



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2012**

Dance 42303

(Specification 4230)

Unit 3: Performance in a duo/group

Report on the Examination

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General comments

The work seen at moderation was often of a very high standard and it was exciting to see the craft of choreography modelled for students as well as work which offered real challenge in terms of performance skills. The three links continue to encourage study of the work through a practical approach and teachers have embraced this with confidence and rigour. The range of responses was again hugely varied with some keeping quite close to the original and others producing work which was entirely different. Many of the dances were very professional and really exciting to watch and the standard of work generally was extremely high with more than 50% of all students entered achieving 25+ marks.

It was noted that some pieces which used a mainly gestural, pedestrian or heavily characterised style did not always contain sufficiently challenging choreography to allow students to demonstrate the full range of their dance skill (particularly technical ability).

It was pleasing to see the rise in numbers of students with physical disabilities presenting lovely work and accessing the higher marks through carefully constructed pieces which provided appropriate challenge.

Specific observations related to the criteria for assessment

This unit was again marked very accurately in schools.

Technical ability

This criterion sets apart those students who have access to regular technical dance sessions as part of the course, and consequently there was a noticeable improvement in the work of some lower ability students. This is an opportunity to showcase what students are capable of and the most able should be demonstrating good alignment, posture, co-ordination, balance, strength, elevation, flexibility, control etc at some point within the piece. Marks are awarded for evidence of the ability to meet the full range of technical skill in the actual performance and not for what a student has demonstrated at some point during the course. It is therefore imperative that the piece offered for assessment contains sufficient technical challenge to meet the needs of each individual student.

Accuracy of action, dynamic, timing and spatial content

Students who succeeded in this criterion not only accurately reproduced the action and spatial content but also demonstrated clarity and precision in their performances. However marks are most often lost for timing errors and lack of understanding of the use of dynamics. Students must understand that if they have not rehearsed to the point where they know the dance without having to think what comes next, they are going to lose marks because they will inevitably be slightly behind on timing and potentially in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Communication of choreographic intent

Schools need to be clear and provide helpful indicators to students about the intended mood, style or atmosphere of the piece. Notes provided for the moderator in some schools clearly identified the intent behind the choreography and the resulting work showed that appropriate and clear consideration had been given to this criterion. Other schools did not define the choreographic intent clearly enough, leaving it rather vague, which meant that students could not access the higher marks because they had no idea what they were trying to communicate through their performances. In one example in dance using *Rosas*, the identified choreographic intent was “to show the place of women in society”. This does not provide enough guidance for students to know how they should be interpreting the mood, style or atmosphere through their performances.

Sensitivity to other dancers in a range of dance relationships

Much of the work seen showed changing relationships which meant the dancers could interact and work together. There is a clear role here for schools to ensure that the task set allows the students to evidence their ability to perform in ‘a range of dance relationships’. Whilst unison is important and tests the use of peripheral vision, timing and spatial awareness, it should not be over used.

Safe practice as a performer

Most students achieved full marks for presentation, but marks were lost where there was insufficient challenge to demonstrate the ability to perform safely. It is a crucial part of the teacher's role to ensure that there is technical challenge built into the dance to satisfy criteria 1 and 5. Further guidance on this can be found in the ***Unit 3 Teacher Support Materials*** on the AQA website.

It is helpful if teachers can identify for the moderator all the specific moments of safe practice challenge in the piece before the performance begins. These can be written down in advance or demonstrated on the day.

Overall performance

There were some strong performances and some were exceptional. Those students that understood the choreographic intent of the piece tended also to be more successful in overall performance. The two criteria are symbiotic and it may help schools to consider the use of focus and projection as part of the choreographic process as opposed to just in rehearsal. This criterion assesses the ability "to communicate with an audience" so providing as many opportunities as possible for students to perform in front of others during the course will focus achievement in this criterion.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available at www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html .

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion