



Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing
Tap Dance

Advanced 1

Specification

This version
of the syllabus
replaces any previous
version, in examinations
taken from
October 2026

For teaching from
September 2024

For exams taken from
October 2025 onwards

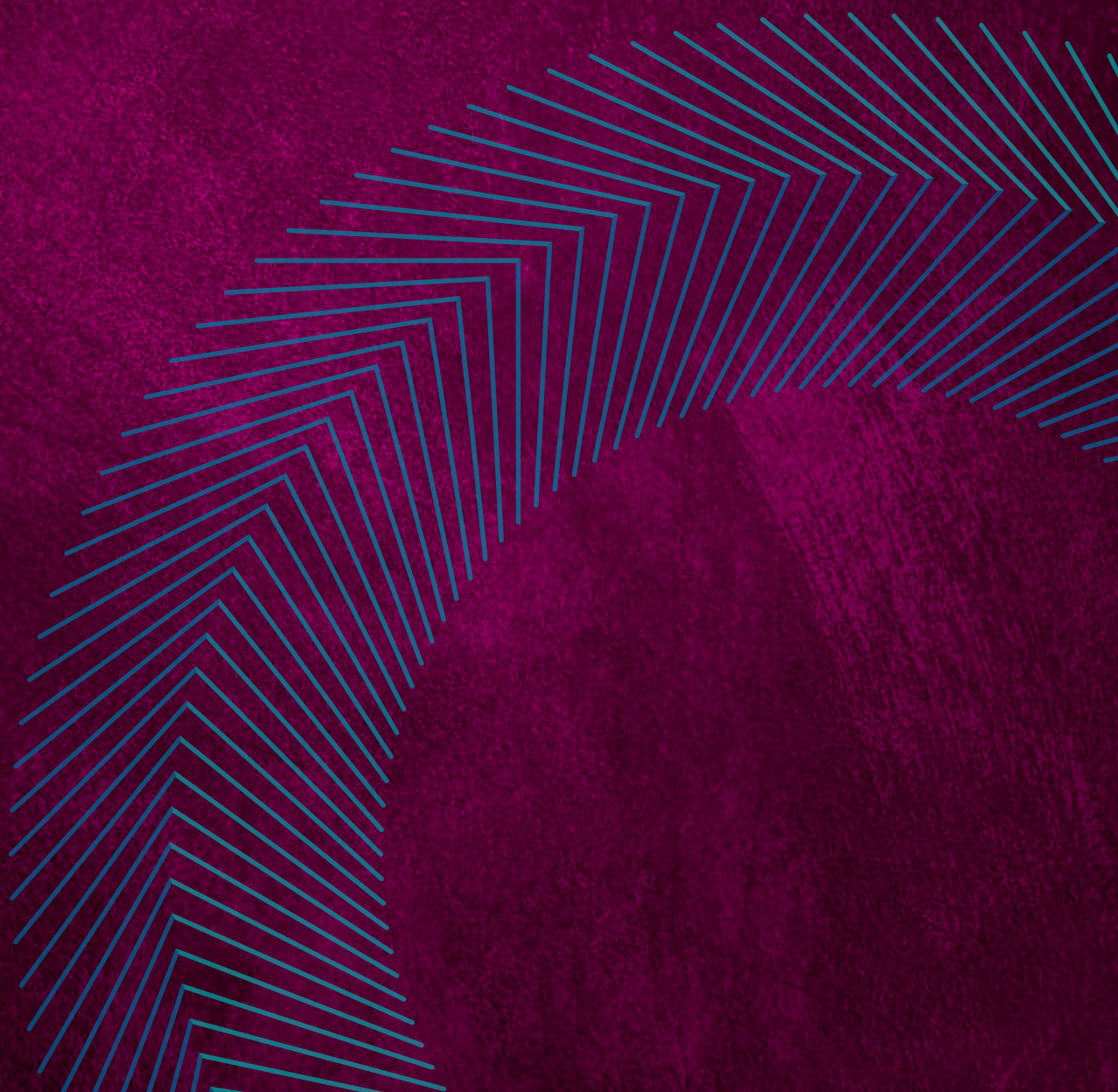
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Contents

1 Qualification purpose	3	9 Examinations and quality assurance	13
Aims.....	3	Exam booking information.....	13
Objectives	3	Quality assurance	13
2 Transferable skills	4	Inclusivity and accessibility of examinations and assessments	13
3 Qualification structure and regulation	5	Reasonable adjustments.....	13
Regulation – UK	5	Special consideration	13
Regulation – Europe.....	5	Enquiries and appeals about results.....	14
4 UCAS Points	6	Malpractice	14
5 Equivalence of qualification levels	6	Results and certification.....	14
6 Entry conditions and general information	7		
Minimum age	7		
Entry conditions	7		
Prior learning.....	7		
Language	7		
Summary information.....	7		
Musical accompaniment.....	7		
Clothing	7		
Studio layout for the examination	7		
7 Learning outcomes and assessment criteria	8		
Syllabus content: Advanced 1	8		
8 Scheme of assessment - vocational examinations	9		
Method of assessment.....	9		
Determining a mark	10		
Determining a grade for vocational qualifications.....	10		
Mark scheme.....	10		
Levels of response mark bands.....	12		
Classification of results	12		

Advanced 1 Specification

For examinations from
1 October 2025



1 Qualification purpose

In this section, you will find information on the purposes of the following qualification in this specification:

Level 4: Advanced 1 in Tap Dance

The Vocational Graded Examinations in Tap Dance, from Intermediate through to Advanced 2, develop the candidate's expertise to provide the basis for either professional employment as a dancer or for further training as a dance teacher.

Throughout the study of the syllabus, candidates are following a vocational path, requiring a higher level of commitment and with an increasing emphasis on safe dance practice and an increased technical ability. Successful candidates at this level should show virtuosity in performance, and a sound knowledge and understanding of the Tap Dance genre, including an understanding of reference and context.

Candidates studying the vocational graded syllabus should display a sense of self-awareness and be self-motivated in terms of personal development. As distinct from the general Graded examinations, a greater degree of personal interpretation is encouraged, and the candidate is expected to show the potential to communicate effectively with an audience.

Candidates will need to show the qualities of professionalism, commitment and focus, with the ability to manage a greater workload than that required for the general graded examinations. This would typically result in a successful candidate spending significant additional time each week in lessons- practising and studying independently.

Aims

Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD) Vocational Graded Examinations in Tap Dance provide an assessment scheme, which give the basis for the measurement of an individual candidate's progress and development in preparing for professional dance performing or teaching careers. The practical, vocational examinations are graded to measure appropriate stages of development from a general standard of Tap Dance education to that of professional competence and readiness.

Objectives

The syllabus objectives of the Tap Dance Vocational Graded Examinations are to:

- teach correct posture
- develop a thoroughly comprehensive tap technique
- develop the use of tone
- promote understanding and use of dance terminology
- develop the sense of line through arms, body and head
- promote understanding of rhythm and its development
- promote appreciation of varying musical styles and their interpretation
- develop awareness of the use of space
- develop awareness of audience with a sense of performance
- encourage an artistic sense of self-expression
- encourage creative use of rhythm and movement
- promote self-confidence in the performance of a solo

2 Transferable skills

Performing skills

- Artistry
- Communication
- Dynamic and rhythmic awareness
- Expression
- Fluency
- Phrasing
- Focus
- Musicality
- Projection
- Sensitivity to others
- Spatial awareness

Technical skills

- Accuracy
- Application of feedback
- Application of technique
- Coordination
- Creative engagement with movement material
- Fitness
- Flexibility
- Kinesthetic awareness
- Mastery
- Memory and recall
- Movement intensity appropriate to the style
- Placement
- Rhythm
- Sensitivity to the cultural framework and/or stylistic influences of the technique
- Stamina
- Strength
- Timing
- Understanding of anatomy and physiology

Personal skills

- Ability to analyse
- Application of knowledge
- Commitment
- Confidence
- Concentration
- Conviction
- Cooperation and teamwork
- Creativity
- Critical self-reflection
- Discipline
- Individuality
- Mental and physical wellbeing
- Perseverance
- Problem solving
- Respect
- Response to feedback
- Self-challenge
- Self-management
- Self-motivation
- Setting and achieving goals
- Understanding and appreciation of cultural framework, style and genre

3 Qualification structure and regulation

Regulation – UK

ISTD Vocational Graded Examination qualifications are regulated in the UK by:

- Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) in England
- Qualifications Wales
- Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA Regulation) in Northern Ireland.

The Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) provides a single, simple system for cataloguing all regulated qualifications, indicating qualifications by their level (degree of difficulty) and size (amount or breadth of learning). There are nine qualification levels in the framework, labelled in order of difficulty from Entry Level to Level 8. For further information, visit: <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk>

Size of the qualification on the RQF is indicated by a credit value, corresponding to a term used in the title. An Award is worth 1-12 credits, a Certificate is worth 13-36 credits, and a Diploma is worth 37 or more credits. 1 credit corresponds to 10 hours of learning for the typical learner, which is divided into Guided Learning hours (GLH), which is broadly contact time with the teacher and personal study time, which together make Total Qualification Time (TQT).

The ISTD's Advanced 1 qualification is placed on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) as follows:

Qualification title	Qualification number	Guided learning hours (GLH)	Total qualification time (TQT)	Total credits
ISTD Level 4 Certificate in Vocational Graded Examination in Tap Dance: Advanced 1	501/0760/4	150	325	33

Unit title	Unit reference number	Guided learning hours (GLH)	Total qualification time (TQT)	Qualification credits
ISTD Level 4 Certificate in Vocational Graded Examination in Tap Dance: Advanced 1	T/602/0193	Level 4	150	33

Regulation – Europe

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is an overarching framework that links the qualifications of different countries together and allows for comparison and translation. The EQF has eight levels across which qualifications can be mapped. The levels do not correspond directly with the UK's Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), although they are similar. The following table shows the level of our Vocational Examination qualifications on the RQF and the EQF.

Qualification title	RQF Level	EQF Level
Intermediate	Level 3	Level 4
Advanced 1	Level 4	Level 5
Advanced 2	Level 4	Level 5

4 UCAS Points

In the UK, our Vocational Graded Examination qualifications can contribute towards entry into higher education through the allocation of UCAS points. UCAS tariff points translate your qualifications and grades into a numerical value, which some universities, colleges, and conservatoires may refer to in their course entry requirements.

Advanced 1	Tariff points
Distinction	24
Merit	20
Pass	16

The number of points they can get depends on how well they performed in their examination, i.e. Distinction, Merit or Pass.

5 Equivalence of qualification levels

Qualification level	Level	Equivalence
Intermediate	3	Equivalent to A-Level and T-Level standard
Advanced 1	4	Equivalent to the first year of a degree or a Certificate of Higher Education or Higher National qualification at Level 4
Advanced 2	4	Equivalent to the first year of a degree or a Certificate of Higher Education or Higher National qualification at Level 4

6 Entry conditions and general information

Minimum age

There is a recommended minimum age of 13 years for Intermediate and above. This is to ensure that candidates are physically and artistically mature, and to meet the demands of the syllabus safely.

Entry conditions

Entries must be submitted via a teacher who holds a relevant membership with the ISTD.

Prior learning

There are no prior examination requirements for Intermediate. However, candidates will need to have knowledge of the content of the ISTD Tap Grades. Candidates are required to achieve the Intermediate qualification prior to entry for Advanced 1, and the Advanced 1 qualification is required prior to entry for Advanced 2.

Exemption from the Intermediate and Advanced 1 examinations may be obtained if the candidate is a student who already holds an equivalent Intermediate or Advanced 1 Tap certificate from an Ofqual approved dance awarding body. Application for exemption must be made in writing to ukdanceteachers@istd.org or internationalteachers@istd.org

Language

All exams and assessments are conducted in English.

Summary information

Examination	Number of candidates	Age	Time allowances		
			1 candidate	2 candidates	3 candidates
Advanced 1	1–3	13+	75 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes

Musical accompaniment

The Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing recommended playlists should be used for this examination. Teachers may use their own choice of music for dance solos. The examiner will provide the accompaniment for Free work/Improvisation where necessary. A sound system capable of playing CDs/mp3 player and a lightning/jack cable to connect digital audible devices at a volume suitable for the venue should be provided. The music system operator should be seated at a discreet distance from the examiner. Music operators should not be teachers, assistant teachers, other candidates in the session or parents.

Clothing

In order for the Examiner to give a true and accurate assessment, dance attire should be smart and give a clear view of head, body arm and leg lines.

Appropriate dancewear should be worn of any colour, for example; leotard and tights, dance shorts, straight-legged dance trousers, tight-fitting t-shirt. Trousers, if worn, should not be too long or too wide, as this could prove hazardous. Shoes must be well fitted and have both toe and heel plates. The heel height should be appropriate for the age of the candidate.

Hair should be neat and securely held in place. Long hair should be tied back to allow a clear neck and headline. Make-up should only be worn where appropriate and should be natural. Jewellery or body piercings, if they are unable to be removed, should be suitably secured and covered so as not to cause any injury.

Where possible, it is recommended that candidates wear clothing that contrasts the studio background, especially if filming for remote examinations.

Studio layout for the examination

Teachers should select the most suitable studio layout for the examination, to allow candidates the space to demonstrate fully. Mirrors in the studio should be completely covered or made opaque and a tablecloth and bell should be on the examiners table.

7 Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
LO1 Apply and demonstrate, through performance, a range of fundamental and relevant knowledge and understanding of the vocabulary and technique of Tap Dance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safely demonstrate physical and technical competence
LO2 Perform a range of movement sequences showing sound and secure technical skills in Tap Dance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform exercises, sequences, and dances
LO3 Perform a range of movement sequences showing an understanding of musicality in Tap Dance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform exercises and dances to music • Create short, coherent sequences of movement to music
LO4 Apply and demonstrate a range of performance skills in Tap Dance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recall, perform and present exercises and dances to an audience using a range of performance and presentational skills • Demonstrate an understanding of style and theme

Syllabus content: Advanced 1

All steps from previous syllabi plus:

- 3 beat undercut shuffle
- Twisted shuffle
- Criss cross progressive shuffle
- 4 beat shuffle
- Reverse cramp roll
- Slalom cramp roll
- Round the world
- 5 beat riffle
- 5, 6, 8 & 9 beat paddles
- Running flap
- Open and closed pull backs
- Firecracker (optional)
- Mixed Maxiford
- 3 beat wing on one foot (optional)
- 4 beat toe knock (optional)
- Clunk and Undercut clunk
- Roll time steps (single, double, triple, double triple, break)

Warm up – seen altogether.

Vocabulary Drills – Candidates will demonstrate a total of six Drills, as specified in the four categories below.

Grounded Drills- seen individually.

Teachers' choice of two out of the three:

- Shuffles
- Cramp Rolls
- Riffles

Close work Drills – seen individually.

Teachers' choice of one out of the two:

- Paddles
- Crawls

Elevated Drills – seen individually.

Teachers' choice of two out of the five:

- Pullbacks
- Shuffle Pick up
- Supported Elevated
- Ripple Down and Firecracker
- Running Flap

Turning Drills – seen individually.

Teachers' choice of one out of the two:

- Close work
- Maxiford

Technical Sequences - seen individually.

Teachers' choice of three out of the four, with one of the three to be danced unaccompanied:

- Lyrical
- Elevated
- 5/4
- Commercial

Turning Sequence – seen individually.

Time steps –seen individually.

Teachers' choice of two of the three:

- Travelling
- Rhythm
- Roll

Free Time steps – seen individually.

Music

Examiners' choice of free music

Time Steps Criteria

The Time Step section content refers to shuffle time steps and breaks only (and not pick up time steps, wing time steps, roll time steps or any other time steps).

Content is as follows:

Shuffle Time Steps only. Singles, doubles, triples - time steps and breaks.

Half breaks, either first half (i.e. single would be, shuffle hop spring shuffle step) or second half (i.e. shuffle step shuffle ball change).

With Elevated pick ups, either on one foot or pick up change or both. (These will be used as follows in any time step/break:- a pick up on one foot instead of a hop, and a pick up change instead of a spring.)

Breaks or time steps can be straight or turning.

Starting on 8 or starting on 1.

With tacet (i.e. 4 counts) or with missed beats (of just 1 beat or of 2 or 3 beats).

The rhythm of the time step can be changed by the examiner. It can include absolutely any rhythm with or without missed beats: with or without syncopation: but not a change of time signature.

N.B. Syncopation may - or may not - be incorporated in the rhythm given by the examiner. The examiner will indicate where they wish the syncopation to be included.

Dance Sequences – seen individually.

Teachers' choice of two out of four:

- Musical Theatre
- Latin
- Blues - (to recommended playlist music only)
- Quick Jazz - (to recommended playlist music only)

Free work/Improv – seen individually.

A free amalgamation will be given by the examiner with an improvisation of up to 1 minute added on the end by the candidate.

Dance – seen individually.

Not to exceed 2 minutes.

Bow – seen altogether.

Shim Sham arrangement from Intermediate.

8 Scheme of assessment - vocational examinations

Method of assessment

Vocational Graded Examinations are assessed by an examiner who is recruited, trained, and monitored by the ISTD.

ISTD examiners:

- are selected for their expertise and undergo rigorous training, which continues throughout their career, for marking both face-to-face and remote examinations
- create a welcoming and reassuring environment at the exam venue, ensuring a positive experience for candidates
- complete a check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (or equivalent body where available) and adhere to ISTD policies and procedures, including equality and diversity, safeguarding and data protection
- do not usually examine at the same exam venue within any two-year period

In the examination the examiner awards a mark of between 0 and 10 for each component (shown on the accompanying grid). A mark of 0 indicates that nothing worthy of credit was presented for assessment.

The examination is divided into sections and each section consists of several components which are individually assessed and aggregated to give the section total. The total number of marks available in the examination is 100.

Title of component	Available marks
Use of Technique	
Clarity of Beating	10
Timing and Rhythm	10
Rhythmic Interpretation and Tonal Quality	10
Weight Distribution	10
Precision and Alignment of Footwork	10
Section total	50
Performance and Presentation	
Response and Knowledge	10
Style	10
Sense of Performance	10
Dance Sequences	10
Dance	10
Section total	50
Overall total	100

Determining a mark

The marks for each component of assessment are added together and an overall mark is given out of 100.

Determining a grade for vocational qualifications

To reflect the need for competence across the range of components, a candidate will **not** attain a grade if:

- 20% of the marks attainable or below are given for any **one** component
- 40% of the marks attainable or below are given for any **three** components.

If all components are achieved, then the overall grade is indicated as follows:

Grade	Total marks
Distinction	80-100 marks
Merit	65-79 marks
Pass	50-64 marks
Not Attained	0-49 marks

Mark scheme

Each component of the assessment is shown on the grid as a column and broken down into mark bands, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor indicates the quality that is expected in the candidate's evidence for that mark band. The indicative content for each component of assessment is exemplified or stated at the bottom of each column/group of columns.

Tap Dance: Advanced 1

Section		Use of Technique				Performance and Presentation					
Component		Clarity of Beating	Timing and Rhythm	Rhythmic Interpretation and Tonal Quality	Weight Distribution	Precision and Alignment of Footwork	Response and Knowledge	Style	Sense of Performance	Dance Sequences	Dance
		10 marks	10 marks	10 marks	10 marks	10 marks	10 marks	10 marks	10 marks	10 marks	10 marks
Top of the Excellent Band	9/10	The candidate demonstrates Excellent ability in the indicative content									
Bottom of the Excellent Band											
Top of the Good Band	7/8	The candidate demonstrates Good ability in the indicative content									
Bottom of the Good Band											
Top of the Fair Band	5/6	The candidate demonstrates Fair ability in the indicative content									
Bottom of the Fair Band											
Top of the Limited Band	3/4	The candidate demonstrates Limited ability in the indicative content									
Bottom of the Limited Band											
Top of the Weak Band	1/2	The candidate demonstrates Weak ability in the indicative content									
Bottom of the Weak Band											
Not Evidenced	0	Indicative content not evidenced									
Indicative content		Tap with clear sounds. Demonstrate definition in the beating.	Timing: Maintain correct timing throughout. Rhythm: Demonstrate correct rhythmic patterns; Demonstrate a rhythmically accurate response to free work and improvisation.	Rhythmic Interpretation: Demonstrate clear rhythmic beating with well-defined use of accent, syncopation and missed beats; Show an awareness of musical phrasing. Tonal Quality: Demonstrate variation of sound using light and shade to create tonal contrasts. Demonstrate ease and relaxation of the ankles and knees, and flexibility through the feet.	Demonstrate variation of weight adjustment and distribution relevant to the steps being demonstrated. Demonstrate the strength and core control necessary to facilitate the technical requirements of the syllabus.	Precision: Demonstrate accurate footwork; Articulate through, and work on the balls of the feet where relevant; Show Close Work with precision. Alignment: Demonstrate accurate foot and leg lines.	Response: Demonstrate an enthusiastic and quick response to given instructions; Respond confidently to free work, translating verbal instructions with technical and stylistic accuracy. Knowledge: Secure knowledge of the syllabus.	Demonstrate ease of movement and rhythmic quality through arms and body; Demonstrate extension through the arms and upper body to create breadth of line where relevant; Demonstrate variation in line, style and dynamics relevant to the music and choreography.	Demonstrate an innate and sincere sense of performance using eye focus and appropriate expression; Demonstrate with assurance and individuality.	Dance each sequence as a solo; Demonstrate technical accuracy and clear rhythmical beating; Demonstrate each sequence with style and expression relevant to the music and choreography.	Demonstrate a rhythmically and technically secure performance; Present a musical interpretation with appropriate style and expression.

Levels of response mark bands

The lower mark in each band indicates that the student has just met the requirement described in the band, the upper mark indicates that the evidence is clear but that the student has not quite met the requirements set out in the next mark band.

The candidate is marked against all components of assessment.

Classification of results

Candidates receive both a final mark and an attainment grade. It is not expected that a candidate in a particular attainment grade will necessarily demonstrate all the characteristics listed in that band but will demonstrate most.

Attainment grade descriptors

Distinction: 80-100 marks

A candidate who achieves a '**Distinction**' will demonstrate the following attributes in performance:

- extremely strong technique
- high clarity of intention in execution of the movement
- excellent precision in the technique of the genre
- excellent use of dynamics and spatial elements
- very confident and accurate responses to instructions, questions asked and/or tasks set
- very strong performing skills.

Merit: 65-79 marks

A candidate who achieves a '**Merit**' will demonstrate the following attributes in performance:

- well established technique
- good clarity of intention in execution of the movement
- good precision in the technique of the genre confident use of dynamics and spatial elements
- confident and accurate responses to instructions, questions asked and/or tasks set
- strong performing skills.

Pass: 50-64 marks

A candidate who achieves a '**Pass**' will demonstrate the following attributes in performance:

- generally established technique
- some clarity of intention in execution of the movement
- some precision in the technique of the genre
- fair understanding of the use of dynamics and spatial elements
- broadly relevant and mostly appropriate responses to questions asked and/or tasks set
- secure performing skills.

Not attained: 00-49 marks

A candidate who achieves a '**Not Attained**' will demonstrate the following attributes in performance:

- poor or limited technical accomplishment
- limited clarity of intention in execution of the movement
- poor or limited grasp of the technique of the genre
- limited understanding of the use of dynamics and spatial elements
- weak or limited response to questions asked and/or tasks set
- weak or limited performing skills.

9 Examinations and quality assurance

This section focuses on the administrative requirements for delivering the examinations and related quality assurance processes.

Exam booking information

Exam bookings are only permitted to be made by Full Teaching members of the ISTD who have active memberships and conduct themselves in accordance with the Member Agreement/Professional Code of Conduct. For more information visit: www.istd.org/documents/rules-and-standing-orders/

The examinations take place either at the exam venues hosted by the registered members, such as the teacher's dance studio, or at the ISTD Exam Centre sessions. Details of how to book an exam, cancellation fees, guidance, and exam regulations are available on:

UK Examinations

Website: www.istd.org/uk-examinations/

Email: ukdanceteachers@istd.org

International Examinations

Website: www.istd.org/international-examinations/

Email: internationalteachers@istd.org

Quality assurance

Quality assurance is a set of policies and procedures the Society has in place to ensure that our examinations and assessments are inclusive and accessible, and students completing our qualifications are issued a fair grade based on their performance. Our quality assurance processes are there to safeguard the integrity of our qualifications by ensuring that high standards are always delivered.

The detailed information about the quality assurance of our qualifications and the related policies can be found at: www.istd.org/examinations/quality-assurance/

For further guidance, please contact the Quality Assurance department at: csqa@istd.org

Inclusivity and accessibility of examinations and assessments

The Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing is fully committed to promoting an environment where all individuals are encouraged to achieve their full potential and develop their skills in dance and examinations, and we encourage teachers to maintain an open approach towards the different abilities offered by all their students.

Reasonable adjustments

We are committed to providing fair access to our assessments for candidates with specific needs, by putting in place access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (also known as ARA). A reasonable adjustment is a process that is made before a learner takes an assessment. It ensures that they have fair access to demonstrate the requirements of the assessments, taking account the needs of individual learners.

However, it would also not be deemed reasonable to make changes to assessment standards or requirements, as this would undermine the effectiveness of the qualification in providing a reliable indicator of the knowledge, skills and understanding of the candidate. For more information visit: www.istd.org/examinations/applications-for-reasonable-adjustments-ara/

Special consideration

Special consideration is given after an assessment has taken place for learners who have been affected by adverse circumstances. The Society has a process in place for special consideration available to candidates who participated in an examination but may have been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury or indisposition, or adverse circumstances which arose immediately before or during the examination.

Enquiries and appeals about results

The Society endorses the principle of the right to enquire about a learner result. These enquiries may relate to an unexpected exam result, assessment decisions being incorrect, or assessment not being conducted fairly. We ensure that enquiries are dealt with swiftly and fairly within the specified timescales.

Malpractice

Malpractice refers to acts that undermine the integrity and validity of assessment, the certification of qualifications, and/or actions that may damage the authority of those responsible for delivering the assessment and certification.

We take any form of malpractice very seriously. Registered members and candidates must follow the requirements set out in this specification, exam regulations and all other ISTD policies about the delivery of our exams. In cases where Registered members or candidates have committed malpractice, a sanction or penalty may be given.

Results and certification

Quality Assurance will issue learner results and certificates direct to the primary organiser, unless requested otherwise. All learners will be issued with a report sheet containing the marks for each component; successful candidates also receive a certificate that shows the qualification title, as well as the subject and level that they have been examined in.

We aim to release results and issue the qualification documents in line with the schedules on our Customer Service Policy on our website: www.istd.org/examinations/quality-assurance/policies-and-related-documents/

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