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# Specification

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**Level 4 Certificate in  
Vocational Graded  
Examination in Dance:  
Advanced 1**

**Level 4 Diploma in  
Vocational Graded  
Examination in Dance:  
Advanced 2**

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**Level 4**

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bbodance<sup>1</sup> (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.

This Specification sets out the aims, objectives, assessment criteria and content for the named qualification/s. Detailed genre specific syllabi can be found on the website and can be downloaded for free (bbodance Registered Teachers and Associate Members only) or purchased from our online shop.

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<sup>1</sup> 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

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## Qualification Titles and Numbers

Qualification Title	Ofqual Qualification Number	Qualification Wales Approval/Designation No.
Level 4 Certificate in Vocational Graded Examination in Dance: Advanced 1	600/3141/4	C00/1719/3
Level 4 Diploma in Vocational Graded Examination in Dance: Advanced 2	600/3142/6	C00/1719/4

## Summary

Vocational Grades Advanced 1 and Advanced 2 are aligned with Level 4 of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (Ofqual 2016). These Examinations are offered in a range of genres and are available to any Candidate, with or without previous dance experience. Successful Candidates receive a Level 4 Certificate in Graded Examination in Dance or a Level 4 Diploma in Vocational Graded Examination in Dance.

Candidates may choose to do one or more Examinations at Level 4 in any genre. The content of Vocational Grades Advanced 1 and Advanced 2 is conceived as a linear progression and Candidates are advised to follow the numerical order.

## Objectives

The objectives of Level 4 Vocational Graded Examinations in Dance are to:

- provide access to nationally recognised Examinations in Dance which, at the higher level, are accepted by the industry as benchmarks of achievement and taken into account by universities and other Higher Education (HE) institutions offering degree courses and programmes in dance and dance Teacher education.
- provide a vocational training for aspiring dance students for entry to a career in dance such as: Professional Dancer, Teacher, Examiner, Choreographer, Notator, Historian, Lecturer and Community Dance Practitioner and/or progression to further study at Level 5
- 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.

# Aims

The aims of Level 4 Vocational Graded Examinations in Dance are to:

- promote the vocational study of dance in preparation for a professional career
- provide a means of measuring the acquisition of technical, musical and dance performance skills at an elite/professional level
- promote and encourage dance as a theatre art
- provide all Candidates with an opportunity of experiencing dance accompanied by live or recorded music
- encourage personal self-confidence in dance performance
- encourage creative artistry in the unique relationship between dance and music
- provide vocational training which reflect the principles of safe dance practice
- provide Teachers with a means by which to develop and monitor the individual progress of vocational students
- reward achievement and motivate career aspirations.

# 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 Level 4 Vocational Graded Examinations.

Vocational Graded Examinations are open to Candidates of any age, although bbodance recommends that Candidates should be aged 16 before undertaking the Advanced 1 or Advanced 2 Examination.

For students who wish to undertake an Examination at an earlier age, we offer Level 3 Awards and Certificates in Dance for which bbodance recommends that Candidates should be aged 14 or above before taking Grades 6-8 and Intermediate Examinations.

## 2. Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

**Learning outcomes** describe in broad terms what a Candidate should know, understand or be able to demonstrate during the Examination. Each bbodance Examination is underpinned by a set of learning outcomes which are appropriate for the level of the award.

**Assessment criteria** specify the standard a Candidate is expected to meet in order to demonstrate that the learning outcomes have been achieved. Each bbodance Examination is marked according to a series of assessment criteria which reflect the level of the award.

### Level 4 Descriptor

Candidates have demonstrated extensive breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding in a selected dance genre. They have performed with mastery of the technique combined with an inherent expressive quality which is the mark of a professional dancer. Their physical stamina, strength and control has been maintained throughout the complex movement material; they are able to perform at speed and at a sustained, lyrical pace. Candidates at this level have demonstrated artistic versatility in engaging with a variety of performance styles from the past and present dance repertoire.

### Advanced 1 Examination Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

<b>Learning Outcomes: the Candidate will;</b>	<b>Assessment Criteria: the Candidate can;</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>perform an extensive range of dance vocabulary with technical precision and command</li> <li>perform on pointe with secure and safe footwork (Option A ballet syllabus only)</li> <li>perform across diverse artistic styles from past and current repertoire</li> <li>sustain a high level of performance throughout the Examination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate breadth and depth of knowledge in a selected dance genre</li> <li>undertake significant independent study to enhance their own progress</li> <li>integrate theoretical and practical learning in their performance</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consolidate their understanding of the relationship between music and dance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>perform to a range of musical tempos and rhythms with sustained focus</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop individual expressive qualities and artistic integrity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate individuality and audience awareness in dance performance</li> <li>demonstrate some qualities which are at or near the level of a professional dancer</li> </ul>

## Advanced 2 Examination Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Learning Outcomes: the Candidate will;	Assessment Criteria: the Candidate can;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>perform an extensive range of dance vocabulary with technical precision and command</li> <li>perform on pointe with secure and safe footwork (Option A ballet syllabus only)</li> <li>perform across diverse artistic styles from past and current repertoire</li> <li>sustain a high level of performance throughout the Examination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate breadth and depth of knowledge in a selected dance genre</li> <li>undertake significant independent study to enhance their own progress</li> <li>integrate theoretical and practical learning in their performance</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consolidate their understanding of the relationship between music and dance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>perform to a range of musical tempos and rhythms with sustained focus</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop individual expressive qualities and artistic integrity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate individuality and audience awareness in dance performance</li> <li>demonstrate some qualities which are at or near the level of a professional dancer</li> </ul>

## Advanced 1 and 2 Assessment

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

- perform a series of prepared dance exercises with an advanced level of technical proficiency in relation to posture, weight placement, co-ordination of the whole body, control, line, spatial awareness and dynamic values
- dance, throughout the Examination, with musicality and some original interpretation of music content
- dance with individual expression and performance quality, sustained throughout the Examination
- perform a complex and demanding set dance/s or enchaînement/ which requires the integration of all of the above aspects of technique, music and performance at an advanced level.

For Level 4 qualifications, Candidates are expected to demonstrate an advanced knowledge of dance vocabulary, to sustain control of the body during complex movements and to dance safely within their physical capacity.

Candidates are required to communicate a confident and mature performance. Musicality is evident throughout the performance and there is a clear understanding of artistic integrity.



## 3. Syllabus Content

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A detailed genre-specific syllabus for each Examination can be found on the website and can be downloaded for free (bbodance Registered Teachers and Associate Members only) or purchased from our online shop.

Candidates will be examined through the performance of the prescribed Examination Content as set out in the genre-specific syllabi.

bbodance upholds the rights of Candidates to be examined in their preferred gender identity. The majority of bbodance syllabi are gender neutral, however, where options have been presented based upon gender, the Candidate has the option to self-identify.

All Candidates who opt to undertake Optional A of the Ballet syllabi have Pointe Work examined and must obtain a mark of 4 or above for Footwork/Pointe Work in order to be successful overall. It is recommended that considering pursuing further vocational ballet training choose to be examined in this area. All Candidates who opt to undertake Option B of Ballet syllabi must obtain a mark of 4 or above in Elevation. bbodance upholds the rights of Candidates to be examined in their preferred gender identity.

## 4. Duration of Examinations

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### Advanced 1

Number of Candidates	Ballet	Tap	Jazz	Modern
1	75 minutes	30 minutes	75 minutes	40 minutes
2	75 minutes	45 minutes	75 minutes	40 minutes
3	90 minutes	60 minutes	80 minutes	50 minutes
4	90 minutes	60 minutes	80 minutes	50 minutes

### Advanced 2

Number of Candidates	Ballet	Tap	Modern
1	75 minutes	60 minutes	40 minutes
2	75 minutes	60 minutes	40 minutes
3	90 minutes	75 minutes	50 minutes
4	90 minutes	75 minutes	50 minutes

# 5. Marks and Achievements

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## Overview of the Mark Scheme

The Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria detailed in Section 2 are differentiated across the Examination via three related assessment areas: technique, musicality and performance.

Technique, musicality and performance are assessed using a mark scheme which comprises a total of 100 marks, applied to the various elements as shown in the tables below.

Where genre-specific criteria differ, the mark scheme below denotes

## Advanced 1 and 2 Mark Scheme

### Ballet

Examination Content	Marks
Co-ordination	10
Elevation* & Beats	10
Extension	10
Footwork/Pointe Work*	10
Musicality	10
Performance Quality	10
Posture & Alignment	10
Strength & Control	10
Style/Interpretation	10
Turns	10

\*In addition to the overall score, Candidates must obtain a mark of 4 or above in Pointe Work (Option A syllabus) or Elevation (Option B syllabus) to gain this qualification

<b>Examination Content</b>	<b>Marks</b>
Clarity of Tapping	10
Co-ordination & Control	10
Footwork	10
Musicality Rhythm & Dynamics	10
Musicality Timing & Phrasing	10
Performance Quality	10
Interpretation	10
Posture & Alignment	10
Spatial Awareness & Directional Change	10
Turning Steps	10

Examination Content	Marks
Co-ordination, Strength & Control	10
Elevation	10
Footwork	10
Isolations	10
Musicality Dynamics	10
Musicality Phrasing	10
Performance Quality	10
Posture & Alignment	10
Spatial Awareness	10
Turns	10

Examination Content	Marks
Co-ordination, Strength & Control	10
Elevation	10
Footwork	10
Musicality Dynamics	10
Musicality Phrasing	10
Performance Quality	10
Posture & Alignment	10
Spatial Awareness	10
Turn Out/Parallel	10
Turns	10

## Mark Descriptors

Mark	Descriptor
1	The Candidate did not show the work required
2	Indicates an extremely limited ability to achieve
3	Indicates a limited ability to achieve
4	Indicates an acceptable ability to achieve
5	Indicates some good ability to achieve
6	Indicates a consistently good ability to achieve
7	Indicates a very good ability to achieve
8	Indicates an excellent ability to achieve
9	Indicates an outstanding ability to achieve
10	Indicates an exceptional ability to achieve

## Achievement Categories

Category of Achievement	Overall Mark
Standard Not Yet Achieved (SNYA)	0-39
Pass (P)	40-54
Merit (M)	55-69
Distinction (D)	70-84
Distinction* (D*)	85-100



# Achievement Descriptors

## Distinction \*

An excellent performance of the examined dance material, 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 examined dance material which may include excellent achievement against some of the assessment criteria. 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 examined dance material 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 in more complex dance sequences. 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 examined dance material 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 examined dance material 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. Total Qualification Time (TQT)

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TQT is a measure of the time taken for an average student to complete a qualification. This figure is for guidance only and does not mean that all students must undertake a specified number of hours before undertaking an Examination.

The TQT for Advanced 1 (Level 4 Certificate) is 325 hours. This figure comprises 150 Guided Learning Hours and 175 hours of 'Other Learning'.

The TQT for Advanced 2 (Level 4 Diploma) is 375 hours. This figure comprises 150 Guided Learning Hours and 225 hours of 'Other Learning'.

**Guided Learning** is the time set aside for teaching or supervising students, including weekly lessons, additional coaching and rehearsals.

**Other Learning** includes a diverse range of activities which support or extend the learning in class. These activities might include 'homework' tasks such as online dance research, reading books on dance technique, seeing a live dance performance or viewing a filmed extract online.

Following consultation with Awarding Organisations the figures for TQT were approved by the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre (April 2016).

## 7. Uniform

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Recommended uniform for each genre is detailed in the bbodance Teachers' Handbook.

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. All Candidates in each Examination set should have the same uniform.

We encourage Examination Candidates to wear bbodance approved uniform because it is fit for purpose, ensuring the health and safety of Candidates and allowing freedom of movement. Approved uniform is supplied by Dansez and is available to purchase via <https://dans-ez.com/collections/bbodance>.

The bbodance approved uniform has been designed so that items can be mixed and matched across genres.

## 8. Teaching Resources

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The following resources are available for Teachers entering Candidates for Level 4 Certificate/Diploma in Vocational Graded Examination in Dance:

- Specification
- Syllabus Transcript
- 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) or the syllabi transcript can be purchased from our online shop.