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# Specification

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**Level 3 Certificate in Graded  
Examination in Dance:  
Grade 6**

**Level 3 Certificate in Graded  
Examination in Dance:  
Grade 7**

**Level 3 Certificate in Graded  
Examination in Dance:  
Grade 8**

**Level 3 Certificate in  
Vocational Graded  
Examination in Dance:  
Intermediate**

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**Level 3**

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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 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.

In addition to regulated qualifications, bbodance offers Graded Assessments<sup>2</sup> and Dance Awards<sup>3</sup> for students who do not wish to take formal examinations. Information on all qualifications and awards can be found on our website (<https://bbo.dance>).

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).

<sup>2</sup> Formally Performance Dance Awards. Graded Assessments commence from September 2019

<sup>3</sup> Formally Freestyle Dance Awards. Dance Awards commence from September 2019

## bbodance Qualifications at a Glance

	Qualification	Genre/s	Level/Award
Graded	Grade 1	Ballet; Tap; Jazz; Modern; Musical Theatre; Contemporary	Level 1 Award
Graded	Grade 2	Ballet; Tap; Jazz; Modern; Musical Theatre; Contemporary	Level 1 Award
Graded	Grade 3	Ballet; Tap; Jazz; Modern; Musical Theatre; Contemporary	Level 1 Award
Graded	Grade 4	Ballet; Tap; Jazz; Modern; Musical Theatre	Level 2 Award
Graded	Grade 5	Ballet; Tap; Jazz; Modern; Musical Theatre	Level 2 Award
Vocational	Intermediate Foundation	Ballet; Tap; Jazz; Modern	Level 2 Certificate
Graded	Grade 6	Ballet; Tap; Jazz; Modern	Level 3 Certificate
Graded	Grade 7	Ballet; Tap; Jazz; Modern	Level 3 Certificate
Graded	Grade 8	Ballet; Tap; Modern	Level 3 Certificate
Vocational	Intermediate	Ballet; Tap; Jazz; Modern	Level 3 Certificate
Vocational	Advanced 1	Ballet; Tap; Jazz; Modern	Level 4 Certificate
Vocational	Advanced 2	Ballet; Tap; Modern	Level 4 Diploma
Teacher Training	L4 Diploma in Dance Teaching	Unspecified	Level 4 Diploma
Teacher Training	L5 Diploma in Dance Teaching	Unspecified	Level 5 Diploma
Teacher Training	L6 Diploma in Dance Teaching	Unspecified	Level 6 Diploma

Teacher Training	L6 Extended Diploma in Dance Teaching	Unspecified	Level 6 Extended Diploma
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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 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Dance: Grade 6	600/3060/4	C00/1718/8
Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Dance: Grade 7	600/3061/6	C00/1718/9
Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Dance: Grade 8	600/3066/5	C00/1719/0
Level 3 Certificate in Vocational Graded Examination in Dance: Intermediate	600/3143/8	C00/1719/5

## Summary

Grades 6, 7 and 8 constitute the final suite of Graded Examinations in Dance and are aligned with Level 3 of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (Ofqual 2016). These examinations are offered in a range of genres (see the table on page 3) and are available to any candidate, with or without previous dance experience. Successful candidates receive a Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Dance.

Intermediate is the second in the suite of Vocational Graded Examinations and successful candidates receive a Level 3 Certificate in Vocational Graded Examination in Dance.

Candidates may choose to do one or more examinations at Level 3 in various genres. The content of Grades 6-8 is conceived as a linear progression and candidates are advised to follow the numerical order. The content of Intermediate is conceived as a linear progression from Intermediate Foundation and candidates are advised to complete them in order.

## Objectives

The objectives of Level 3 Graded and 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. Graded and Vocational Graded examinations also aid progression to workplace opportunities such as: professional dancer, teacher, examiner, choreographer, notator, historian, lecturer and community practitioner
- 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 sound platform in dance knowledge and skills for progression to subsequent Graded and/or Vocational Graded Examinations.

## Aims

The aims of Level 3 Graded and Vocational Graded Examinations in Dance are to:

- promote the study of dance as a leisure and/or vocational activity
- provide a means of measuring the acquisition of technical, musical and dance performance skills
- promote and encourage enjoyment of dance as a form of physical exercise
- provide all candidates with an opportunity of experiencing dance accompanied by live or recorded music
- encourage personal self-confidence and group awareness through the experience of dancing solo, with partners and in small groups
- aid the development of a general appreciation of music through dancing to various musical styles and rhythmic patterns
- 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 dance 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, standardisation exercises and performance reviews
- 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 3 Graded or Vocational Graded Examinations.

Graded and Vocational Graded Examinations are open to candidates of any age, although bbodance recommends that candidates should be aged 14 or above before undertaking the Grade 6 and Intermediate examination, aged 15 before undertaking the Grade 7 examination and aged 16 before undertaking the Grade 8 examination.

For students who wish to undertake an examination at an earlier age, we offer Level 2 Awards and Certificates in Dance for which bbodance recommends that candidates should be aged 10 or above before taking Grade 4 or 12 or above before taking Intermediate Foundation.

## 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 3 Descriptor

Candidates who have successfully completed a Level 3 qualification will have demonstrated an appropriate range of dance vocabulary with a secure technical foundation. They will be able to perform complex movements with a clear and sustained sense of co-ordination and alignment. Their musicality is sound and forms part of a clearly discernible sense of performance which includes some aspects of individuality.

### Grade 6 Examination Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Learning Outcomes: the candidate will;	Assessment Criteria: the candidate can;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>develop detailed knowledge and understanding of the dance vocabulary and technical principles</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>perform complex movement phrases and sequences with secure use of dance technique</li><li>perform longer movement sequences with accuracy</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>understand the complex relationship between music and dance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>demonstrate a clear understanding of a range of musical rhythms and styles</li><li>demonstrate a sensitive interpretation of musical quality, phrasing and narrative</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>use an appropriate range of technique and performance skills in an extended set dance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>present a technically sound and assured dance performance which engages with an audience</li></ul>

## Grade 7 Examination Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Learning Outcomes: the candidate will;	Assessment Criteria: the candidate can;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop in-depth knowledge and understanding of dance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>perform complex movement sequences, using a wide dance-based vocabulary</li> <li>perform with technical security and an element of confidence</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a secure understanding of musicality in dance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate a confident and personal interpretation of musical accompaniment</li> <li>perform to a range of musical rhythms, dynamics and styles</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>integrate a range of knowledge and skills in order to present an informed and assured dance performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate a secure sense of performance and artistry with an appropriate sense of style</li> </ul>

## Grade 8 Examination Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Learning Outcomes: the candidate will;	Assessment Criteria: the candidate can;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop an assured range and depth of knowledge and understanding in dance, including complex nuances in style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate a broad range of dance vocabulary across choreographic styles</li> <li>demonstrate sustained technical accuracy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consolidate the range and nuance of their musicality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate a consolidated sense of musicality with some detailed nuances of phrasing</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>synthesise practical and theoretical learning to perform complex and extended dance sequences with confidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate confidence as a performer with a clear sense of style</li> <li>demonstrate confidence in performing alone and with others</li> </ul>

## Intermediate Examination Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Learning Outcomes: the candidate will;	Assessment Criteria: the candidate can;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop an assured range and depth of knowledge and understanding in the chosen genre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate an extensive range of dance vocabulary</li> <li>demonstrate sustained technical accuracy with confidence</li> <li>demonstrate a secure basis for pointe work (Option A ballet syllabi only)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consolidate the range and nuance of their musicality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate musicality and secure musical phrasing in learned sequences</li> <li>demonstrate contrasting musical and movement dynamics</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>synthesise practical and theoretical learning to perform complex and extended sequences with confidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate a clear sense of performance and artistic style</li> <li>perform alone and with others with equal confidence</li> <li>perform with an element of individual interpretation and artistry</li> </ul>

## Grade 6-8 and Intermediate Assessment

In the examinations candidates will be assessed on their ability to:

- perform a series of prepared dance exercises which require the ability to demonstrate secure posture, correct weight placement, co-ordination of the whole body, control, line, spatial awareness and dynamic values
- dance, throughout the examination, in time to the music and show responsiveness to the music
- dance, throughout the examination, with expression and communication
- perform a set dance/dances which require the candidate to demonstrate all of the above aspects of technique, music and performance.
- verbally respond to basic theory questions asked by the examiner

In progressing through these Level 3 qualifications, candidates are expected to demonstrate an increased vocabulary of steps, with an increasing awareness and mastery of dance technique. Candidates are expected to demonstrate knowledge of vocabulary as defined by the chosen syllabus content. An understanding of dance technique is reflected in the ability to co-ordinate movements to produce combinations of steps with appropriate quality of movement (i.e. precision and control), within the range of the candidates' physical capacity.

Candidates are required to communicate an increasing confidence in performance. They should be able to interpret music and display a developing sensitivity to musical content and style. Candidates' performances should communicate a developing spatial awareness, an ability to work with others and responsiveness to an audience.

## 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. The examination is mainly practical in nature, with the inclusion of theory questions which the examiner will ask, related to vocabulary covered in the syllabi; both verbal and physical demonstration responses are acceptable.

In all dance genres, the examination content for Grades 6-8 and Intermediate are gender neutral. For the Ballet syllabi, Pointe Work is introduced for Vocational Graded Examinations, beginning with Intermediate Foundation. 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 candidates identifying as female and considering pursuing further vocational 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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### Grade 6 (Ballet and Tap)

Number of Candidates	Ballet	Tap
1	60 minutes	30 minutes
2	60 minutes	40 minutes
3	75 minutes	55 minutes
4	75 minutes	55 minutes

### Grade 7 and 8 (Ballet and Tap)

Number of Candidates	Ballet	Tap
1	60 minutes	30 minutes
2	60 minutes	40 minutes
3	75 minutes	45 minutes
4	75 minutes	45 minutes

### Intermediate (Ballet, Tap, Jazz and Modern)

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

# 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

## Grades 6-8 Mark Scheme

### Ballet

Examination Content	Marks
Co-ordination & Control	10
Elevation & Beats	10
Footwork	10
Individual Interpretation	10
Musicality	10
Performance Quality	10
Posture & Alignment	10
Spatial Awareness	10
Theory/Knowledge	10
Turns	10

## Tap

Examination Content	Marks
Clarity of Tapping	10
Co-ordination, Balance & Control	10
Footwork	10
Musical Dynamics	10
Musical Rhythm	10
Performance Quality	10
Posture, Placing & Alignment	10
Spatial Awareness	10
Tapping ability	10
Theory/Knowledge	10

## Jazz

Examination Content	Marks
Co-ordination Control	10
Elevation	10
Footwork	10
Individual Interpretation	10
Musicality	10



Performance Quality	10
Posture & Alignment	10
Spatial Awareness	10
Theory/Knowledge	10
Turns	10

## Modern

Examination Content	Marks
Co-ordination Control	10
Elevation	10
Footwork	10
Individual Interpretation	10
Musicality	10
Performance Quality	10
Posture & Alignment	10
Spatial Awareness	10
Theory/Knowledge	10
Turns	10

## Intermediate Mark Scheme

### Ballet

Examination Content	Marks
Co-ordination	10
Extension	10
Footwork/Pointe Work*	10
Musicality	10

Performance Quality	10
Posture & Alignment	10
Strength & Control	10
Style/Interpretation	10
Theory/Knowledge	10
Turns & Elevation*	10

\*In addition to the overall score, candidates must obtain a mark of 4 or above in Pointe Work (female syllabi) or Elevation (male syllabi) to gain this qualification

### Tap

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

### Jazz

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
Theory/Knowledge	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
Theory/Knowledge	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

Excellent in most aspects of technique with consistency across all exercises and set dances. The quality of performance and musicality is also very well developed with demonstration of a range of dynamics. At the upper end of the mark range for Distinction, the candidate demonstrates an excellent or outstanding overall achievement.

### Merit

Good in most aspects of technique with some very good areas of ability. Some aspects of performance quality and musicality are well developed but may lack consistency. At the upper end of the mark range for Merit is work which is very good overall.

### Pass

Acceptable or adequate in the control of technique with some inconsistency across the full range of examined work. Some musical awareness and sense of performance is demonstrated but not fully developed. Some areas of the work examined show limited ability but overall the learning outcomes for the level have been met.

### Standard Not Yet Achieved

Limited technical ability with insufficient strength or control. 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 Grades 6, 7 and 8 is 130 hours. This figure comprises 90 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) and 40 hours of 'Other Learning'.

The TQT for Intermediate is 275 hours. This figure comprises 150 Guided learning Hours (GLH) and 125 ours 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. UCAS Tariff Points

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All bbodance Level 3 Graded and Vocational Graded Examinations carry UCAS points. For details visit: <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator>.

## 8. Uniform

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

Hair should be secured neatly away from the face. Candidates should not wear watches or jewellery in the examination room.

Uniforms may be obtained from any dancewear supplier, however, for information on the bbodance approved stockist go to <https://bbo.dance/shop>.



## 9. Teaching Resources

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The following resources are available for Teachers entering candidates for Level 3 Certificate in Graded and 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.