



National
Qualifications
2026

2026 Dance

National 5

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

These marking instructions have been prepared by examination teams for use by Qualifications Scotland appointed markers when marking external course assessments.

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General marking principles for National 5 Dance

This information is provided to help you understand the general principles you must apply when marking candidate responses to questions in this paper. These principles must be read in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidate responses.

- (a) Marks for each candidate response must always be assigned in line with these general marking principles and the detailed marking instructions for this assessment.
- (b) Marking should always be positive. This means that, for each candidate response, marks are accumulated for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding: they are not deducted from a maximum on the basis of errors or omissions.
- (c) Candidates who do not respond to all aspects of a question cannot access the full range of marks.
- (d) Candidates could refer to a choreography that is unknown to the marker. Markers should use their professional judgement.
- (e) Candidates are expected to use dance terminology throughout in order to access the full range of marks.

Overview

The purpose of the question paper is to assess breadth of knowledge and depth of understanding from across the course, and the application of this knowledge to answer appropriately challenging questions.

Section 1 asks candidates to give a personal evaluative response of self.

Section 2 asks candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a chosen dance style.

Section 3 asks candidates to give a personal evaluative response to a professional piece of choreography for two or more dancers.

Marking instructions for each question

SECTION 1

Question			Expected response	Max mark	Additional guidance
1.	(a)		Candidates are asked to describe an exercise they used to improve or maintain their flexibility. The candidate has given: - a detailed description of an exercise used to improve or maintain their flexibility (2 marks) - a straightforward description of an exercise used to improve or maintain their flexibility (1 mark)	2	Example of a candidate 2 mark response: An exercise I did to improve my leaps is over splits on the blocks. I do this by placing a block under the front of my left leg and going into a split and holding it for 10 seconds. Then I straighten my legs, and then I repeat the same process and if it gets easier, I increase the blocks to aim for the 180 degrees position so that when I perform leaps they are good. Example of a 1 mark candidate response: One exercise I used was using stretch bands to try get my splits. When doing this I was sitting with my legs in front of me and put the band around one foot while holding it pulling towards my chest.

Question		Expected response	Max mark	Additional guidance
	(b)	Candidates are asked to evaluate their use of flexibility in their solo performance. The candidate has given: - a detailed evaluation of their use of flexibility in their solo performance (2 marks) - a straightforward evaluation of their use of flexibility in their solo performance (1 mark) Award 0 marks where there is no evaluation of their use of flexibility in their solo performance.	2	Example of a 2 mark candidate response: My use of flexibility in my solo was successful because I used my hip flexibility correctly the way I used it was through my leaps and kicks. For my leaps I successfully used my hip flexibility to push me into the air and hit the split position. I used the same hip flexibility to give me a strong kick that will hit my shoulder. So, by correctly using my hip flexibility it gave me power and strength to get my kick and leap height and make my performance more eye-catching. Example of a 1 mark candidate response: I think my flexibility was good in my jazz solo because from my stretching program my muscles felt very loose and flexible making it easier to perform the leap. Meaning I didn't have to focus how high my legs would go and could focus on the technique and performance.

Question			Expected response	Max mark	Additional guidance
2.			Candidates are asked to explain their use of quality and/or dynamics to create contrasts in their solo performance. The candidate has given: - a detailed explanation of their use of quality and/or dynamics to create contrasts in their solo performance (2 marks) - a straightforward explanation of their use of quality and/or dynamics to create contrasts in their solo performance (1 mark)	2	Example of a 2 mark candidate response: In my solo I used different dynamics by performing different movements fast and slow. At the start of my solo I perform a move when I slowly contract in. My shoulders release down and my head falls down. After this movement I quickly pull myself back up. To do this I stand up on my left foot on demi-pointe and quickly moving my left arm around my head in wrapping motions. This helps to show contrast in my dance, as I go from performing a slow, soft release to straight away performing something explosive. Example of a 1 mark candidate response: In my commercial solo my quality and dynamics created contrast. In the house section the upper half of my body stayed calm and relaxed whilst my feet were making sure every step had sharp and precise dynamics.

Question			Expected response	Max mark	Additional guidance
3.	(a)		Candidates are asked to describe in what way(s) they used general space in their solo performance. The candidate has given: - a detailed description of their use of general space in their solo performance (2 marks) - a straightforward description of their use of general space in their solo performance (1 mark)	2	Example of a 2 mark candidate response: I used general space in my jazz solo performance when doing a leap from the corner. I started the solo downstage and I made sure when doing a step turn step I got to the opposite upstage right corner. I then did a big step ball-change step leap to the opposite side downstage left. Example of a 1 mark candidate response: I used my general space when completing the leap and step ball change section, this means I managed to travel a far distance around the room going corner to corner making sure to use all my space.
	(b)		Candidates are asked to describe in what way(s) they used personal space in their solo performance. The candidate has given: - a detailed description of their use of personal space in their solo performance (2 marks) - a straightforward description of their use of personal space in their solo performance (1 mark)	2	Example 2 mark candidate response: During my contemporary solo there is a section when my feet don't move and I only use my body from the knees up. I use movements like extended arm grabs; I also bend my knees a lot to make me in a plié position. Making sure not to travel and keeping me in my personal bubble. Example of a 1 mark candidate response: In my fan kick I stretched my arms up as far as I could and kicked my leg round as big as I could this helped make my move look bigger and bolder, staying on the spot.

SECTION 2

Question			Expected response	Max mark	Additional guidance
4.			The candidates are asked to describe one style specific step used to identify their selected dance style. The candidate has given: - a detailed description of one style specific step used to identify their selected dance style (2 marks) - a straightforward description of one style specific step used to identify their selected dance style (1 mark)	2	Example of a 2 mark candidate response: Ballet One style specific step is a glissade this would be when you start in third or fifth position and plié you then release one leg and aim it toward second without it leaving the floor you then go onto that leg and do the same movements with the other leg bringing it in to third or fifth either under or over. Example of a 1 mark candidate response: Jazz Pirouette – start in parallel, step left foot in front of you and step the right foot back to relevé. Place right arm straight out in front and left arm straight to the side. Then pull right arm back and the right knee up and turn on your relevé. Land with feet in parallel on relevé with both arms out to the side.

Question			Expected response	Max mark	Additional guidance
5.			The candidates are asked to describe the origins of their selected dance style. The candidate has given: • a detailed description of the origins of their selected dance style (4 marks) • a description of the origins of their selected dance style in some detail (3 marks) • a straightforward description the origins of their selected dance style (2 marks) • a limited description of the origins of their selected dance style (1 mark)	4	Example of a 4 mark candidate response: Jazz: Jazz dance started during the Atlantic slave trade in the 1800s. This was when Africans were kidnapped from their homes to work as slaves for American plantations. They would be transported from Africa to America, along what was known as middle passage. The conditions on the boats were inhumane. Slaves would be shackled to the floor below deck, close together with one another. The boats were unhygienic and the slave owners were cruel to the slaves. As a way to keep the slaves fit and healthy they were forced to exercise on the top deck. As a way to exercise but stay close also to their roots and traditions, they would perform their traditional tribal dances. These would include things like high kicks and use of explosive leg strength. They would use their shackles as music and body percussion too. Slave owners seen this dancing and wanted to use it to make fun of their slaves. The slave owners put on shows to do this and these were known as Minstrel shows. This is where dancers dressed up to look clumsy to perform tribal dancing. However, these shows introduced this style of dancing to America.

Question			Expected response	Max mark	Additional guidance
					Example of a 3 mark candidate response: Contemporary: Contemporary came around in the early 20th century. The first pioneer, Isadora Duncan decided to rebel against the traditional ballet style, which was about precise technique and perfect lines. She did for example, loose tunics and bottoms, wearing no shoes and moving freely and differently from the technical ballet style. Many called this ugly by not using as much technique within the movements. Many pioneers created their own style, for example, Merce Cunningham. He began to enforce equality in contemporary dance by having women lift women in overhead lifts and both men and women wearing the same exact costumes so they're equal. Example of a 2 mark candidate response: Ballet: The origins of ballet were created in Italy as a form of court entertainment performed by nobles. Ballet then moved to France where King Louis created the Royal Academie of Danse and ballet as a style was formalised and the formal technique was set for example first to fifth position of the feet and arms. Example of a 1 mark candidate response: Jazz: The origins of jazz started during the slave trade when people wouldn't be able to speak to each other so they would communicate through stamps, clicks, claps and more until they were banned.

Question			Expected response	Max mark	Additional guidance
6.			The candidates are asked to explain the ways music and costume have developed over time in their selected dance style. The candidate has given: - a detailed explanation of the ways music and costume have developed over time in their selected dance style (4 marks) - an explanation of the ways music and costume have developed over time in their selected dance style in some detail (3 marks) - a straightforward explanation of the ways music and costume have developed over time in their selected dance style (2 mark) - a limited explanation of the way music and costume have developed over time in their selected dance style (1 mark) Candidates can be awarded a maximum of 3 marks if the development of either costume or music is explained in detail.	4	Example of a 4 mark candidate response: Music within ballet was originally performed live and was developed in tandem with the development of operas during the 15th/16th century. As time moved forward however choreographers like Twyla Tharp pushed the boundaries with the music used for ballet performances, using the music of the Beach Boys – for example – for her works. Ballet music has developed to keep up with modern trends and engage wider audiences. Costume in Ballet productions has changed over time as traditionally women would only perform in big full skirts and tutus, however, today in performances like Mathew Bourne’s Swan Lake production the dancers wear everyday clothing for example swimsuits to show a modern setting. Example of a 3 mark candidate response: In the 1800s music that was used for jazz dance was the shakles and body percussion used by the slaves. The costumes used were the minstrel show costumes, which were big costumes used to make dancers look clumsy and to make fun of slaves. Jazz music developed into musical theatre by Bob Fosse. Jazz dance was danced to songs such as All That Jazz from Chicago or music from Cabaret. The costumes used were leotards, black tights, hats, heels, gloves and canes. Now jazz music and costumes is a mixture of everything. For example, I danced my jazz dance in my show to Good Morning Baltimore from Hairspray and the costume I wore was a pink skirt, leotard, heels, a pink handkerchief and pink ribbon.

Question			Expected response	Max mark	Additional guidance
					Example of a 2 mark candidate response: Ballet music used to be very slow paced with no lyrics but over time it has developed to some choreographers using lyrics and some fast tempo sections and music used for allegro. Ballet used to be very specific with only girls wearing pointe shoes and tutus but over time it has developed to some dance schools and colleges having boys do pointe work as well as the girls. Example of a 1 mark candidate response: Music for contemporary used to be classical or instrumental music with no words but you can now dance to songs with words, even popular songs. For costume you have always been able to wear anything.

SECTION 3

Question			Expected response	Max mark	Additional guidance
7.	(a)		Candidates are asked to describe one key movement or motif from the choreography. The candidate has given: - a detailed description of one key movement or motif from the choreography (2 marks) - a straightforward description of one key movement or motif from the choreography (1 mark)	2	Example 2 mark candidate response: Young men by Iván Pérez A key movement in Young Men was in the PTSD section when the dancer inverted his leg, lifting it to an attitude like position. His standing leg was not in alignment and one arm looked to be reaching for help, with his chest lifted upwards. Example of a 1 mark candidate response: Shadows by Christopher Bruce One key movement that is repeated throughout the piece is the daughters turns. She leaves the rest of the family and begins to spin looking out of control. She maintains facial expressions looking terrified and worried.

Question		Expected response	Max mark	Additional guidance
	(b)	Candidates are asked to explain in what way(s) this key movement or motif is developed to communicate the theme/intentions. The candidate has given: - a detailed explanation of the way(s) this key movement or motif is developed to communicate the theme/intentions (2 marks) - a straightforward explanation of the way(s) this key movement or motif is developed to communicate the theme/intentions (1 mark)	2	Example 2 mark candidate response: Young men by Iván Pérez This key movement is developed by embellishment and using different tempos and dynamics. The movement become slower but with some sharper moments. This section was about shell shock, therefore the out of alignment, angular, uncomfortable nature of the dancer's movement which becomes more exaggerated and sharper with the development made it difficult to watch and replicates the pain and torture he was feeling, further communicating the theme of war and suffering. Example of a 1 mark candidate response: Shadows by Christopher Bruce The daughters turns are developed through the piece by each time she does them she gets more out of control. At the beginning it looks like normal turns because the family were doing ok. Nearer the end she does more turns faster and with worried facial expressions because her family were struggling.

Question			Expected response	Max mark	Additional guidance
8.			Candidates are asked to evaluate the use of lighting at one key moment to communicate the theme/intentions. The candidate has given: - a detailed evaluation of the use of lighting at one key moment to communicate the theme/intentions (2 marks) - a straightforward evaluation of the use of lighting at one key moment to communicate the theme/intentions (1 mark) Award 0 marks where there is no evaluation of the use of lighting in one key moment to communicate the theme/ intentions.	2	Example 2 mark candidate response: Swansong by Christopher Bruce The lighting in the first section was good because it is dark with one dim spotlight on the diagonal facing the prisoners chair in the middle of the room. This was fabulous to show the idea of the cell being dark and having no escape. The light could be the door out and the only way out which relates to the theme of human rights as the prisoner has lost his rights and is not able to escape the cell. Therefore, the light at the start is effective in communicating the theme of entrapment. Example of a 1 mark candidate response: Peaky Blinders: The Redemption of Thomas Shelby by Benoit Swan Pouffer The use of strobe lighting in act one was effective to show the theme/intentions. During ‘the devil inside me’ there is harsh white lights flashing to effectively show the chaos and violence of war.

Question			Expected response	Max mark	Additional guidance
9.	(a)		Candidates are asked to describe one costume from the choreography. The candidate has given: - a detailed description of one costume from the choreography (2 marks) - a straightforward description of one costume from the choreography (1 mark)	2	Example of a 2 mark candidate response: Shadows by Christopher Bruce The mother's costume is a dress with puffy sleeves that goes down to her knees and floats. The dress has a floral pattern on it with the colours light grey, pink and blue that are faded. Example of a 1 mark candidate response: Still Life Penguin Café by David Bintley One costume is in the zebra scene they are all wearing one suit pieces with zebra print covered. They also have a mohawk/hair coming from their forehead down their head to their neck to represent a zebra.
	(b)		Candidates are asked to explain the impact this costume had on communicating the theme/intentions. The candidate has given: - a detailed explanation of the impact this costume had on communicating the theme/intentions (2 marks) - a straightforward explanation of the impact this costume had on communicating the theme/intentions (1 mark)	2	Example 2 mark candidate response: Peaky Blinders: The Redemption of Thomas Shelby by Benoit Swan Pouffer By the dancers wearing dirty and undone uniform it communicates the psychological impact of war. They all looked drained and exhausted, as their clothes are untidy, conveying that war has a big mental impact on the soldiers and they have all been through a traumatic and unpleasant time. Example 1 mark candidate response: Ghost Dances by Christopher Bruce The costumes were powerful as it gives them their haunting, eerie, defined look. It shows they don't care about what they're wearing as they only want to take people's lives away.

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]