



DANCE

ATAR course

Year 11 syllabus for teaching from 2026

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

As part of the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Refreshment, the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) has revised the course rationale and aims, and updated the General Capabilities to create clearer connections with the syllabus content.

This syllabus is effective from 1 January 2026.

Users of this syllabus are responsible for checking its currency.

Syllabuses are formally reviewed by the Authority on a cyclical basis, typically every five years.

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Rationale

The Dance ATAR course offers a comprehensive exploration of various genres and styles, enabling students to develop both technical and expressive movement skills. Dance is a physical art which can not only demonstrate ideas but also provide insight into the contexts and cultures of others. It encourages creative and whole-body development. The course fosters students' artistic imagination and their appreciation of this art form.

Students explore practical and theoretical aspects of dance, including choreography, performance and contextual knowledge. They develop skills through technique exercises; the use of improvisation, the elements of dance and choreographic devices; and viewing dance works. They create and present dance in at least two genres, selecting from ballet, ballroom, contemporary, jazz, hip-hop and cultural dance, allowing students to not only experience new forms of dance, but to also build on any areas of previous learning.

Through the course, students build their physical motor skills while also developing their overall strength, fitness and rhythmic abilities. They learn about dance history, including cultural influences, and understand how this knowledge can inform choreographic intent. Students broaden their use of dance-specific terminology and enhance their ability to reflect critically by evaluating dance works.

At this beginning stage, students learn about the importance of biomechanical principles and safe dance practices. They develop transferable skills by engaging in teamwork, collaboration and communication, which are all key requirements for group performances. Beyond the practice of dancing, students also develop an understanding of design concepts, costume, lighting, props and sets.

Through the course, students acquire lifelong skills that support both personal and professional development, whether pursuing dance or applying its skills in other fields. Although the Dance ATAR course can prepare students for post-school opportunities in dance and the performing arts, the course also provides them with valuable transferable skills which can be applied to careers in areas such as education, health sciences and event management.

Aims

The Dance ATAR course aims to develop students':

- ability to develop, articulate and explore ideas
- skills in production and performance
- ability to create dance for a range of purposes, audiences and contexts
- understanding of the contextual relationships of dance
- ability to analyse and evaluate dance in performance
- transferable skills in 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
- hip-hop
- jazz
- 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 choreographic works that communicate ideas and intentions. Responding includes exploring, responding to, analysing and interpreting dance.

Representation of the General Capabilities

The General Capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that will support students to live and work successfully now and into the future. They are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content. Teachers should find opportunities to incorporate the following General Capabilities into the teaching and learning program for the Dance ATAR course.

Critical and creative thinking

Dance fosters creativity and problem-solving as students explore and manipulate movement ideas. In Choreography, students experiment with the elements of dance (body, dynamics, space and time – BDST) to generate and refine original works. They evaluate choreographic choices through peer feedback and rehearsal processes. Students analyse the evolution of dance genres and critique the artistic and technical aspects of professional performances, developing their critical thinking through their ability to interpret and reflect on complex movement ideas.

Ethical understanding

Ethical understanding is integral to dance practice, particularly in the exploration of culturally significant movement forms and sensitive themes. Students examine ethical considerations surrounding representation and appropriation in dance, particularly when engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and international dance traditions. They also explore issues of artistic integrity and copyright when creating and presenting original choreography.

Intercultural understanding

Dance is a global art form that enables students to engage with diverse cultural expressions. In Prescribed genres, students study dance forms from various traditions, such as Indian, Spanish and hip-hop, gaining an appreciation for their historical and social contexts. Through case studies, students investigate choreographers who integrate intercultural influences, fostering respect and open-mindedness towards different artistic and cultural perspectives. Additionally, the study of dance in context highlights how movement reflects and shapes cultural identities and narratives.

Literacy

Dance relies on multiple literacies – oral, visual, kinetic and text-based – which are fundamental to learning, communicating, creating and responding. Students develop literacy skills in the course as they describe, analyse and document their dance practice and that of others. Students critically examine a choreographer or company, using appropriate dance terminology to describe movement choices, choreographic intent and design concepts. They also develop structured analyses of dance works, using precise language and technical vocabulary.

Numeracy

Creating dance works requires an understanding of spatial and temporal measurement to manipulate space, time and form effectively. Students develop an appreciation for numerical concepts such as size, scale, proportion, depth and pattern. They structure movement sequences using mathematical patterns, such as canon and repetition. Additionally, students apply rhythmic analysis when measuring dance phrases across different metres and tempos, enhancing their spatial awareness during performance.

Personal and social capability

Students develop confidence, resilience and interpersonal skills through individual and collaborative dance experiences. The Performance component requires students to work effectively in ensembles, demonstrating leadership, communication, and respect for diverse perspectives. The rehearsal process promotes self-discipline, adaptability and goal-setting as they refine their technique and performance qualities. Students also develop skills in teamwork and negotiation through choreographic projects.

Addressing the other General Capabilities

Although the following General Capability has not been identified as a focus in the Dance ATAR Year 11 syllabus, teachers may find opportunities to incorporate it into the teaching and learning program.

- Digital literacy

Such opportunities may occur through the application of different contexts, pedagogical practices and/or assessment strategies that relate to the syllabus as part of the teaching and learning program.

Summary representation of the General Capabilities in the Dance ATAR course

The unit content and assessment types for this course provide students with the opportunity to develop the General Capabilities summarised in the table below.

Year	Course	Course type	General Capabilities						
			CCT	DL	EU	IU	L	N	PSC
Year 11	Dance (AEDAN)	ATAR	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year 12	Dance (ATDAN)	ATAR	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Key

CCT: Critical and creative thinking, DL: Digital literacy, EU: Ethical understanding, IU: Intercultural understanding, L: Literacy, N: Numeracy, PSC: Personal and social capability

Representation of the Cross-curriculum Priorities

The Cross-curriculum Priorities address the contemporary issues that students face in a globalised world. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate them 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
- hip-hop
- jazz
- 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
- emotional, mental and physical wellbeing that sustains the developing dancer – recovery, rest 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:

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

The case study must investigate the following:

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

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
- hip-hop
- jazz
- 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 require a competent level of fitness:

- cardiovascular endurance
- complex and extended sequences
- 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
- emotional, mental and physical wellbeing that sustains the developing dancer – recovery, rest 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
- cultural and social context of the dance work
- related and relevant dance works – choreographic devices, choreographic intent, choreographic structures, design concepts and elements of dance

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, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' 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.

Transverse 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.

