

Graded Qualifications Alliance

Regulated Qualifications Framework Levels 1 - 3

General Graded Examinations In Contemporary Dance

Syllabus/Specification

**Graded Qualifications Alliance
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1. Rationale

Contemporary Dance developed during the mid-twentieth century and has since grown to become one of the dominant genres for formally trained dancers throughout the world. Contemporary Dance is complex, rich and ever expanding. It encompasses a wide range of styles, techniques and movement philosophies.

With an innate ability and interest in embracing different body shapes, different cultural influences and new styles and ideas as they appear, Contemporary Dance is extremely exciting, has broad appeal and readily stimulates creativity.

Contemporary Dance continuously explores the cutting edge of performance art and therefore remains current and relevant to society as a valid and useful means of expression. As a reflection of contemporary society, it is common professional practice for dancers to assist the choreographer during the creative process by improvising or generating original movement material. They may also be required to improvise in performance.

Due to its nature, Contemporary Dance focuses training practices on preparing the dancer as an artistic athlete and creative collaborator. The dancer's body is required to be fit and healthy and ready to move in different ways. There will also be the expectation that the dancer has practiced and is confident with the rehearsal process. They must be able to engage with and help to facilitate the transformation of ideas into movement sequences, to co-operate and work with their team and to suggest solutions as and when problems arise.

This Specification offers candidates the opportunity to participate in Contemporary Dance for their own personal development, to prepare for a career specifically in the field of Contemporary Dance or to develop a wide variety of skills that are useful for a broad range of activities and careers, particularly within the creative and arts industries.

2. Specification Aims

The content and structure of this specification aims to encourage Programmes of Study in a variety of Contemporary Dance styles to be developed. Programmes of Study can focus specifically on a style, such as Graham or Cunningham or others, or they can offer a more general foundation of study in a generic or eclectic style.

A course of study based on this specification aims to:

- promote Contemporary Dance as a medium for personal expression and enjoyment;
- encourage the acquisition and development of personal and social skills;
- provide access to structured Contemporary Dance training and examinations from the starting point of a complete beginner;
- provide access to Contemporary Dance as a vocation;
- encourage the acquisition of aesthetic and critical understanding and judgement;
- develop awareness of the cultural contribution of dance.

3. Specification Objectives

The content is intended to enable the following objectives to be met through a course of study and graded examinations based on this Specification, providing opportunities for:

- practical work based on sound principles that pay due regard to the health, safety and wellbeing of those involved;
- developing an applied working knowledge of kinesiology;
- increasing kinaesthetic awareness, physical coordination and spatial awareness;
- developing the technical, performance and creative skills required from a Contemporary Dancer;
- understanding and contributing to Contemporary Dance as an art form;
- responding to and interpreting a variety of stimuli;
- measuring and rewarding achievement.

The purpose may be summarised as fostering intuitive, aesthetic and imaginative thinking expressed through dance and encouraging active and continuing participation in the performing arts.

4. Progression

Progression is achieved through the Graded Examination structure, with each of the eight grades being progressively differentiated by content and the expected standard of performance. Opportunities are available to further extend and develop individual abilities by courses leading to vocational, professional and teaching qualifications.

The opportunities for progression underline the contribution of the Specification for Graded Examinations in Contemporary Dance to the national provision of training and qualifications for dancers in the theatre and allied professions. Candidates are able to select pathways that provide for the development of expressive and/or applied abilities and interests and to work towards qualifications that meet their aspirations for a range of careers (e.g. as performers, professional dancers, or teachers).

5. Target Groups

This Specification is designed to provide opportunities for candidates from six years of age and onwards, though are typically taken by the six to eighteen age range.

A typical candidate might be expected to take twelve years of study to progress from Grade 1 to Grade 8. Entry to the grades is not age related and is open to any prospective candidate who has the physical capability to safely undertake the study requirements. Candidates with additional educational needs are not targeted separately although special provision can be made for them.

Continuing Education candidates include those returning to learn Contemporary Dance as well as those starting to learn as mature candidates. No prior learning or ability is required but prospective candidates are expected to start at a grade appropriate to their physical capabilities. There are no age restrictions, the age of candidates being entered for these examinations could include those who are 70+. Mature candidates who are considering learning dance are encouraged to contact GQAL for a list of teachers in their area and for advice on what is appropriate to them.

Age or Description	Grades	RQF Level
6 – 13	1 – 5	Level 1 and Level 2
11 – 18+	6 – 8	Level 2 and Level 3
Continuing Education	Grades 1 – 8	All Levels

6. Specification Overview

Examinations at **Grades 1 – 8** are available in **Contemporary Dance**, progression through the grades is provided through a **Programme of Study** based on this **Specification**. Each **Grade** requires the practical demonstration of the minimum levels of achievement set out in the **Level and Grade Descriptions**. All the examinations require candidates to demonstrate achievement in the **Examination Components** (areas of study) of (i) **Exercises**, (ii) **Combinations**, (iii) **Repertoire**, (iv) **Choreography**, for each examination.

This Specification provides opportunities for the interpretation and the choice of Contemporary Dance styles within a coherent and structured context. The intention is to provide a firm foundation of technique that can be progressively built on. The structure allows candidates to selectively develop and progress with their performance using this as a basis for their education, vocational and professional training in dance and related fields.

7. Subject Content

This is based on:

Technical Skills: Candidates will learn and develop their technical skills through studying a programme of exercises, combinations and repertoire.

Performance Skills: Candidates will learn and develop their performance skills through their study of exercises, combinations and repertoire.

Creative Skills: Candidates will learn and develop their creative skills through studying a programme that includes improvisation and choreography exercises.

Knowledge and Understanding: Candidates will develop their knowledge and understanding of Contemporary Dance throughout the programmes of study.

8. Examination Components

There are no optional **Examination Components** (areas of study). The following summaries provide an overview of the areas of study for Grades 1 - 8 in (i) **Exercises**, (ii) **Combinations**, (iii) **Repertoire**, (iv) **Choreography**.

Exercises - The purpose of this area of study is to develop the technical skills a candidate requires as a foundation for the more complex sequences of movement to follow. Each exercise is focused on a limited range of technical skills using a limited range of movements enabling the candidate to refine and embody technique and develop confidence. This section may include floor work and travelling.

Combinations - The purpose of this area of study is to develop technical skills further, to apply them to more complex sequences of movement and to develop a range of performance skills. These combinations enable the candidate to increasingly develop their kinaesthetic awareness, coordination, spatial awareness, relationship with an aural accompaniment and relationship with an audience.

Repertoire – The purpose of this area of study is to develop movement memory, performance skills and stamina, and for candidates to apply their technical skills to

performance. Candidates will explore their capacity for interpretation, expression and communication of artistic intent.

Choreography – The purpose of this area of study is to develop creative skills by exploring movement ideas and possibilities in response to a variety of stimuli. This section will include an exploration of self and the art of creating new movement phrases and patterns with the intention to communicate an idea to an audience. Programmes of Study will specify how the candidate’s choreography will be demonstrated.

Each Graded Examination from Grade 1 to Grade 8 follows the same pattern. This continuity ensures that both teachers and candidates have a clear understanding of what is to be assessed. The level of technical ability, performance and creative expression expected from the candidate becomes progressively more demanding and sophisticated as they progress through the grades.

9. Total Qualification Time

Each course for Contemporary Dance qualifications from grade 1 to grade 8 follows the same pattern and will require the following minimum amount of study hours:

Grade	Guided Learning Hours	Other Learning Hours	Total Qualification Time In Hours	Current credit value
Grade 1	60	10	70	7
Grade 2	60	10	70	7
Grade	Guided Learning Hours	Other Learning Hours	Total Qualification Time In Hours	Current credit value
Grade 3	60	10	70	7
Grade 4	75	20	95	10
Grade 5	75	20	95	10
Grade 6	90	40	130	13
Grade 7	90	40	130	13
Grade 8	90	40	130	13

10. Availability of Examinations and Entry Details

These examinations are available to anyone who is capable of safely reaching the required standard. The entry requirements are intended to ensure that there are no barriers to restrict access and progression and equal opportunities exist for all candidates. Centres and teachers are required to provide applicants with information and advice on the programme of study, the level of demand and associated physical requirements and the expectations of performance at the grade sought. GQAL reserves the right to decline entry to an

examination where previous qualifications, experience and level of physical fitness give rise to concerns about the safety and well-being of the candidate during an examination performance. There are no prior entry requirements. No restrictions for entry are placed on candidates who are studying for other qualifications in dance, whether this is with GQAL or other awarding organisations.

Examinations are available through the teacher with a minimum notice period of 8 weeks. Further details are available from GQAL.

The examination will be conducted by either a Visiting Examiner, or a Remote Examiner. The option of a remote examination is at the discretion of GQAL, Centres/Teachers wishing to have the examination conducted remotely should make a request to GQAL. GQAL reserves the right to insist on remote examining in certain circumstances.

11. Duration of Examinations

All examinations are performance based and are structured so that the duration of each examination provides opportunities for all candidates to demonstrate achievement whilst ensuring an appropriate level of demand across each grade. The duration of examinations at each grade is set out in the following table. The timings are approximate and offered for guidance.

Grade	LEVEL 1			LEVEL 2		LEVEL 3		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Approximate duration of the overall examination in <u>minutes</u> for 1 candidate including choreography.	23	24	29	33	39	45	48	48

There may be an increase in the times listed above where multiple candidates are entered to ensure that, where individual work is required, candidates have adequate opportunities to demonstrate the necessary levels of performance.

12. Scheme of Assessment

Assessment is by external examination.

During an examination candidates will be assessed on their ability to demonstrate performance of the following four **Assessment Categories**:

1. **Technical Skills**
2. **Performance Skills**
3. **Creative Skills**
4. **Knowledge and Understanding**

The **Assessment Categories** and their **Assessment Strands** are listed below:

- **1 Technical Skills** includes the following five strands:
 - 1A ~ *Posture – Balance - Turning*
 - 1B ~ *Strength – Alignment - Elevation*
 - 1C ~ *Placement – Accuracy – Flexibility*
 - 1D ~ *Use and Transference of Weight – Floor Work - Travelling*
 - 1E ~ *Stamina*

- **2 Performance Skills** includes the following four strands:
 - 2A ~ *Timing – Phrasing - Accent*
 - 2B ~ *Spatial Awareness*
 - 2C ~ *Focus, Projection*
 - 2D ~ *Expression – Communicating Intention*
- **3 Creative Skills** includes the following three strands:
 - 3A ~ *Space - Levels*
 - 3B ~ *Actions - Dynamics*
 - 3C ~ *Individuality - Originality*
- **4 Knowledge & Understanding** includes the following three strands:
 - 4A ~ *Appearance*
 - 4B ~ *Attitude*
 - 4C ~ *Programme of Study*

The overall description of what is required at each grade for each Assessment Category and Assessment Strand are termed **Assessment Criteria**. Each **Assessment Criteria** is exemplified by reference to the **Assessment Requirements**. These lists of terms are provided to guide teachers and examiners as a means of ensuring common levels of understanding and expectation.

Coverage of the Assessment Categories					
Assessment Categories		Examination Components			
		Exercises	Combinations	Repertoire	Choreography
1 Technical Skills					
1A	Posture – Balance - Turning	✓	✓		
1B	Strength – Alignment - Elevation	✓	✓		
1C	Placement – Accuracy – Flexibility	✓	✓		
1D	Use and Transference of Weight – Floor Work - Travelling	✓	✓		
1E	Stamina		✓		
2 Performance Skills					
2A	Timing, Phrasing, Accent	✓	✓		
2B	Spatial Awareness		✓		
2C	Focus, Projection		✓		
2D	Expression, Communicating Intention			✓	✓
3 Creative Skills					
3A	Space, Levels				✓
3B	Actions, Dynamics				✓
3C	Individuality, Originality				✓
4 Knowledge and Understanding					
4A	Appearance	✓	✓	✓	✓
4B	Attitude				
4C	Programme of Study				

The marking scheme comprises a balanced structure of **Examination Components** and **Assessment Categories**. Taken together they form a matrix that enables the performance of each candidate to be systematically assessed and marked in order to produce both a final score and a profile of achievement.

The **Examination Components** (i) Exercises, (ii) Combinations, (iii) Repertoire and (iv) Choreography are of equal importance in terms of their assessment.

The four **Assessment Categories** i.e. Technical Skills, Performance Skills, Creative Skills, Knowledge & Understanding are weighted as follows for each level:

Weightings for Assessment Categories			
Assessment Categories	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Technical Skills	55%	50%	45%
Performance Skills	30%	30%	30%
Creative Skills	10%	15%	20%
Knowledge and Understanding	5%	5%	5%

13. Level 1 Assessment Criteria

Level 1 (Grades 1-3) Contemporary Dance examinations provide evidence that candidates have demonstrated skills at a **basic** level of achievement under the Assessment Categories of Technical Skills, Performance Skills, Creative Skills, Knowledge and Understanding.

Differentiation between Grades 1, 2 and 3 is defined by the progressive requirements and expectations prescribed in the Programmes of Study for each Grade.

Level 1 Programmes of Study require candidates to learn and perform exercises, combinations, repertoire and choreography, **selected, modified and simplified** in a **basic** way to provide a **firm foundation** of skills in preparation of the demands for Level 2 Grades.

LEVEL 1 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	
Assessment Category & Strand	Assessment Skills Requirements
1 TECHNICAL SKILLS – The dancer will be assessed for their technical dance skills under five assessment strands.	
1A Posture – Balance - Turning	Some correct postural alignment. Basic awareness of centring (placement and stability of centre of gravity over centre of supports). Developing core strength. General stability and balance, including in high level/on one leg. Developing control and balance when turning. Basic use of spotting. General accuracy of facing.
1B Strength – Alignment - Elevation	Basic awareness of correct leg alignment in parallel and turn-out when the feet are supporting. Basic use of the feet. Developing lower body strength. Developing power and control of aerial steps. Developing control of alignment and impact on landing.
1C Placement – Accuracy – Flexibility	General accuracy of leg, arm, torso and head gestures. Developing use of isolation, connection, suspension and release. Developing range of mobility in the joints.
1D Use and transference of Weight - Floor Work - Travelling	Developing stability and control transferring weight to different parts of the body. Fall and recovery. Developing upper body strength. Basic use and transference of weight. General accuracy and range of step length.
1E Stamina	Developing cardio-vascular fitness, energy level and use of breath.
2 PERFORMANCE SKILLS - The dancer will be assessed for their ability to perform in relation to an audience under four assessment strands.	
2A Timing – Phrasing - Accent	Correlate performance to the length, rhythm, tempo, and accents of the music .
2B Spatial Awareness	Developing awareness of their performance space and their placing within it (this includes any obstacles and other performers)
2C Focus - Projection	Some use of the eyes and body to communicate with the audience.
2D Expression	Some awareness of expression.
3 CREATIVE SKILLS - The dancer will be assessed for their ability to express an appropriate interpretation and response to a given basic stimulus under three assessment strands through choreography .	
3A Space - Levels	Appropriate use of the dance space High and low levels of movement
3B Actions - Dynamics	Range of body parts Aerial steps Turning Falling and recovery Fast/slow movement
3C Individuality - Originality	An exploration of physical attributes and natural abilities. An emerging sense of identity and personality through movement preferences.
4 KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING - The dancer will be assessed for their ability to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding under three assessment strands.	
4A Appearance	The dancer will wear clothing as specified in the programme of study and that allows the examiner to observe and make judgements about the technical and expressive use of the body. In the repertoire and choreography components the dancer will make good use of costume or props if required by the programme of study – so that the dancer demonstrates their knowledge and understanding of appearance as an important part of dance expression.
4B Attitude	The dancer will show enthusiasm and interest in their work so that they demonstrate knowledge and understanding that a dancer should be involved and responsive .
4C Programme of study	The dancer will perform all elements of the examination and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the relevant programme of study.

14. Level 2 Assessment Criteria

Level 2 (Grades 4-5) Contemporary Dance examinations provide evidence that candidates have demonstrated an **increasing consolidation** of skills under the Assessment Categories of Technical Skills, Performance Skills, Creative Skills, Knowledge and Understanding.

Differentiation between Grades 4 and 5 is defined by the progressive requirements and expectations prescribed in the Programmes of Study for each Grade.

Level 2 Programmes of Study will require candidates to learn and perform exercises, combinations, repertoire and choreography **selected and adapted** in an **increasingly challenging** way to provide an **increasing consolidation** of skills in preparation of the demands for Level 3 Grades.

LEVEL 2 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	
Assessment Category & Strand	Assessment Skills Requirements
1 TECHNICAL SKILLS – The dancer will be assessed for their technical dance skills under five assessment strands.	
1A Posture – Balance - Turning	Correct postural alignment. Use of centring (placement and stability of centre of gravity over centre of supports). Core strength . Stability and balance, including in high level/on one leg. Control and balance when turning. Use of spotting . Accuracy of facing.
1B Strength – Alignment - Elevation	Correct leg alignment in parallel and turn-out when the feet are supporting. Use of the feet. Lower body strength. Power and control of aerial steps. Control and accuracy of leg alignment on landing. Controlled impact through correct use of the feet.
1C Placement – Accuracy – Flexibility	Accurate placement of leg, arm, torso and head gestures. Use of isolation, connection, suspension and release. Range of mobility in the joints .
1D Use and transference of Weight - Floor Work - Travelling	Stability and control transferring weight to different parts of the body. Fall and recovery. Upper body strength. Use and transference of weight. Accuracy and range of step length.
1E Stamina	Sustained cardio-vascular fitness , energy level and use of breath .
2 PERFORMANCE SKILLS - The dancer will be assessed, for their ability to perform in relation to an audience under four assessment strands.	
2A Timing – Phrasing - Accent	Where the movement is set to music - correlate performance to the length, rhythm, tempo, and accents of the music. Where the movement is set to poetry or prose - perform to the required length with musicality using rhythm, tempo, phrasing and accents suggested by the words .
2B Spatial Awareness	Awareness of the performance space and accurate placing within it (this includes any obstacles and other performers)
2C Focus - Projection	Use of the eyes and body to communicate with the audience.
2D Expression - Communicating Intention	Express appropriate feeling, emotion, mood, character and narrative. Communicate the intended meaning of the dance.
3 CREATIVE SKILLS - The dancer will be assessed for their ability to express an appropriate interpretation and response to a given INCREASINGLY CHALLENGING stimulus under three strands through Choreography.	
3A Space - Levels	Space in a compact through to extensive way. Direction. Placing of the dance within the space in relation to the audience. Travelling and shaping floor patterns. Levels from floor-work, through to aerial steps.
3B Actions - Dynamics	The range of body parts for gesture The range of body parts for support Aerial steps Turns Falling and recovery Extension and flexion Fast/slow movement Stillness
3C Originality - Individuality	A developing personal style. Original stylistic elements. A developing sense of identity and personality from an expanded range of movement preferences and dynamic affinities. A utilisation of movement idiosyncrasies.
4 KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING - The dancer will be assessed for their ability to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding under three assessment strands.	
4A Appearance	The dancer will wear clothing as specified in the Programme of Study and that allows the examiner to observe and make judgements about the technical and expressive use of the body. In the Repertoire and Choreography Components of the Examination the dancer will make good use of costume or props if required by the Programme of Study – so that the dancer demonstrates their knowledge and understanding of appearance as an integrated element of dance expression.
4B Attitude	The dancer will have a positive and compliant attitude toward the examiner and the presentation of their work so that they demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the essential requirement that a dance performer can respond to direction and present themselves to an audience appropriately .
4C Programme of study	The dancer will perform all elements of the examination and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the relevant Programme of Study.

15. Level 3 Assessment Criteria

Level 3 (Grades 6 - 8) Contemporary Dance examinations provide evidence that candidates have demonstrated **sound and established** skills, understanding and artistry under the Assessment Categories of Technical Skills, Performance Skills, Creative Skills, Knowledge and Understanding.

Differentiation between Grades 6, 7 and 8 is defined by the progressive requirements and expectations prescribed in the Programmes of Study for each Grade.

Level 3 Programmes of Study will require candidates to learn and perfect exercises, travelling and combinations and dance work that will provide the **sound and established** skills, understanding and artistry **necessary for a performer** in Contemporary Dance.

LEVEL 3 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	
Assessment Category & Strand	Assessment Skills Requirements
1 TECHNICAL SKILLS – The dancer will be assessed for their technical dance skills ability under five assessment strands.	
1A Posture – Balance - Turning	Established and secure use of correct postural alignment, centring and core strength. Stability and balance throughout. Full control and balance when turning. Effective use of spotting. Precise accuracy of facing.
1B Strength – Alignment - Elevation	Precise leg alignment in parallel and turn-out when the feet are supporting. Full use of the feet. Lower body strength. Power and full control of aerial steps. Full control and precise accuracy of leg alignment on landing. Consistently controlled impact through correct use of the feet.
1C Placement – Accuracy – Flexibility	Accurate placement of leg, arm, torso and head gestures. Full embodiment of isolation, connection, control, release and stylistic details. Full range of mobility in the joints.
1D Use and transference of Weight - Floor Work - Travelling	Full stability and control transferring weight to different parts of the body. Fall and recovery. Upper body strength. Precise and varied use and transference of weight. Consistent accuracy and range of step length.
1E Stamina	Sustained and effective cardio-vascular fitness , energy level and use of breath.
2 PERFORMANCE SKILLS - The dancer will be assessed, for their ability to perform in relation to an audience under four assessment strands.	
2A Timing – Phrasing - Accent	Where the movement is set to music - correlate or contrast performance to the length, rhythm, tempo, phrasing and accents of the music. Where the movement is not set to music - perform to the required length with inherent musicality through use of rhythm, tempo, phrasing and accents.
2B Spatial Awareness	Consistent awareness of the performance space and accurate positioning within it (this includes any obstacles and other performers)
2C Focus - Projection	Creative use of the eyes and body to communicate with the audience. Holding and guiding the attention of the audience.
2D Expression - Communicating Intention	Express sensitive feeling, emotion, mood, character and narrative. Integrate and communicate the intended meaning in all elements of the dance and performance.
3 CREATIVE SKILLS - The dancer will be assessed for their ability to express an appropriate interpretation and response to a given stimulus under three strands through Choreography.	
3A Space - Levels	Space in a compact through to extensive way. Direction. Placing of the dance within the space in relation to the audience. Travelling and shaping floor patterns. Levels from floor-work, through to aerial steps.
3B Actions - Dynamics	The range of body parts for gesture. The range of body parts for support. Aerial steps. Turning. Falling and recovery. Extension and flexion. Sudden/quick to sustained/slow movements. Fine/light to firm/heavy movements. Stillness
3C Originality - Individuality	A personal movement vocabulary that has been stretched and expanded . A unique and identifiable personal style. A clear movement signature. An organic statement of self. A surety of self and a clear sense of identity used as a base from which to explore. A versatile use of physical attributes, natural abilities, movement preferences, movement idiosyncrasies and dynamic affinities
4 KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING - The dancer will be assessed for their ability to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding under three assessment strands.	
4A Appearance	The dancer will wear clothing as specified in the Programme of Study and that allows the examiner to observe and make judgements about the technical and expressive use of the body. In the Repertoire and Choreography Components of the Examination the dancer will wear costume or use props if required by the Programme of Study, in a way that is fully integrated with the expression of the dance – so that the dancer demonstrates their knowledge and understanding of appearance as an integrated and sustained element of dance expression.
4B Attitude	The dancer will have a positive and compliant attitude toward the examiner and the presentation of their work so that he/she demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the essential requirement that a dance performer can respond to direction and present themselves to an audience appropriately and consistently
4C Programme of study	The dancer will perform all elements of the examination and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the relevant Programme of Study.

16. Marking

Marks are awarded for the extent to which the performance of a candidate matches each of the four **Assessment Categories** in each of the three **Examination Components** as shown in the **Mark Allocation** table below.

MARK ALLOCATION																
Examination Components	Assessment Categories															
	Technical Skills					Performance Skills				Creative Skills			Knowledge & Understanding			
	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	A	B	C	
Exercises	5	5	5	5	5	5							5			
Combinations														5		
Repertoire	5	5	5	5		5	5	5	5					5		
Choreography									5	5	5	5		5		

For each **Assessment Category** as shown, a mark between 0 and 5 will be awarded indicating the degree to which the candidate has met the **Required Standard** as defined in the **Marking Grid** below.

MARKING GRID						
MARK DEFINITION	0	1	2	3	4	5
		Required standard not demonstrated	Required standard demonstrated in a very limited way	Required standard demonstrated in a way that is sometimes limited and sometimes partial	Required standard demonstrated in a way that is sometimes partial and sometimes of the required standard	Required standard demonstrated

The descriptions in the **Assessment Criteria** are to be used in conjunction with the requirements of the **Programme of Study** for each Grade. The judgement is made by the examiner in relation to the appropriate **Level/Grade Description**.

17. Level Descriptions

Level Descriptions provide a guide to the qualities and extent of the level of performance that candidates achieving a particular grade are expected to demonstrate. Strength in one area of performance may compensate for weakness in another. A candidate awarded a **Pass** will have demonstrated the overall achievement necessary to match these descriptions.

Candidates achieving a **Pass with Merit**, or a **Pass with Distinction**, will have matched and exceeded the qualities of performance described. The Level Descriptions form a context for the examiner judgement and when taken as a whole, are indicative of expectations; they are assessed through the Assessment Components and Assessment Criteria.

Level 1 Assessment Criteria cover **Grades 1, 2, 3**.

Level 2 Assessment Criteria cover **Grades 4, 5**.

Level 3 Assessment Criteria cover **Grades 6, 7, 8**.

18. National Standards

The following Level Descriptors and Grade Benchmark Statements are based on the work done by the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre. The awarding organisations have come together to collectively review the original set of descriptors against the original generic descriptors. The resulting descriptors aim to deliver two functions:

- To provide a set of benchmarks to which future Graded Examinations in Dance qualifications will be developed
- To provide benchmarks which will provide a basis for on-going comparability and maintenance of standards within and between awarding organisations.

General descriptor	Knowledge statement (the holder....)	Skills statement (the holder can....)
ACHIEVEMENT AT LEVEL 1 ... reflects the ability to understand and use and apply relevant knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to an increasing vocabulary of movement and artistic awareness.	Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of technique, music or stimulus and performance, which is reflected in the ability to co-ordinate simple movements to produce combinations of steps with appropriate precision and control or through discussion with examiners.	Demonstrate basic techniques through using an increasing vocabulary of movement in their chosen dance discipline, genre. Demonstrate the ability to interpret music or stimulus with a sense of appropriate timing and rhythm for their chosen dance discipline, genre. Demonstrate performance with an increasing confidence and responsiveness to an audience.
At Grade 1 candidates demonstrate the fundamental basic knowledge of the vocabulary and technical skills for their chosen genre. They are able to perform a simple repertoire with a sense of timing and rhythm and respond to music or stimulus.		
At Grade 2 candidates demonstrate a developing knowledge of the basic vocabulary and technical skills through the performance of basic repertoire showing timing and rhythm and responsiveness to music or stimulus.		
At Grade 3 candidates demonstrate an increasing knowledge of the vocabulary and technical skills for their chosen genre. They show a more consistent sense of timing and rhythm and responsiveness to music or stimulus through the performance of a developing repertoire of movements.		

General descriptor	Knowledge statement (the holder....)	Skills statement (the holder can....)
ACHIEVEMENT AT LEVEL 2 ... reflects the ability to build upon skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to an increasing vocabulary of movement and artistic understanding showing an increased confidence and assurance in application.	Demonstrates a clear knowledge and understanding of technique, music or stimulus and performance which is reflected in the ability to co-ordinate more complex movements to produce combinations of steps with increasing precision and control or through discussion with examiners.	Demonstrate an increasing consolidation of technical skills in their chosen dance discipline, genre. Demonstrate an increased ability to interpret music and display sensitivity to musical content and style appropriate to the dance discipline, genre. Demonstrate an increased

		<p>range of movements in sequences of greater length and complexity and the ability to sustain an appropriate sense of style of the dance discipline, genre.</p> <p>Demonstrate confidence in performing the movement sequences required.</p>
<p>At Grade 4, candidates demonstrate a more secure knowledge of the vocabulary and technical skills through performance of a more complex repertoire. They show a developing understanding of a range of rhythmical sounds or stimulus, accents and timings and an understanding of interpretation and use of expression.</p>		
<p>At Grade 5 candidates demonstrate sound and secure technique knowledge of the vocabulary and technical skills through performance of a increasingly complex repertoire. They show an increasing understanding of a range of musical sounds or stimulus, accents and timings, an understanding of interpretation and a secure use of expression.</p>		

General descriptor	Knowledge statement (the holder....)	Skills statement (the holder can....)
<p>ACHIEVEMENT AT LEVEL 3 ...reflects the ability to build upon a range of skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to an increasingly refined vocabulary of movement and artistic interpretation showing an increased confidence, assurance and sensitivity in application.</p>	<p>Demonstrates a sound and established knowledge and understanding of the technique and music or stimulus of a particular dance discipline, genre.</p> <p>Demonstrates an increased awareness of performance and an increased understanding of the relationship between performer and audience.</p>	<p>Demonstrate a wide range of movements performed consistently and confidently with technical accuracy and control.</p> <p>Demonstrate an increased sensitivity to a range of content and style appropriate to the dance discipline, genre.</p> <p>Demonstrate dynamics and fluidity of movement incorporating the use of space and a maturity and individuality in interpretation and expression.</p>
<p>At Grade 6 candidates demonstrate secure and confident knowledge of the vocabulary, technical skills and performance of complex repertoire in their chosen genre. They show a clear understanding of a range of musical sounds or stimulus, accents and timings, a sensitive interpretation and begin to show a personal sense of style and confidence in performance.</p>		
<p>At Grade 7 candidates demonstrate detailed and thorough knowledge of the vocabulary, technical skills and performance of complex repertoire in their chosen genre. They show a secure understanding of a range of complex rhythmical sounds or stimulus, accents and timings, a confident and sensitive interpretation and a developing and increasingly assured personal sense of style and confidence in performance.</p>		
<p>At Grade 8 candidates demonstrate a consolidated knowledge of the vocabulary, technical skills and performance of complex repertoire in their chosen genre. They show a consolidated understanding of a range of complex rhythmical sounds or stimulus, accents and timings, a confident, sensitive and varied interpretation and a developing and an assured personal sense of style and confidence in performance.</p>		

19. Candidates with Additional Needs

Information on assessment, examination and entry requirements for candidates with additional needs are published on the GQAL website and are also provided in the Teachers Handbook. In addition you can contact GQAL Head Office.

20. Examination Results

Results and certificates will normally be issued six weeks after the date of the examination. This time is necessary to ensure that all results are properly standardised and checked by GQAL.

21. Awards of Pass, Pass with Merit, or Pass with Distinction

Depending on the level of performance demonstrated during the examination a candidate may be awarded either a Pass, or a Pass with Merit, or a Pass with Distinction. Each award broadly corresponds with the following descriptions of achievement and requires that the candidate obtains or exceeds the minimum number of marks set as the boundary for the award.

Award	Description of Achievement	Mark Boundary
Pass	<p>To achieve the award of a Pass the performance of a candidate must reach or partially reach the required standard of Contemporary Dance skills in most but not necessarily all of the assessment criteria.</p> <p>The performance of some candidates may have exceeded the required standard in one or more aspects of the examination and this reflects the fact that strength in one aspect may compensate for weakness in another.</p> <p>A defining characteristic of the overall performance of a candidate awarded a Pass is that it reaches or partially reaches the required standard of Contemporary Dance skills indicated in the Level Descriptions and the Grade Descriptions.</p>	44%
Merit	<p>To achieve the award of a Pass with Merit the performance of a candidate must reach the required standard of Contemporary Dance skills in the majority of assessment criteria.</p> <p>The performance of some candidates may have exceeded the required standard in one or more aspects of the examination and this reflects the fact that strength in one aspect may compensate for weakness in another.</p> <p>A defining characteristic of the overall performance of a candidate awarded a Pass with Merit is that it consistently matches and occasionally may exceed the required standard of Contemporary Dance skills indicated in the Level Descriptions and the Grade Descriptions.</p>	59%
Distinction	<p>To achieve the award of a Pass with Distinction the performance of a candidate must reach and exceed the required standard of Contemporary Dance skills in the majority of assessment criteria.</p> <p>The performance of some candidates may have exceeded the required standard by a considerable margin in one or more aspects of the examination and this reflects the fact that strength in one aspect may compensate for weakness in another.</p> <p>A defining characteristic of the overall performance of a candidate awarded a Pass with Distinction is that it consistently exceeds the required standard of Contemporary Dance skills indicated in the Level Descriptions and the Grade Descriptions.</p>	77%

24. Language and Bias

Every effort has been made to ensure that this specification and associated mark schemes, procedures and materials are free from any form of bias, and have no hidden requirements for entry or assessment. Care has been taken to ensure that the specification, grade descriptions and examination requirements make appropriate demands on candidates both in terms of their physical safety, well being, and expectations of physical and cognitive performance in relation to their age and level of ability.

25. Statutory Requirements

It is a requirement that all centres, teachers of this qualification and examiners make themselves aware of and comply with the relevant current legislation relating to Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Data Protection, and Equalities.

26. Validity of Specification

This specification is valid from the 1 September 2023 until 31 August 2028.