



DANCE

ATAR course

Year 11 syllabus

Acknowledgement of Country

Kaya. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) acknowledges that our offices are on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar and that we deliver our services on the country of many traditional custodians and language groups throughout Western Australia. The Authority acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We offer our respect to Elders past and present.

Important information

This syllabus is effective from 1 January 2025.

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Rationale

Dance is dynamic and powerful. It embodies our ideas, thoughts, emotions and values and provides a unique opportunity to develop physically, creatively, aesthetically, emotionally and intellectually. People have always danced, and dance continues to evolve as a form of expression, fulfilling a variety of functions in society. As an art form, dance encourages artistic creativity and the active use of the imagination. The study of dance acknowledges the interrelationship between practical and theoretical aspects – the making and performing of movement and the appreciation of its meaning. It allows students to make and present dance relevant to their lives.

The Dance ATAR course develops and presents ideas through a variety of genres, styles and forms, as it provides a unique way in which to express our cultural view and understanding of the world. Through critical decision making in individual and group work, movement is manipulated and refined to reflect the choreographer's intent. Students use a wide range of creative processes, such as improvisation and the use of choreographic elements and devices, and draw on their own physicality and the interpretation of existing work of others to make dance works.

Students experience an intrinsic sense of enjoyment and personal achievement through expressing and challenging themselves physically. As a physical art form, dance is able to offer an opportunity for them to achieve an elite level of movement skills. They gain an understanding of the physical competencies specific to dance, including biomechanical principles, strength, flexibility, coordination and rhythmic understanding, while learning to use the body as a medium for artistic expression. Dance may draw on other multidisciplinary art forms that are traditional or innovative. It is essential that students demonstrate safe dance practices and understand health issues that will enhance their general physical wellbeing and prolong their dance involvement.

Students reflect on, respond to, and evaluate how dance styles and forms are historically derived and culturally valued. They learn about the origins of dance and its importance as a form of expression and that it can represent a variety of political, cultural and historical motivations. This understanding informs their own dance-making and the dance works of others. They use appropriate terms and language to describe dance.

In performing dance, technical, design and expressive skills are incorporated and developed. The opportunity to present dance to an audience enables students to understand and undertake a wide range of production and design concepts, skills and roles.

Through participation in the Dance ATAR course, students develop transferable skills essential to their future. These include communication skills, collaborative teamwork skills, negotiation and conflict resolution skills, problem-solving skills, as well as the ability to organise, analyse and evaluate. Participation may lead to opportunities for future study in dance or related arts fields.

Aims

The Dance ATAR course enables students to:

- develop, articulate and explore ideas
- demonstrate skills in production and performance
- create dance for a range of purposes, audiences and contexts
- understand the contextual relationships of dance
- analyse and evaluate dance in performance
- develop transferable skills of creative problem solving, collaboration, innovation, flexibility, social skills, self-regulation and leadership.

Organisation

This course is organised into a Year 11 syllabus and a Year 12 syllabus. The cognitive complexity of the syllabus content increases from Year 11 to Year 12.

Structure of the syllabus

The Year 11 syllabus is divided into two units, each of one semester duration, which are typically delivered as a pair. The notional time for each unit is 55 class contact hours.

Unit 1 – Popular dance

In this unit, students will explore how popular dance reflects and influences cultural and social trends, identity and community. They will learn about the impact of media and technology on the evolution of popular dance, considering how platforms such as radio through to social media have transformed the visibility and accessibility of dance.

Unit 2 – Youth dance

This unit focuses on creating dance that explores original concepts and expresses personal ideas. This course focuses on the development of technical skills, artistic expression and performance abilities in various dance styles popular among youth. Students explore learning contexts that reflect their own cultural understanding and produce unique work with a personal style.

Each unit includes:

- a unit description – a short description of the focus of the unit
- unit content – the content to be taught and learned.

Organisation of content

This course is divided into three content areas:

- Choreography
- Performance
- Contextual knowledge.

Prescribed genres

In the Year 11 ATAR course, students are required to work in at least two different genres:

- ballet
- ballroom
- contemporary
- jazz
- hip-hop
- tap
- dance from other cultures, such as Indian, Spanish, etc.

Note: The teacher selects the dance genre which is informed by the context of the school. The course is not designed for individual students to select separate genres as their personal focus of study.

Progression from the Years 7–10 curriculum

This syllabus builds on the dance skills, techniques, processes, elements and principles explored in the Years 7–10 Arts curriculum. This includes the interrelated strands of Making and Responding. Making includes learning about and using knowledge, skills, techniques, processes, materials and technologies to explore dance practices and make artworks that communicate ideas and intentions. Responding includes exploring, responding to, analysing and interpreting dance.

Further, this syllabus extends the dance content explored in the Years 7–10 Arts curriculum.

1	Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas in dance
2	Manipulating and applying the elements/concepts with intent in dance
3	Developing and refining understanding of dance skills and techniques
4	Structuring and organising ideas into form for dance
5	Sharing dance through performance
6	Analysing and reflecting upon intentions in dance
7	Examining and connecting dance in context

Representation of the general capabilities

The general capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that will assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate the capabilities into the teaching and learning program for the Dance ATAR course. The general capabilities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

Literacy

Dance relies on multiple literacies: oral, visual, kinetic, text-based and digital literacy as fundamental to learning, communicating, creating and responding. Students use and develop literacy skills as they describe, appraise and document their own dance and those of their peers. They respond to, interpret and analyse increasingly complex dance works made by others. They use their literacy skills to access knowledge, make meaning, express thoughts, emotions and ideas, interact with and challenge others. For example, viewing, analysing, interpreting and responding to dance works.

Numeracy

Creating dance works requires knowledge and understanding of measurement in order to manipulate space, time and form. Students develop an appreciation of and ability to apply numerical concepts such as size, space, scale, proportion, depth, ratio and pattern. For example, measuring rhythms across various metres, speeds, arrangements, patterns, equations and sequences in dance.

Information and communication technology capability

Information and communication technology (ICT) capability enables students in the Dance ATAR course to use digital tools and environments to represent their ideas and dance works. They use digital technologies to locate, access, select, document, plan and evaluate information, work collaboratively, share and exchange information, and communicate with a variety of audiences. For example, using ICT to enhance design choices for performance work.

Critical and creative thinking

Dance is dependent on the development of creative research, reflective practice and critical thinking. In creating dance, students draw on their curiosity, imagination and analytic skills to pose questions and explore ideas. They consider possibilities and a variety of processes to make choices that assist them in taking risks and expressing their ideas creatively. For example, analysing components including the elements of dance and choreographic choices.

Personal and social capability

All learning in the Dance ATAR course promotes self-discipline, initiative, confidence, goal-setting, empathy and adaptability as students work individually and collaboratively. When working with others, dance students develop and practise social skills that assist them to communicate effectively, work collaboratively, make considered group decisions and show leadership. For example, collaborative working within groups to achieve performance objectives.

Ethical understanding

Ethical understanding is developed and applied in the Dance ATAR course when students encounter or create dance that requires ethical consideration, such as dance work that is controversial, involves a moral dilemma or presents a biased point of view. They actively engage in ethical decision making when reflecting on their own and others' dance works. For example, via theme-based dance work, students explore the complexity of ethical issues.

Intercultural understanding

Intercultural understanding in the Dance ATAR course assists students to explore new ideas, media and practices from diverse local, national, regional and global cultural contexts. Students are encouraged to demonstrate an open mind to perspectives that differ from their own and to appreciate and draw on the diversity of cultures and contexts in which artists and audiences live. For example, staging the stories from other cultures.

Representation of the cross-curriculum priorities

The cross-curriculum priorities address the contemporary issues which students face in a globalised world. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate the priorities into the teaching and learning program for the Dance ATAR course. The cross-curriculum priorities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures carry an ancient tradition with stories that communicate histories of indigenous Australia that are both unique and share parallels with other ancient cultures. Exploration of the history and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples provides a rich opportunity to build a greater understanding of a part of Australian history and society, as well as foster values of mutual understanding and respect between cultures included under the broad identity of this country.

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

The Asia region represents a highly diverse spectrum of cultures, traditions and peoples with a third of the world's population located north of Australia. Engaging in a respectful exploration of particular traditions from countries like China, India, North Korea, South Korea and Japan, for example, enables students to understand more deeply the values and histories of our near neighbours with whom we share important interrelationships.

Sustainability

Students use the exploratory and creative platform of dance to develop world views that recognise the importance of social justice, healthy ecosystems and effective action for sustainability.

Sustainability provides engaging and thought-provoking contexts in which to explore the nature of dance making and responding, and enables the investigation of the interrelated nature of social, economic and ecological systems.

Unit 1 – Popular dance

Unit description

In this unit, students will explore how popular dance reflects and influences cultural and social trends, identity and community. They will learn about the impact of media and technology on the evolution of popular dance, considering how platforms such as radio through to social media have transformed the visibility and accessibility of dance.

Unit content

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

Prescribed genres

In Unit 1, students must work in at least one of the following genres:

- ballet
- ballroom
- contemporary
- jazz
- hip-hop
- tap
- dance from other cultures, such as Indian, Spanish.

Choreography

Choreographic processes

- selection and combination of elements of dance – body, dynamics, space, time (BDST) to convey ideas
- choreographic devices – canon, contrast, motif, repetition, unison
- choreographic structure – binary, narrative
- create movement to convey choreographic intent
- movement exploration through improvisation
- introduction to improvisation plans

Design concepts

Describing design concepts which convey meaning and effect:

- costume
- lighting
- music/sound
- props
- set
- technology

Performance

Technique and skills

Development of dance technique and skills as applicable to selected genres, such as:

- elevation
- floor work
- standing work
- travelling
- turning

Exercises and sequences that require a competent level of fitness:

- cardiovascular endurance
- coordination
- flexibility
- muscular endurance
- strength
- technique and style applied to a dance genre
- complex and extended sequences
- correct execution and control of technique and skills
- alignment and placement of body

Safe and healthy dance

- warm-up and cool-down specific to a dance genre and performance requirements
- physical, emotional and mental wellbeing that sustains the developing dancer – rest, recovery and stress management

Biomechanical principles

Identifying biomechanical principles of movement:

- balance
- base of support
- centre of gravity
- force
- motion
- transfer of weight

Performance qualities

- artistic interpretation
- commitment
- confidence
- engagement
- expression
- focus
- musicality
- projection

Contextual knowledge

Functions and contexts of dance

- evolution of popular dance styles over time
- key figures and iconic movements in popular dance

Dance language

- application of dance terminology and language
- describe and explain dance

Case study

Within the focus of popular dance, students must conduct **one** case study chosen from the following:

- dance companies
- choreographers
- dancers
- dance genre/style

The case study must investigate the following:

- background information
- related and relevant dance works – choreographic intent, elements of dance, choreographic devices, choreographic structures and design concepts

Suggested case studies

This is only a suggested list and teachers are able to make their own selection for case studies.

Unit 1 Popular dance	
Boy Blue (UK) – <i>Emancipation of Expressionism</i>	Mourad Merzouki – <i>Pixel</i>
CDK Company	Les Twins

Unit 2 – Youth dance

Unit description

This unit focuses on creating dance that explores original concepts and expresses personal ideas. This course focuses on the development of technical skills, artistic expression and performance abilities in various dance styles popular among youth. Students explore learning contexts that reflect their own cultural understanding and produce unique work with a personal style.

Unit content

This unit builds on the content covered in Unit 1.

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

Prescribed genres

In Unit 2, students must work in at least one of the following genres not studied in Unit 1:

- ballet
- ballroom
- contemporary
- jazz
- hip-hop
- tap
- dance from other cultures, such as Indian, Spanish

Choreography

Choreographic processes

- manipulate the elements of dance – body, dynamics, space, time (BDST) to reflect concept
- utilise choreographic devices – accumulation canon, contrast, embellishment, fragmentation, motif, repetition, unison
- choreographic structure – binary, narrative, ternary
- introduction to improvisation plans

Design concepts

Describing design concepts which convey meaning and effect:

- costume
- lighting
- music/sound
- props
- set
- technology

Performance

Technique and skills

Development of complex dance technique and skills in selected genres, such as:

- elevation
- floor work
- standing work
- travelling
- turning

Exercises and sequences that involve a competent level of fitness:

- cardiovascular endurance
- coordination
- flexibility
- muscular endurance
- strength
- technique and style applied to a dance genre
- complex and extended sequences
- correct execution and control of technique and skills
- alignment and placement of body

Safe and healthy dance

- warm-up and cool-down specific to a dance genre and performance requirements
- physical, emotional and mental wellbeing that sustains the developing dancer – rest, recovery and stress management

Biomechanical principles

Uses biomechanical principles to enhance movement:

- balance
- base of support
- centre of gravity
- force
- motion
- transfer of weight

Performance qualities

- artistic interpretation
- commitment
- confidence
- engagement
- expression
- focus
- musicality
- projection

Contextual knowledge

Functions and contexts of dance

- individual and group expression and identity
- youth communication through dance

Dance language

- application of dance terminology and language
- describe, explain and evaluate dance

Case study

Within the focus of Youth dance, students must conduct **one** case study chosen from the following:

- youth dance companies
- companies who create dance for and/or with youth
- choreographers who create dance for and/or with youth.

The case studies must investigate the following:

- background information
- related and relevant dance works – choreographic intent, elements of dance, choreographic devices, choreographic structures and design concepts
- cultural and social context of the dance work

Suggested case studies

This is only a suggested list and teachers are able to make their own selection for case studies.

Unit 2 Youth dance	
BalletBoyz – <i>Them/Us</i>	Yellow Wheel – <i>QUARK</i>
Company Chameleon – <i>This Witness</i>	QL2 – <i>Me Right Now</i>

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning that at the senior secondary years:

- provides evidence of student achievement
- identifies opportunities for further learning
- connects to the standards described for the course
- contributes to the recognition of student achievement.

Assessment for learning (formative) and assessment of learning (summative) enable teachers to gather evidence to support students and make judgements about student achievement. These are not necessarily discrete approaches and may be used individually or together, and formally or informally.

Formative assessment involves a range of informal and formal assessment procedures used by teachers during the learning process in order to improve student achievement and to guide teaching and learning activities. It often involves qualitative feedback (rather than scores) for both students and teachers, which focuses on the details of specific knowledge and skills that are being learnt.

Summative assessment involves assessment procedures that aim to determine students' learning at a particular time; for example, when reporting against the standards, after completion of a unit/s. These assessments should be limited in number and made clear to students through the assessment outline. Appropriate assessment of student work in this course is underpinned by reference to the set of pre-determined course standards. These standards describe the level of achievement required to achieve each grade, from A to E. Teachers use these standards to determine how well a student has demonstrated their learning.

Where relevant, higher order cognitive skills (e.g. application, analysis, evaluation and synthesis) and the general capabilities should be included in the assessment of student achievement in this course. All assessment should be consistent with the requirements identified in the course assessment table. Assessment should not generate workload and/or stress that, under fair and reasonable circumstances, would unduly diminish the performance of students.

School-based assessment

The *Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Manual* contains essential information on principles, policies and procedures for school-based assessment that must be read in conjunction with this syllabus.

School-based assessment involves teachers gathering, describing and quantifying information about student achievement.

Teachers design school-based assessment tasks to meet the needs of students. As outlined in the *WACE Manual*, school-based assessment of student achievement in this course must be based on the Principles of Assessment:

- Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning
- Assessment should be educative
- Assessment should be fair
- Assessment should be designed to meet its specific purpose/s
- Assessment should lead to informative reporting
- Assessment should lead to school-wide evaluation processes
- Assessment should provide significant data for improvement of teaching practices.

The table below provides details of the assessment types and their weighting for the Dance ATAR Year 11 syllabus.

Summative assessments in this course must:

- be limited in number to no more than eight tasks
- allow for the assessment of each assessment type at least once over the year/pair of units
- have a minimum value of five per cent of the total school assessment mark
- provide a representative sampling of the syllabus content.

Assessment tasks not administered under test or controlled conditions require appropriate authentication processes.

Assessment table – Year 11

Type of assessment	Weighting	To SCSA
Performance/production Exploring ideas, improvising, manipulating the elements of dance and using choreographic devices and structures to create original dance. Demonstrating competence in the use of technical dance skills, techniques/styles, performance qualities in a range of performance contexts.	40%	60% Practical
Examination Practical Typically conducted at the end of semester and/or unit and reflecting the practical examination design brief and the practical (performance) examination requirements document for this syllabus.	20%	
Examination Written Typically conducted at the end of semester and/or unit and reflecting the written examination design brief for this syllabus.	15%	40% Written
Response Response to analysis and evaluation of own or others' dance works. Research work in which students plan, conduct and communicate case studies.	25%	

Teachers must use the assessment table to develop an assessment outline for the pair of units (or for a single unit where only one is being studied).

The assessment outline must:

- include a set of assessment tasks
- include a general description of each task
- indicate the unit content to be assessed
- indicate a weighting for each task and each assessment type
- include the approximate timing of each task (e.g. the week the task is conducted, or the issue and submission dates for an extended task).

Reporting

Schools report student achievement, underpinned by a set of pre-determined standards, using the following grades:

Grade	Interpretation
A	Excellent achievement
B	High achievement
C	Satisfactory achievement
D	Limited achievement
E	Very low achievement

The grade descriptions for the Dance ATAR Year 11 syllabus are provided in Appendix 1. They are used to support the allocation of a grade. They can also be accessed, together with annotated work samples, on the course page of the School Curriculum and Standards Authority website at www.scsa.wa.edu.au.

To be assigned a grade, a student must have had the opportunity to complete the education program, including the assessment program (unless the school accepts that there are exceptional and justifiable circumstances).

Refer to the *WACE Manual* for further information about the use of a ranked list in the process of assigning grades.

The grade is determined by reference to the standard, not allocated on the basis of a pre-determined range of marks (cut-offs).

Appendix 1 – Grade descriptions Year 11

A	Demonstrates highly skilled execution of technical dance skills incorporating consistent control of the body, fluency, quality of line, breadth of movement and pliancy in use of weight.
	Performs confidently, consistently demonstrating accomplished performance qualities.
	Creates dance which clearly and effectively communicates the choreographic intent. Sustains a skilled manipulation and considered selection of the elements of dance and choreographic structure and devices.
	Uses effective and consistent problem-solving techniques and rehearsal strategies when working individually and collaboratively. Demonstrates a high level of autonomy.
	Succinctly describes, analyses, interprets and evaluates how the elements of dance, choreographic structure and devices and design concepts are used to communicate the choreographic intent of a dance work.
	Uses case studies to examine and coherently communicate the significance of the functions and contexts of dance.
	Develops insightful responses that include substantial evidence and justification, using a range of accurate and relevant terminology.
B	Demonstrates skilled execution of technical dance skills incorporating control of the body, fluency, quality of line, breadth of movement and use of weight.
	Performs confidently with commitment and focus, demonstrating competent performance qualities.
	Creates dance, communicating the choreographic intent with clarity. Uses a skilled manipulation of the elements of dance and choreographic structure and devices.
	Uses effective problem-solving techniques and rehearsal strategies when working individually and collaboratively.
	Analyses in some detail, interprets and evaluates how the elements of dance, choreographic structure and devices and design concepts are used to communicate the choreographic intent of a dance work.
	Uses case studies to clearly communicate in detail the functions and contexts of dance.
	Develops informed responses that include evidence and justification using accurate and relevant dance terminology.
C	Demonstrates control of most technical dance skills with minor inconsistencies in control of the body and/or fluency. Displays adequate quality of line, breadth of movement and use of weight.
	Performs mostly with commitment and focus, demonstrating appropriate performance qualities.
	Creates dance, communicating the stated choreographic intent with developing clarity. Selects and manipulates the elements of dance and choreographic structure and devices adequately.
	Uses some effective problem-solving techniques and rehearsal strategies when working individually and collaboratively.
	Describes and interprets how the elements of dance, choreographic structure and devices are used to communicate the choreographic intent of a dance work.
	Uses case studies to communicate briefly and/or superficially about the functions and contexts of dance.
	Develops responses that include some evidence and justification with occasional use of relevant dance terminology.

D	Demonstrates control in some technical dance skills with inconsistencies in control of the body and/or fluency, adequate quality of line, breadth of movement and use of weight.
	Performs inconsistently and often with a lack of focus and/or commitment, demonstrating some appropriate performance qualities.
	Demonstrates simplistic manipulation of the elements of dance and use of choreographic structure and devices when creating dance.
	Uses few problem-solving techniques and rehearsal strategies. Relies on teacher and/or peer input.
	Outlines how the elements of dance, choreographic structure and devices and design concepts are used in a dance work.
	Uses case studies to communicate in a limited way some of the functions and contexts of dance.
	Develops responses that are supported with little evidence or justification or limited dance terminology.
E	Does not meet the requirements of a D grade and/or has completed insufficient assessment tasks to be assigned a higher grade.

Appendix 2 – Glossary

This glossary is provided to enable a common understanding of the key terms in this syllabus.

Accumulation

A choreographic device where new movements are added to existing movements in a successive manner. It generally begins with move 1, then 1 + 2, then 1 + 2 + 3.

Alignment

The correct positioning and arrangement of the body parts in relation to one another to achieve efficient movement and balance.

Artistic interpretation

The unique way a choreographer or dancer expresses and conveys the emotions, intentions and narrative of a dance work.

Asymmetrical

Movements or positions that are different or unbalanced on each side of the body or space.

Australian dance

Encompasses a diverse array of styles and traditions, reflecting the country's multicultural population, indigenous heritage and contemporary innovations.

Ballet

A highly technical and formalised performing art that originated during the Italian Renaissance and later developed into a concert dance form in France and Russia. Ballet is characterised by its precise and graceful movements, which require a great deal of training and discipline.

Ballroom

Encompasses a wide variety of dance styles that are typically performed in pairs. Ballroom dance is characterised by its emphasis on technique, elegance and the connection between partners.

Binary

A two-part choreographic structure with an A theme and a B theme (AB). The binary form consists of two distinct self-contained sections that share either a character or quality, i.e. the same tempo, movement quality or style.

Biomechanical principles

The study of the mechanics of human movement:

- balance – ability to maintain a controlled body position during movement or stillness
- base of support – area beneath a person that includes all points of contact with the ground or another surface
- centre of gravity – the point at which the body's mass is evenly distributed in all directions
- force – the use of muscles to apply force
- motion – study of movement mechanics and how the body interacts with its environment
- transfer of weight – movement or redistribution of body mass from one body part to another, either fully or partially.

Body

As an element of dance, it encompasses:

- body awareness – this centres on consciousness of the body in space, including body shapes, body bases, body parts, body zones, locomotor and non-locomotor movements
- body bases – the body parts that support the rest of the body, e.g. when standing, the feet are the body base
- body parts – legs, arms, head, torso, hands and feet
- body activity – transfer of weight, travelling, turning, rising and falling
- body shapes – curved, straight, open, closed, symmetrical and asymmetrical
- body zones – body areas of right side, left side (sagittal plane), front, back (frontal or coronal plane), upper half or lower half (transverse plane).

Canon

A choreographic device that reflects the musical form of the same name, in which individuals and groups perform the same movement phrase beginning at different times.

Cardiovascular endurance

The ability of the cardiovascular system (heart, lungs and blood vessels) to deliver oxygen and nutrients to working muscles efficiently over an extended period of time

Choreography

The art of planning and arranging dance movements into a meaningful whole; the process of building a composition; a finished dance work.

Choreographic devices

Tools of the choreographer used for the creation of dances, such as unison, canon, motif, contrast, repetition, fragmentation, embellishment, accumulation and retrograde.

Choreographic intent

The purpose behind the composition or performance of movement.

Choreographic processes

The fundamentally accepted methods for creating dances.

Choreographic structure

The preconceived plan for the arrangement of movement in a particular structure that a choreographer uses when creating a dance. Examples of such structures include AB (binary), ABA (ternary), rondo (ABACA) and narrative.

Commitment

The dedication and perseverance that dancers demonstrate towards training and performing.

Complex and extended sequences

Involve intricate patterns of movement and a prolonged duration.

Confidence

Refers to a dancer's belief in their abilities, skills and artistic expression.

Contemporary dance

Contemporary dance is a broadly inclusive term to describe an approach to dance that draws on modern dance elements, classical ballet, release work and other forms of dance, often reflective of the creative innovations of particular dance choreographers and directors. Contemporary dance may also draw on other dance forms, including popular dance and forms from other cultures and times. Many contemporary dance pieces reflect explorations of structure and body dynamics in space/time.

Contextual knowledge

Refers to an understanding of the broader framework surrounding a particular dance style, piece or performance.

Contrast

A choreographic device where dance elements are altered to create oppositions, thus making contrasts, such as high/low or big/little.

Cool-down

Following dancing, the dancer should allow the body to gradually warm down (cool-down). Abruptly stopping vigorous activity causes pooling of the blood, sluggish circulation which hampers removal of waste products, cramping, soreness and even fainting. Light activity and stretching after the dance class is recommended.

Costume

The attire worn by dancers during a performance or rehearsal.

Cultural context

The values, attitudes, customs, practices, language and conventions commonly shared by a particular group that forms a part of their identity and contributes towards a sense of shared understanding.

Dance practices

The collective activities, techniques and processes involved in the creation, learning, performance and retention of dance.

Design concepts

The use of design and technologies to enhance dance. This includes costume, lighting, music/sound, props, set and technology.

Dynamics

Motion of the body under the action of forces. Variations in energy, intensity and quality of movement that dancers use to express different emotions, create contrast and add depth to their performance.

Elements of dance

The basic (key) components of dance: body, dynamics, space, time (BDST). These elements can be combined and manipulated to communicate and express meaning through movement. See Body, Dynamics, Space and Time.

Elevation

The vertical distance a dancer travels from the floor during movements that involve leaving the ground.

Embellishment

A choreographic device where detail is added to the original movement sequence.

Emotional wellbeing

The state of a dancer's overall emotional health and resilience to manage emotions effectively and maintain positive relationships.

Engagement

The level of active involvement and participation.

Expression

The communication of emotions, thoughts and ideas through movement, gesture and physicality.

Flexibility

The ability of a dancer's body to move freely and easily through a wide range of motion.

Floor work

Movements and techniques that are executed while the dancer is in direct contact with the floor.

Focus

Conscious attention toward a certain point, using eyes, body parts or the direction in which the dancer faces. Focus is not just confined to the eyes; it also involves using the whole body to project and communicate the intention of the dance.

Fragmentation

A choreographic device, where only a part of the movement sequence/motif is manipulated. A movement is broken down into smaller units.

Frontal or coronal plane

An imaginary vertical plane that divides the body into front and back halves, allowing movements to occur in a sideways motion.

Genre

A specific category of dance that has a tradition or history and is identifiable by specific characteristics and social and cultural contexts, e.g. classical ballet, jazz, contemporary or tap.

Hip-hop

A dynamic and expressive form of movement that originated primarily in urban communities in the United States of America during the 1970s. In the context of dance, hip-hop is characterised by its rhythmic and percussive movements.

Historical context

The historical context focuses on when the dance was made. The relevant developments in that era may influence the dance.

Improvisation

Improvisation permits the dancer elements of freedom and creativity in making movement and dances. Improvisation can involve the spontaneous creation of dance movement, without pre-planning or choreography.

Improvisation plan

A structured outline designed to guide dancers in creating spontaneous movement sequences or compositions in real time.

Innovation

The creation and introduction of new ideas, techniques, movements, styles or approaches that push the boundaries of traditional dance forms

Jazz

A broad range of movements and techniques, drawing inspiration from various sources, including African rhythms, European folk dances and the blues.

Lighting

The use of illumination to enhance the visual presentation of a dance performance.

Manipulation

The intentional alteration movement to achieve expression, communicate ideas or convey emotions. The manipulation can include the manipulation of body parts, spatial pathways, timing and dynamics.

Mental wellbeing

Cognitive health including the ability to cope with stress and adapt to challenges.

Motif

A movement, gesture or short movement phrase which has the potential to be developed during the dance/work. A movement motif functions as a choreographic device within the choreography. It can contain the essence of the completed piece and is usually repeated with integrity and manipulated throughout the dance.

Movement phrase

Two or more movement ideas linked together. A series of movements linked together to make a distinctive pattern.

Movement sequence

A series of movements, longer than a phrase, but shorter than a section of a dance.

Muscular endurance

The ability of muscles to perform repetitive movements over an extended period without experiencing fatigue. It involves sustaining dance movements, poses or sequences for an extended duration without compromising technique or form.

Music/sound

The intentional selection, arrangement and utilisation of auditory elements to complement, enhance and synchronise with the movements, emotions and themes of a dance performance.

Musicality

The ability of a dancer to interpret and express movement in sync with the rhythm, tempo, dynamics and mood of the accompanying music.

Narrative

The use of movement, gesture, choreography and music to convey a story.

Personal style

A distinctive or individualistic manner of expressing an idea. The dancer is capable of communicating a sense of physical and/or emotional connection to the movement material. Rather than 'presenting', they have a tangible sense of presence, awareness and embodiment that includes other dancers in the space and audience. This quality may be influenced by body structure, type of training, prior dance experience, personality and individual BDST preferences.

Physical wellbeing

Refers to the overall state of health, fitness and vitality of a dancer's body.

Placement

A balanced alignment of the body, hips, torso, limbs, head, knees and rib cage.

Projection

The communication of meaning through extension and focus of the body.

Props

Objects that dancers use or interact with during a performance to enhance the choreography. Props can add layers of meaning, create visual interest and help tell a story or convey a specific mood.

Recovery

The process of resting, recuperating and restoring the body after intense physical activity, rehearsals or performances.

Repetition

A choreographic device whereby a movement or motif are repeated exactly for emphasis or to gain interest.

Rest

An important practice which allows a dancer's body to recuperate from fatigue, prevent overuse injuries and recharge energy levels.

Rehearsal process

The structured period of practice and preparation that dancers and choreographers undertake to perfect a dance piece before its performance.

Retrograde

A choreographic device where a sequence of movements is performed in reverse order. It is similar to a dancer moving backward through a series of steps they initially performed forward.

Rondo

A choreographic structure of three or more themes with an alternating return to the main theme (ABACADA).

Safe dance practices

The practice of selecting and executing movement safely. The focus is on providing dance activities and exercises which allows students to participate without risk of injury. All dance movements should be performed relevant to an individual's body type and capabilities. Safe dance practices also include safe emotional spaces, where individuals are able to take creative risks in a supportive learning environment.

Sagittal plane

An imaginary vertical plane that divides the body into left and right halves, allowing movements to occur in a forward or backward direction.

Set

Design concepts of a stage set refer to the artistic elements and arrangements used to create the visual environment in which the dance performance takes place.

Social context

A dance work that refers to the society or culture in which it is made and reflects the dynamics within that society or culture. For example, lifestyle, socio-economic status, employment and race may influence, or be reflected in, the dance work.

Space

Where the body moves, including level (varying heights at which a dancer performs movement), dimension 3D and 4D (three dimension is the use of space in terms of height, width and depth; four dimension incorporates the element of time, such as rhythm and tempo), direction (up, down, left, right, forward, backward, diagonal), active space (the meaning the space takes through the dance), positive space (the space the dancer occupies), negative space (space outside the positive space), pathways (creation of shapes through the space), personal (area around the dancer's body) and performance space (the area designated for the dance performance).

Strength

The physical ability of dancers to support and control their bodies while executing movements with power and control.

Stress management

Process of implementing strategies and techniques to cope with the effects of stress on physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

Structured improvisation

This approach combines the spontaneity and creativity of improvisation with a degree of organisation and structure to achieve a cohesive and meaningful dance.

Standing work

Choreography or movement sequences performed while standing.

Style

Within the broad categorisation of genre, it is possible to draw further distinctions between constituent groups and identify them as particular styles. For example, ballet (genre) may be identified as romantic, classical or modern in style. More specific styles may relate to the country/origin, or the company or community who performed the dance. Choreographers also have their own distinctive styles (which may change and develop over time).

Symmetrical

Mirroring or evenly distributing movements or positions on both sides of the body or space.

Tap

A style of dance characterised by the sound of the dancer's shoes striking the floor as a form of percussion. The dance focuses on rhythm, timing and detailed foot movements, often creating complex and syncopated patterns with the feet.

Technical dance skills

Combinations of proficiencies in control, accuracy, strength, alignment, balance and coordination. This will include the acquisition of appropriate strength, flexibility, coordination and endurance in the performance of body actions, locomotor and non-locomotor movement and developed to be performed in specific dance styles and genres.

Technique

The correct acquisition and execution of dance skills within a dance genre or style.

Technology

The use of digital, electronic and mechanical tools and systems to enhance the creation, production and performance of dance.

Ternary

A three-part choreographic structure in which the second section contrasts with the first section (ABA). The third section is a restatement of the first section in a condensed, abbreviated or extended form.

Time

Time refers to how long a dance takes, including metre, tempo, momentum, accent, duration, phrasing, rhythmic patterns, stillness and beat.

Transfer of weight

The intentional shifting of the body's weight from one part to another either fully or partially.

Travel

The movement of a dancer or group of dancers across the performance space while maintaining the quality of the choreography.

Traverse plane

An imaginary plane that divides the body into top and bottom halves.

Turning

Rotational movements where the dancer spins around an axis, typically the vertical axis of the body.

Unison

Two or more people performing the same movement at the same time.

Warm-up

Activities that raise the core body temperature and loosen the muscles before dancing. Movements are designed to raise the core body temperature and bring the mind into focus for the activities to follow.

