
Specification

Dance Awards

Entry – Level 4

Qualifications regulated in England and Wales

This specification is valid from April 2023 to January 2027 – Version 1

bbodance¹ (formally the British Ballet Organization) was established in 1930 to improve standards of dance teaching. Our mission is to inspire excellence and promote the education, training and enjoyment of dance. We are an inclusive, innovative and dynamic organisation which supports its members through a lifelong partnership.

bbodance is accredited by the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre (CDMT) and offers Performing Arts Graded Examinations in Ballet, Tap, Jazz, Modern, Musical Theatre and Contemporary. Recognised under the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), these Examinations are regulated by Ofqual and Qualifications Wales. The Examinations are delivered both nationally and internationally. The bbodance Dance Awards sit alongside the Graded Examinations, falling at the same levels, for example, Entry, Level 1, Level 2 etc. However, the purpose of these Awards is to give Candidates the opportunity to show their dance and performance ability, in a wider range of genres, through short dances choreographed by their Registered Teacher. bbodance Dance Awards are designed to be a level of attainment for students who enjoy their 'show style' dance, rather than a demonstration of vocabulary, giving the Candidates opportunity to perform, show characters or dance in groups. The Dance Award gives the students the opportunity to attain an acceptable level of success within an approved bbodance standardisation, with continual access to the Graded Levels.

A Teacher may suggest these Awards if a Candidate enjoys the performance side of dance training, would like to gain acknowledgement of achievement for 'show' or 'festival' work, beyond that of the performance day. The Dance Awards give the candidate an opportunity to perform a series of dances choreographed by their Registered Teacher. These build in length and complexity according to the Dance Award Level.

This Specification sets out the aims, objectives, assessment criteria and content for the named qualification/s.

¹ bbodance is a trading name for The British Ballet Organization Ltd., a Charity registered in England (No. 277177) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (No. 1402656).

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1. Summary, Objectives, Aims and Philosophy

Qualification Title	Suggested vocabulary / level of study for each Award*
Nursery Award	Introduction to / Pre-Syllabus
Primary Dance Award	Pre-Primary and Primary in Dance
Level 1 Dance Award	Grade 1, 2 and 3 in Dance
Level 2 Dance Award	Grade 4, 5 and Intermediate Foundation in Dance
Level 3 Dance Award	Grade 6, 7, 8 and Intermediate in Dance
Level 4 Dance Award	Advanced 1 and Advanced 2 in Dance

*This relates to the Graded and Vocationally Graded Examination syllabi devised by bbodance. This material can be used as a teaching aid to support the candidate learning towards the Dance Award qualifications.

Summary

The Dance Awards are aligned to the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) however they are not Regulated Examinations. These Examinations are offered in any genre and are available to any Candidate, with or without previous dance experience. Successful Candidates receive a Dance Award for the level undertaken. All candidates receive a badge and certificate.

Candidates may choose to do one or more Dance Awards in various genres.

The same examination and quality assurance procedures apply for Dance Awards as for the Graded and Vocationally Graded Examinations, and Performance Awards.

Objectives

The objectives of the Dance Awards are to:

- provide access to nationally recognised Examinations in Dance
- provide a broad education in and through dance which is accessible for all children, young people and adults, with or without prior dance experience
- contribute to the development of a wide range of competencies and life skills, such as motor control, health and safety awareness, self-expression, physical fitness and stamina, discipline, mental ability and confidence
- provide a marker of success for all children, young people and adults, and support further learning and development

Aims

The aims of the Dance Awards are to:

- promote the study of dance as a leisure and/or vocational activity
- promote and encourage enjoyment of dance as a form of physical exercise
- encourage personal self-confidence and group awareness through the experience of dancing with partners or in small groups
- motivate students by providing a series of clearly defined goals which have been structured to reflect the principles of safe dance practice
- provide Teachers with a means by which to develop and monitor the individual progress of their students
- reward achievement and motivate further learning

Fitness for Purpose

A qualification will only be fit for purpose if it secures the requirements of:

- validity
- reliability
- comparability
- manageability
- minimising bias

bbodance aims to meet these requirements through a rigorous internal Quality Assurance Framework which includes:

- identifying and mitigating conflicts of interest in the delivery of Examinations
- adopting policies and procedures which encourage access to Examinations, minimise or remove barriers, and treat all students and Candidates without bias
- providing initial Examiner training which includes seminars, 'shadowing' existing Examiners and a mentoring support scheme
- providing on-going training for Examiners and monitoring their work through annual seminars, moderation and standardisation exercises
- undertaking regular reviews of syllabus content, Examination procedures and marking methodologies in order to meet regulatory requirements and the needs of Examination 'users'
- undertaking statistical analysis of marks and adjustment where appropriate
- monitoring the use of Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration procedures and sharing best practice with other dance Awarding Organisations
- maintaining an appropriately skilled, competent and dedicated team of staff to design, deliver and quality assure dance Examinations.

Entry Criteria

No previous dance qualifications are necessary in order to enter for any of the Dance Awards.

Dance Awards are open to Candidates of any age. The following minimum ages are recommended by the organisation for safe completion of Examinations and are for guidance only.

Qualification Title	Recommended Minimum Age
Nursery Award	4 years
Primary Dance Award	5 years
Level 1 Dance Award	7 years
Level 2 Dance Award	10 years
Level 3 Dance Award	12 years
Level 4 Dance Award	16 years

2. Qualification Descriptor and Assessment

Dance Award Descriptor

Candidates who have successfully completed a Dance Award will have demonstrated sufficient levels of technical, performance and musical understanding of the choreography they have presented. This progressively increases in line with the bbodance Graded and Vocationally Graded Examinations.

Dance Award Assessment

bbodance's Dance Awards are met by choreographed pieces which meet the demands of Entry, Level 1, 2 3 and 4. Key vocabulary should be taken from the syllabi transcripts for the Graded and Vocationally Graded Examinations. If the Candidates are presenting a genre which bbodance do not offer a syllabi in, the Registered Teacher should use their professional knowledge of the related vocabulary to ensure that sufficient challenge and complexity is provided.

In the Examinations, Candidates will be assessed on their ability to:

- perform one or more short choreographic pieces with a basic level of technical proficiency in relation to posture, weight placement, transference of weight, co-ordination of the whole body, control, line, spatial awareness and dynamic values, as it relates to the genre
- dance, throughout the Examination, in time to the music and show responsiveness to the music
- dance with expression and performance quality

Candidates are required to communicate an element of confidence and autonomy in their performance.

Dance Awards (per Level and non-regulated)	Level Attained	Number of Dances to Perform	Max. Length of Each Dance (½ minute can be added for a Song & Dance)
Nursery Award	Nursery Rhyme	1	1 minute
	Nursery Character	1	1 minute
Primary Dance Award			
Primary Dance Award	Bronze	1	1 ½ minutes
	Silver	1	1 ½ minutes
	Gold	2	1 ½ minutes
Level 1 Dance Award			
Level 1 Dance Award	Bronze	1	1 ½ minutes
	Silver	1	1 ½ minutes
	Gold	2	1 ½ minutes
Level 2 Dance Award			
Level 2 Dance Award	Bronze	1	2 minutes
	Silver	1	2 minutes
	Gold	2	2 minutes
Level 3 Dance Award			
Level 3 Dance Award	Bronze	1	2 minutes
	Silver	2	2 minutes
	Gold	3	2 minutes
Level 4 Dance Award			
Level 4 Dance Award	Bronze	1	2 minutes
	Silver	2	2 minutes
	Gold	3	2 minutes

3. Guidelines

1. Candidates may enter into the Awards system at an appropriate Level of Achievement
2. Where 2 or more routines are required, they can be of the same or mixed genres, but styles **must not** be mixed within a single dance
3. The choice of music is at the Teacher's discretion and should be suitable in tempo, dynamics and if there are lyrics, they should be age appropriate
4. Props may be used in all Awards if desired
5. Skirts or costumes may be worn if this will enhance the dance
6. The Registered Teacher must send the Examiner information via email how the Set is being examined (see 'Entering Candidates' section below) prior to the session
7. Marks awarded: SNYA, Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction*

Entering Candidates

SETS

In a set of up to 4 candidates, they perform either:

- a. The same dance at once and in unison (i.e. candidates cannot perform certain parts of a dance individually)
- b. The same dance but individually
- c. Different dances but in the same dance genre

All candidates receive a badge and certificate.

GROUPS

5 or more candidates performing the same group dance. Candidates will each receive a badge and certificate. It is the teacher's responsibility to arrange the timetable according to the Level and number of candidates in each group.

4. Duration of Examinations

Dance Award	Level	Number of Candidates		
		Set (1 - 2)	Set (3 - 4)	Group (5+)
Nursery Award	Nursery Rhyme	10 min	15 min	10 min
	Nursery Character	10 min	15 min	10 min
Primary Dance Award	Bronze & Silver	10 min	15 min	10 min
	Gold	15 min	20 min	15 min
Level 1 Dance Award	Bronze & Silver	10 min	15 min	10 min
	Gold	15 min	20 min	15 min
Level 2 Dance Award	Bronze & Silver	10 min	15 min	10 min
	Gold	15 min	20 min	15 min
Level 3 Dance Award	Bronze	10 min	15 min	10 min
	Silver	15 min	20 min	15 min
	Gold	25 min	30 min	25 min
Level 4 Dance Award	Bronze	10 min	15 min	10 min
	Silver	15 min	20 min	15 min
	Gold	25 min	30 min	25 min

5. Achievements

Upon successfully passing their Examination, Candidates will receive a certificate and badge.

Achievement Categories

Nursery Awards

Category of Achievement
Unsuccessful
Successful

Primary – Level 4 Dance Awards

Category of Achievement
Standard Not Yet Achieved (SNYA)
Pass (P)
Merit (M)
Distinction (D)
Distinction* (D*)

Achievement Descriptors

Distinction *

An excellent performance of the choreography, with some outstanding achievement in technique, musicality and performance quality. Candidates demonstrate an exceptional degree of technical control and spatial awareness with assured musical phrasing throughout. Artistic interpretation is outstanding and Candidates demonstrate a distinctive personal style and sense of performance. Overall, Candidates in this category surpass all expectations for the level.

Distinction

A very good performance of the choreography which may include excellent elements. Candidates demonstrate a very high level of technical control overall, with confident musicality and clear artistic engagement. Musical phrasing, interpretation and sense of performance are assured but without the confidence and originality of the Distinction* Candidate.

Merit

A good performance of the choreography with clear evidence of the appropriate knowledge and skills for the level. Some aspects of technique may require fuller development but the level of control is good overall. Musicality is clearly evident but may not always be sustained throughout the dance(s). Artistic engagement and a sense of performance may also be less assured but overall, the work is commendable.

Pass

An acceptable or adequate performance of the choreography with sufficient evidence of the appropriate knowledge and skills for the level. Control of technique with some inconsistencies across the full range of examined work. Some areas of the work examined show limited ability but overall the learning outcomes for the level have been met.

Standard Not Yet Achieved

A limited performance of the choreography with insufficient evidence of the knowledge and skills required for the level. Technical clarity and control are not yet achieved. Musical awareness is not clearly demonstrated and there is a lack of performance style. Whilst there may be some potential ability, the learning outcomes have not been met; further study is required.

6. Uniform

Recommended uniform for each genre is detailed in the bbodance Teachers' Handbook. However, please note that costumes may be worn for Dance Awards.

For all Examinations no jewellery or watches should be worn. Hair should be securely tied off the face and neck in an appropriate hairstyle for the genre.

7. Teaching Resources

The following resources are available for Teachers entering Candidates for Performance Awards

- Specification
- Syllabus Transcripts for Graded and Vocationally Graded Examinations
- Syllabus Film (where available)
- Teachers' Handbook
- Continuing Professional Development offered throughout the year by bbodance

These resources are available on the website and can be downloaded for free (bbodance Registered Teachers and Associate Members only).