture and placing</li> <li>• Spatial awareness</li> </ul> <p>They are able to perform a simple repertoire with a sense of appropriate presentation and expression and an awareness of performance space.</p> <p>At <b>Grade 2</b> candidates demonstrate an emerging knowledge of the vocabulary and technical skills of their chosen genre including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timing and rhythm</li> <li>• Musicality</li> <li>• Co-ordination</li> <li>• Posture and placing</li> <li>• Spatial awareness</li> </ul> <p>They show an emerging sense of appropriate presentation and expression and an awareness of performance space.</p> |

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|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  | <p>At <b>Grade 3</b> candidates demonstrate a developing knowledge of the vocabulary and technical skills for their chosen genre including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Timing and rhythm</li><li>• Musicality</li><li>• Co-ordination</li><li>• Posture and placing</li><li>• Spatial awareness</li></ul> <p>They show a developing sense of appropriate presentation and expression and an awareness of performance space.</p> |
|--|--|--|--|

| General descriptor   | Knowledge statement (the holder....)   | Skills statement (the holder can....)   | Grade benchmark statements  |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Achievement at <b>level 2</b> reflects the ability to build upon skills, knowledge and understanding in a chosen dance genre showing developing confidence and security in application.</p> | <p>Demonstrates an increasingly secure knowledge and understanding of technique, music and performance which is reflected in the ability to perform more complex repertoire with increasing precision and control.</p> | <p>Demonstrate secure technical skills in a chosen dance genre.</p> <p>Demonstrate secure interpretation and sensitivity to a range of musical content and style appropriate to the dance genre.</p> <p>Demonstrate confidence and responsiveness to an audience.</p> | <p>At <b>Grade 4</b>, candidates demonstrate increasingly secure technical skills and knowledge through performance of a more complex repertoire in their chosen dance genre through the use of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timing and rhythm</li> <li>• Musicality</li> <li>• Co-ordination and control</li> <li>• Posture, placing and alignment</li> <li>• Spatial awareness</li> </ul> <p>They show an increasing secure understanding of musical interpretation, use of expression and an awareness of performance space.</p> <p>At <b>Grade 5</b> candidates demonstrate secure technical skills and knowledge through performance of a more complex repertoire in their chosen dance genre through the use of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timing and rhythm</li> <li>• Musicality</li> <li>• Co-ordination and control</li> <li>• Posture, placing and alignment</li> <li>• Spatial awareness</li> </ul> <p>They show a secure understanding of musical interpretation, use of expression and an awareness of performance space.</p> |

| General descriptor  | Knowledge statement (the holder...)   | Skills statement (the holder can....)   | Grade benchmark statements  |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Achievement at <b>Level 3</b> reflects the ability to build upon a range of skills, knowledge and understanding in a chosen dance genre showing developing assurance and sophistication.</p> | <p>Demonstrates an assured knowledge and understanding of the technique and performance skills in a chosen dance genre with assured precision and control.</p> <p>Demonstrates secure understanding of the relationship between performer and audience.</p> | <p>Demonstrate a wide range of techniques within a chosen dance performed consistently and confidently with technical accuracy and control.</p> <p>Demonstrate an assured performance with perceptive sensitivity to a range of musical content and style appropriate to the dance genre.</p> <p>Demonstrate dynamics, fluidity and control in a chosen dance genre incorporating the use of space and an assured interpretation and expression, engaging the audience.</p> | <p>At <b>Grade 6</b> candidates demonstrate secure and consistent knowledge of the vocabulary, technical skills and performance qualities demanded by increasingly complex repertoire in a chosen genre through the use of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timing and rhythm</li> <li>• Musicality</li> <li>• Co-ordination, strength and control</li> <li>• Posture, placing and alignment</li> <li>• Spatial awareness</li> </ul> <p>They show a clear understanding of a range of musical sounds, accents and timings, demonstrate musical interpretation, a secure understanding of the performance space and evidence the ability to communicate and express themselves through performance.</p> <p>At <b>Grade 7</b> candidates demonstrate assured knowledge of the vocabulary, technical skills and performance qualities demanded by increasingly complex repertoire in their chosen genre through the use of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timing and rhythm</li> <li>• Musicality</li> <li>• Co-ordination, strength and control</li> <li>• Posture, placing and alignment</li> <li>• Spatial awareness</li> </ul> <p>Through the repertoire, they are able to show an assured understanding of a range of complex musical sounds, accents and timings, demonstrate an advanced sense of interpretation, a secure understanding of the performance space and an increasingly assured</p> |

|  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
|  |  |  | <p>personal sense of style and confidence in performance.</p> <p>At <b>Grade 8</b> candidates demonstrate sophisticated knowledge of the vocabulary, technical skills and performance qualities demanded by complex repertoire in their chosen genre through the use of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timing and rhythm</li> <li>• Musicality</li> <li>• Co-ordination, strength and control</li> <li>• Posture, placing and alignment</li> <li>• Spatial awareness</li> </ul> <p>Through this repertoire, they are able to show perceptive understanding of a range of complex musical sounds, accents and timings, demonstrate a sophisticated sense of interpretation, a secure understanding of the performance space and an assured personal sense of style and confidence in performance.</p> |
|--|--|--|---|