

# Key Stage 4 Dance Qualifications

Teaching from September 2022



## Introduction

This document will give dance teachers an insight into the qualifications available for dance at Level 2/KS4 by comparing three possible choices. It is designed to get you started in making an informed decision, without being exhaustive. If you are looking to start a new dance qualification or change to something different it is always an idea to read through the specification, ask fellow teachers how they are experiencing it first hand, attend CPD training and think about what is right for your dance students and yourself.

It is important to note that this document does not discuss all qualifications available for dance at KS4 such as the WJEC Level 1/2 Vocational Award Performing Arts (Technical Award).

This document will however examine these in detail:

- AQA GCSE (9-1) in Dance
- Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Performing Arts with a dance approach





**Where are all the possible dance qualifications with regards to headline measures?**

<b>Dance Qualification</b>	<b>Discount code</b>	<b>DfE list (At present this only goes up to 2024)</b>
AQA GCSE Dance	LB1	2023, 2024
New: Pearson BTEC Level 1 / 2 Tech Award in Performing Arts with a Dance Approach	LB1	2024 – first year of certification for new updated version of the spec
New: WJEC Level 1/ 2 Vocational Award in Performing Arts (Technical Award)	LC11	2024 – first year of certification for this new qualification
Pearson BTEC Level 1 / 2 Tech Award in Performing Arts with a Dance Approach (legacy spec)	LB1	2023 – last year of certification
RSL Level 2 Creative and Performing Arts Certificate (CAPA)	LC11	2023 – last year of certification, then available as a non-performance table qualification
AQA Technical Award in Performing Arts	LC11	2023 – this is the last year of certification
UAL Level 2 Award and Diploma in Performing and Production Arts	N/A	Please check with the board for non-performance table qualifications

## Some things to look for when choosing the right course for your students:

- For Dance discount code LB1 from 2024 there is a choice between BTEC and GCSE for headline measures.
- Pearson have three Tech Awards each with a different discount code. As well as the *with a Dance Approach* listed above there is a *Performing Arts* route (LC11) and a *with a Production approach* which is LE1.
- The BTEC has a Level 1 'fall back' so that learners not achieving a Pass/4 would still be awarded a qualification.
- At GCSE those not achieving a 4 can also still be awarded a qualification if they reach the minimum standard for grade 1 or above.

## How do the grades awarded for these qualifications compare at a glance?

GCSE Dance	BTEC Tech Award
9	Distinction*
8	8.5
7	Distinction 7
6	Merit
5	5.5
4	Pass 4
3	Level 1 Distinction
2	Level 1 Merit
1	Level 1 Pass 1.25

## Expectations for assessment/moderation/examination – for 2024

GCSE Dance	BTEC Tech Award with a Dance approach	WJEC Tech Award
<b>Internally assessed / Externally moderated</b>	<b>Internal assessment</b>	
<p><u>Component 1: Performance and choreography</u></p> <p><b>Performance:</b> Solo performance of two set phrases (approximately 1 minute in duration). Duet/trio performance (3 minutes to a maximum of 5 minutes) 30% of qualification.</p> <p><b>Choreography:</b> Solo (2 to 2 ½ minutes) or Group choreography for 2 to 5 dancers (3 to 3 ½ minutes) 30% of qualification.</p>	<p><u>Component 1: Exploring the Performing Arts</u></p> <p>Learners will explore three dance pieces in three different styles and produce evidence to satisfy two learning aims using one work:</p> <p>A: Investigate how professional performance or production work is created.</p> <p>B: Demonstrate understanding of the skills, techniques and approaches used by professionals to create performance/production work. Controlled assessment 12 hours/ 60 marks available 30% of qualification/ 36 Guided learning hours</p>	<p><u>Unit 1: Performing</u></p> <p>The assignment brief, which will include a scenario and several tasks, will be available via the WJEC Secure Website, and will remain the same for the lifetime of the specification.</p> <p>This unit can be completed through any ONE of the following disciplines: Drama/ Music/ Music Technology/ Musical Theatre (candidates will be required to demonstrate their skills in at least two out of the three disciplines of singing, dancing, and acting).</p> <p>Learners are required to create a research portfolio, perform existing work for between 3 and 6 minutes and review and reflect their performance Controlled assessment 10 hours/ 60 marks available 30% of qualification/ 36 Guided learning hours</p>
	<p><b>Internal assessment</b></p> <p><u>Component 2: Developing Skills and Techniques in the Performing Arts</u></p> <p>Learners will train in one dance style performing a piece of chosen professional repertoire, evaluating their progress and performance. The three learning aims for Component 2:</p> <p>A Use rehearsal or production/design processes</p>	<p><b>Internal assessment</b></p> <p><u>Unit 2: Creating</u></p> <p>An assignment brief will be provided by WJEC which will include a scenario and several tasks, available via the WJEC Secure Website.</p> <p>This unit can be completed through any ONE of the following disciplines:</p>

	<p>B Apply skills and techniques in performance or realisation  C Review own development and application of performance or design skills.  Controlled assessment 15 hours/ 60 marks available  30% of qualification/ 36 Guided learning hours</p>	<p><i>Performance disciplines:</i> Devised drama, Choreography, Composition, Composition using technology. <i>Production disciplines:</i> Costume design (for at least two characters), Lighting design, Sound design, Make-up, and hair design (for at least two characters), Set design.</p> <p>Learners are required to create a research portfolio, devise a piece between 3-10 minutes, review, reflect and refine their creation.</p> <p>Controlled assessment 10 hours/  60 marks available  30% of qualification/ 36 Guided learning hours</p>
<b>External assessment</b>		
<p><u>Component 2: Dance appreciation</u>  Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes duration.  Comprising three sections:  A: Knowledge and understanding of choreographic processes and performing skills – 30 marks.  B: Critical appreciation of own work – 18 marks.  C: Critical appreciation of professional works – based on the study of six dance works called the GCSE Dance Anthology - 32 marks.  Marked out of 80.  40% of qualification.</p>	<p><u>Component 3: Responding to a brief</u>  Learners create and perform a group dance piece with 3-7 dancers lasting 7-15 minutes that responds to a brief. There are 4 marked activities with a supervised window of 12 weeks/ 60 marks available  3 x 1 hour written logs  40% of qualification/ 48 Guided learning hours</p>	<p><u>Unit 3: Performing arts in practice</u>  An assignment brief will be provided by WJEC which will include a scenario and several tasks, available via the WJEC Secure Website.  Learners will plan a performance work, promote, and pitch, then evaluate, and reflect. This can be completed entirely using dance.  Controlled assessment 20 hours/ 80 marks available  40% of qualification/ 48 Guided learning hours</p>
Total: 120 Guided learning hours	Total: 120 Guided learning hours/ 150 total qualification time	Total: 120 Guided Learning hours/ 180 total qualification time

**Considering Guided Learning Hours when choosing the right course for your students.**

For a qualification with 120 hours a centre that would run the course over 2 years would have 60 hours over a year, which works out roughly as 2 hours a week over two years. The total qualification time includes rehearsals, workshops, performances, homework, trips and any other activities that relate to the course.



# AQA GCSE Dance

## Introduction

Once a centre has registered, they will be given access to all the resources and supporting documents and allocated a Non-Examination Assessment (NEA) adviser, who is available to support the centre for the full two years. Teachers can get access to all key materials in e- AQA, including the six professional works and accompanying resources, schemes of work, teacher support materials, question papers and mark schemes, and examination reports. Teacher Online Standardisation (TOLS) is also available to centres.

Dance students will study the GCSE Dance Anthology comprising six short professional dance works, with a total viewing time of the whole anthology being under two hours. The current works are:

- *A Linha Curva* by choreographer Itzik Galili performed by Rambert Dance Company
- *Shadows* by choreographer Christopher Bruce performed by Phoenix Dance Theatre
- *Infra* by choreographer Wayne McGregor performed by The Royal Ballet
- *Artificial Things* by choreographer Lucy Bennett performed by StopGap Dance Company
- *Within Her eyes* by choreographer James Cousins performed by James Cousins Company
- *Emancipation of Expressionism* by choreographer Kenrick H2O Sandy performed by Boy Blue Entertainment

## Component 1 - Performance and choreography

### Solo Performance

There are four set phrases that are each around 30 seconds in length named Breathe, Flux, Shift and Scoop. The videos of each phrase, with detailed accompanying notes, are available on the AQA website under Teaching Resources on the GCSE Dance page. The videos include demonstrations by the choreographer from both the audience and performers viewpoint plus a slow motion version. It is advised that teachers learn the set phrases



through an approved AQA trainer or CPD event, but if this is not possible, they can be learnt from the videos and accompanying notes.

The first part of the performance element of Component 1 asks students to learn and perform two of the set phrases to a beat of 105 BPM. Assessment of the solo performance will focus on the student's ability to demonstrate application of physical, technical and expressive dance skills. Each set phrase is filmed separately, and AQA suggests this is completed in the autumn of Year 11 before half term. Teachers can, of course, adjust this timeframe to plan their own course for success. The teacher marks the solo performance out of 12.

For the second element, students will perform in a duet / trio performance lasting 3 to 5 minutes using the original material and/or developed versions of the two set phrases that have not been used in the solo performance. The piece must have a clearly defined choreographic intent and offer sufficient sophistication, complexity and challenge to allow each student to access the full range of marks available.

The duet/trio performance may be choreographed by teacher(s), dance artists(s) or by collaboration between teacher(s) dance artist(s) and students. This is a performance task so students are not expected to take responsibility for creating the work but they can collaborate and be involved in the choreographic process. Centres might wish to consider basing the duet/trio performance on one of the GCSE Dance Anthology works, thus using the anthology as a primary resource to support learning of choreography and performance as well as learning to critically appreciate other people's work. Teachers provide a programme note of 150 words to support the assessor's marking. This performance could be videoed in the autumn of Year 11 after half term as suggested in AQA's Scheme of Work (SOW), but it is up to dance teachers to plan their own course for success, as assessment schedules are personal to each centre. The teacher marks the duet/trio performance out of 24 with an additional 4 marks available for the use of mental skills and attributes which is assessed during both performances (set phrases and duet/trio).

## Component 1 - Performance and choreography

### Choreography

AQA will publish an externally set task list for students to choose from for the creation of a solo or group choreography, which the teacher marks out of 40. The choreography paper is published at the beginning of the academic year by 15<sup>th</sup> September. Students must demonstrate a creative response to a choice of one stimulus from the prescribed task list.

Each year the tasks will relate to the following types of stimuli:

- Words, poem or a piece of text
- A photograph / image
- A prop, accessory or object
- A feature of the natural world
- An everyday activity or topical or historical event.

The order that work is assessed in and when it is assessed is a choice made by the centre. The AQA SOW is only a suggestion. Solo choreography is a minimum of 2 minutes and a maximum of 2 ½ minutes. Group choreography is a minimum of 3 minutes and a maximum of 3 ½ minutes. Students will demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of skills for choreography through their selection and use of: action, dynamics, spatial, relationships (where appropriate), structuring devices and form, choreographic devices and aural setting to realise their chosen choreographic intent. To support the assessor's marking of the choreography students must write an accompanying programme note of 120 - 150 words.

## Component 2 - Dance appreciation

The written exam takes place in the summer series, usually in June, lasts 1 hour and 30 minutes and consists of three sections.

Section A contains short answer questions with a mark range of 1 – 3 marks and tests students' knowledge and understanding of choreographic processes through a hypothetical dance scenario, and their knowledge and understanding of performing skills. This section is worth 30 marks.

Section B contains three questions all with the same mark value of 6 marks. Students will demonstrate their knowledge and appreciation of their own work. Questions will relate to students' own experience of performance, or choreography or both from within the course. This section is worth 18 marks.

Section C contains extended writing questions with mark values of 6 and 12 marks that relate to four out of the six professional works. Students will demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the defining characteristics of each professional work including: Features of production, performance environments, choreographic approaches, choreographic content and the choreographic intent. Students must be able to critically analyse, evaluate and identify similarities and differences and explain and justify their own opinions with reasoning. This section is worth 32 marks.

## Overall

- Two components.
- Opportunity for students to access the full range of grading criteria 9-1.
- A specification where the core principles are to build knowledge and understanding of Dance as an art form which is transferable across practical and written elements and, where learning is integrated.
- A specification that aims to empower young people to engage holistically with Dance as an art form and have a valued opinion.
- Established paper with concise content for each section.
- A written paper that has a clear design and structure.
- A schedule for assessment that is flexible and can be tailor made to suit each individual centre.
- A specification that has been carefully designed to maximise the impact of studying the practical aspects of the course and to value an integrated approach to learning with 84% of the total qualification being experienced and learned through practical work.
- A set GCSE Dance Anthology which is worth 16% of the whole qualification.

## What teachers are saying?

*At LeAF Studio, we select to study **AQA GCSE Dance** as we value the importance of training our dancers both theoretically and vocationally allowing them to fully broaden their skills and best prepare them for their Post 16 studies, be that at LeAF Studio, another sixth form or a vocational college. Once our curriculum offer in Dance was shaped and the specification was fully understood, we've been able to achieve wonderful results year on year. Each year, we perform above the national average and have received an increase of L9s each year! The specification at first can look daunting but once grasped by the teacher/faculty, it's fantastic and exposes the students to a variety of dance styles through the professional works, innovative contemporary technique in the phrases and allows the students to demonstrate their own creativity through the choreography component. The GCSE Dance course is right for our students because students join our school with ambition to pursue a career in the arts but also develop an understanding of dual careers to ensure they are fully supported with academic study should their careers be cut short or not take off in the way they once planned. The level of academic writing on the course really supports their transition into our sixth form on the BTEC course, particularly for the external units.*

**Geoff Lake, Head of Dance & Production, LeAF Studio**

*At Claremont Senior School, Hastings we run AQA's GCSE Dance course. I have taught this course for over 12 years and evolved with the positive changes. The course delivers creativity with a large emphasis in choreographic development. Students take ownership of their own work and pick up tools from the outset, which are realised in their final pieces after two years of study. For me, the theoretical work is embedded into practical contexts to support all types of learners. The fear could be facing six professional works, but when you get into them, the individual interpretations are where students can excel in their written work, and they approach it with greater confidence. It is more about what they can remember about the work and what it means to them as an individual.*

**Beth Eckhoff, Claremont Senior School**

# PEARSON BTEC TECH AWARD IN PERFORMING ARTS WITH A DANCE APPROACH

## Overview

BTECs are vocational qualifications and there are three BTEC Tech Awards in Performing Arts: a general Performing Arts that can be taken in Dance, Drama, Musical Theatre, or a mix, Performing Arts (with a production arts approach) and the Performing Arts (with a dance approach). For Dance, centres register learners onto the Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Performing Arts (with a dance approach) qualification number 60370543, syllabus code 26163. The qualification is the same size and level as a GCSE.

Learners will take three components where Components 1 and 2 are internally assessed and both worth 30% each, and Component 3 is externally assessed worth 40%. The three components each have an emphasis of explore, develop, and apply which builds over the duration of the course. Component 1 aims to explore dance by examining the work of professionals and the processes used, Component 2 aims to develop the learners practical dance skills and techniques, with Component 3 utilising the knowledge, understanding and skills experienced and apply these to create a performance piece to a brief.

The moderation for internal components 1 and 2 will be conducted through a centre visit where the moderator will review the evidence of a pre-selected sample of learner work. Within the moderation process, based on the moderator's feedback, the centre will be able to adjust the initial marks they awarded where necessary.

Pearson have created resources and offer supportive services for the Tech Award including a Teacher Guide, Sample PSAs and External Assessments, Training and standardisation, Network events and a Dedicated Subject Advisor, Paul Webster who can be contacted via e-mail, in face book groups and via the BTEC Community group platform on the Pearson website.

Top tip: Centres have found that running the Component 1 Year 10 and Component 2 and 3 the external in Year 11 is an effective approach to planning the course over two years but your plan will be unique to your centre. The new DfE terminal assessment rules require that learners take the external assessment in their final series, i.e., the one in

which certification of the qualification is claimed, this means that component 3 needs to be entered in the final year.

## Component 1 - Exploring the Performing Arts

The emphasis behind this component is to **explore** the Performing Arts and Dance. Learners will study performance work in at least three different styles and produce evidence to satisfy the two learning aims. Pearson will set the assignment for the assessment of this component making the PSA (Pearson set assignment) available at two points within the academic year through a secure area of the website. The PSA will include a theme for learners to use to explore and evidence one example of performance work. The PSA will take approximately 12 supervised hours to complete and will be marked by centres and moderated by Pearson.

The PSA will consist of two tasks. In response to Task 1/Learning aim A, learners will investigate an example of professional performing arts work, covering stylistic qualities, features, intentions, and purpose of the work investigating how professional performance work is created. Learners will also cover the skills and responsibilities required and the influences of other work. In response to Task 2/Learning aim B, learners will demonstrate understanding of the techniques, processes and approaches used in the creation of professional work from Task 1.

The most effective way to do this is often practical giving learners a chance to know what it would feel like to be a dancer or choreographer in each style or selected performance work. An intention of the component is to discover the methods used in the creation of works, who is involved, their roles and responsibilities, how a theme or idea is developed, who the audience is and to give learners an understanding of the overall creative process so that they in turn can use this knowledge to help create their own performance piece for the external Component 3. Referencing these pieces in their logs for Activity 1 and 2 of Component 3 is considered good practice, which is why Component 3 is only available in year 11. Evidence can be presented in a variety of ways including written/audio commentary, presentations, scrapbooks (digital or paper based), research journals (digital or paper based), blog/vlog. The teacher marks the component out of 60.

## Component 2 - Developing Skills and Techniques in the Performing Arts

The emphasis behind this component is to develop practical skills and techniques in performing Dance through the reproduction of extracts of existing dance repertoire produce evidence to satisfy the three learning aims.

Pearson will set the assignment for the assessment of this component making the PSA (Pearson set assignment) available at two points within the academic year through a secure area of the website. The PSA will include a theme for learners to use to explore and evidence one example of repertoire from professional performance work. The PSA will take approximately 15 supervised hours to complete and will be marked by centres and moderated by Pearson.

Learners will train in one dance style developing and exploring these skills in workshops and lesson leading up to the rehearsal and performance of a chosen piece of professional repertoire. The assessor or the learners themselves can select the repertoire, as long as they can demonstrate their abilities in a style that suits them and that it is in response to the theme on the relevant PSA. It is suggested that competent learners at level 2 could perform 2 or more minutes of repertoire but usually it is unique to each centre to consider where they think they can get their learners in the unit hours. To aid their development each learner will evaluate their progress, setting and review targets whilst developing rehearsal and performance skills in dance. They will also produce a final evaluation, which can help prepare them for Activity 4 of Component 3.

Evidence can be presented in a variety of ways including video recordings of milestone rehearsals, written/audio commentary, blog/vlogs, milestone reviews, Video recording of the performance of repertoire, written review, written/audio commentary, annotated photographs, and presentations.

Referring to the development of dance skills as experienced in the component in their logs for Activity 2 of Component 3 is considered good practice. The teacher marks this component out of 60.

### Component 3 - Responding to a brief

The emphasis behind this component is to apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired within the dance experiences covered in Component 1 and 2. In late January of the final year, year 11, the controlled external set task: responding to a brief is released giving learners a supervised period of 12 weeks to complete the 4 activities before sending off all learner work in an \electronic format in May. The brief is available to the exams officer as external tasks are now available on the Secure Tests Pearson webpage. The total amount of marks available are 60.

The learners are required to create a dance of between 7 to 15 minutes in groups of 3 to 7 dancers based on the given Set Task: responding to a brief and to complete three written activity logs. It is recommended that learners spend up to 8 hours as part of their group on the development of creative ideas and rehearsal for the workshop performance. Teachers will need to timetable in 3 x 1 hour supervised sessions for learners to complete their activity logs at various, appropriate stages within the whole 12-week supervised period. Learners may bring in a total of 4 pages of their own prepared notes over the three 1 hour written activities.

- Activity 1, the Ideas Log, is completed after exploring and developing ideas in their groups. The learners will take 1 hour to complete this log, which will evidence the concept and style of their proposed performance, the justification of the selection of their target audience, the resources they needed, their own contribution to the exploration and development of ideas and how the work of others has influenced these ideas. There are 15 marks available.
- Activity 2, the Skills Log, will evidence their role within their group, the skills, and techniques they selected, how they developed their skills and techniques, their individual contribution to the rehearsal/development processes and how the work of other dance practitioners has influenced their development of skills and techniques. There are 15 marks available.
- Activity 3 is the final workshop performance should be approximately between 7-15 minutes in length and is presented to a live audience and videoed. Learners are marked on their individual contribution, skills and



techniques, collaboration with others and communication of creative ideas to the audience through their role. There are 18 marks available.

- Activity 4 is the Evaluation report where again learners will take 1 hour to complete. Learners are marked on how their outcome met the requirements of the brief, their development processes, their performance outcome, the key strengths of their work and any areas for further development. There are 12 marks available.

Please note that Component 3 is first available in 2024 within this new specification.

## Overall

- The teacher's choice to select the professional works and styles studied
- All components, including the externally assessed synoptic component, are assessed through engaging, open, and flexible set tasks, designed to give learners as much freedom as possible in how they respond, allowing them to work to their own strengths and interests, and to focus on the area of the performing arts sector that most excites and appeals to them.
- The schedule for the external component assessment tasks is flexible and can be tailor made to suit each individual centre.
- Connects learners with professional repertoire getting a taste of what the danced sector is like.
- There are no minimum grade requirements in any component, so an Unclassified result in any of the components will not prevent a learner from achieving the qualification. This gives your learners more opportunities to achieve and better captures their true ability.
- Assessment is compensatory within components and across the qualification - anywhere learners gain marks, these are added to the total towards a grade.

## What teachers are saying?

*The **BTEC Tech Award** in Dance allows students to become independent and reflective practitioners of dance composition and performance. The specification provides for every student to learn beyond a young persons lived experience, allowing them to discover interests and talents and possible future careers in an industry that this award supports and prepares for. For me, as a teacher, I am inspired by the freedom the programme allows you to have in delivering the content, whilst also still providing opportunities for me to learn as a specialist. Ultimately, I love my job because by teaching the Tech Award I have the privilege in observing countless light bulb moments of genius, creating work that is the best that I have seen in my 16-year teaching career.*

**Louise Elvy, Warblington School**

*Choosing to offer the **BTEC Tech Award** in Dance means that as a teacher I can make informed choices about the dance styles and genres that will suit each cohort. I really like the vocational focus and the opportunity to imitate real-life situations that the students may encounter if dance is their chosen career. The synoptic component offers challenge and I love that students gain credit for their contribution to the process of dance making and not just the final product.* **Jo Lawlor Head of Arts Faculty at Bishop Luffa School**

## Useful links

[AQA GCSE Dance](#)

[Pearson BTEC Level 1 / 2 Tech Award in Performing Arts with a Dance Approach](#)

[WJEC Level 1/2 Vocational Award Performing Arts \(Technical Award\)](#)

[One Dance UK](#)

*Written by dance education consultant Justine Reeve.*

