

Dance



Examination Board: AQA



■ What is the course about?

A Level dance is a dynamic qualification which encourages students to develop their creative and intellectual capacity, alongside transferable skills such as team working, communication and problem solving. The specification reflects both historical and current dance practices, making it more relevant, and inspires a lifelong passion and appreciation for dance. The course recognises the role of dance in young people's lives and students will be able to study a range of dance styles.

For the two-year linear A Level course you will study:

Performance

Students must develop and apply the knowledge, understanding and skills required to perform dance, as a soloist and in a duet/trio. The knowledge and understanding of physical skills, including flexibility, strength, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, agility, neuromuscular coordination and kinaesthetic awareness, underpin and inform the development of both the physical/technical and interpretative/performance skills outlined in:

- A performance in a solo.
- A performance within a quartet.

Choreography

Students must learn how to create an original piece of group choreography, which lasts for a minimum of three minutes to a maximum of four minutes, for three, four or five dancers, in response to an externally set task. To translate their dance ideas into choreography, students must develop and apply practical knowledge and understanding of choreographic processes, including:

- Researching, developing and experimenting with dance ideas through studio and non-studio investigation.
- The rehearsal process.

Critical Engagement

The set works and areas of study provide an appropriate focus for students to critically engage with dance and understand the interrelationship between the creation, presentation and viewing/appreciation of dance. Critical engagement with areas of study must enable students to develop and demonstrate an in-depth knowledge and understanding of dance through time and location relating to features of genre, including:

- Style
- Technique
- Influences
- Key practitioners
- Professional repertoire
- Communication of dance ideas

The areas of study cover the genres of modern dance, ballet and jazz dance, offering a breadth of study. For the purposes of this specification, these genres are defined as follows.

- **Modern dance:** a form of theatrical dancing which began in the early 20th century, originally in opposition to the formality of ballet. As the dance form has developed, this distinction has become less evident. The term 'modern' has in some cases been replaced with other labels, e.g. contemporary.
- **Ballet:** a form of dancing which focuses on the technique and style of the danse d'école, using the port de bras, the five positions of the feet and turnout of the legs.
- **Jazz dance:** a form of dancing based on African origins. It focuses on the use of complex rhythms and techniques which include the isolation of body parts. Throughout the 20th century a wide range of jazz dance styles has evolved, e.g. lyrical jazz dance and urban dance.

■ How is the course assessed?

Students must complete both assessment components.

Component 1 (performance and choreography) includes a solo performance linked to a specified practitioner within an area of study, a performance in a quartet and group choreography. This is assessed with a practical exam and equates to 50% of the A Level.

Component 2 (critical engagement) includes knowledge, understanding and critical appreciation of two set works. One is a compulsory set work within the compulsory area of study and the other an optional set work within the corresponding area of study, from a choice of four.

This is assessed with a 2-hour 30-minute written exam. This section equates to 50% of the A Level and is split into two sections. Section A: short-answer questions (25 marks) and one essay question (25 marks) on the compulsory set work/area of study. Section B: two essay questions on the second set work/area of study (25 marks for each essay)

■ What can the course lead to in terms of higher education and future careers?

A Level dance teaches a range of transferable skills and can open doors to study performing arts at higher education.

■ What are the formal entry requirements?

Significant dance experience is required. Students may be asked to submit evidence of their dance experience in order to be accepted onto the course.