



ROYAL  
BALLET  
SCHOOL

SETTING THE STANDARD

## REPORTING & ASSESSMENT POLICY

OCTOBER 2018

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Updated: 3 July 2018 (KLD/CP) Next Review: July 2019

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## INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines the School's approach to the assessment of student progress, and the reporting of that progress, to parents and students, both artistically and academically.

The key underlying principles are openness, equity and timeliness. The process is intended to avoid the delayed communication of any significant issues so that parent meetings and reports do not contain unwelcome surprises. Parents (and indeed students) should feel able, at any time, to contact the relevant ballet or academic teacher about any concerns affecting progress. Likewise, staff will speak with a student and contact parents, if necessary, when they do not feel it is appropriate to delay a discussion until the next formal meeting or report.

It is the intention of The Royal Ballet School to assess progress based on clear criteria and with due regard to performance in the studio, in class and in prep (homework) as well as in formal assessments (exams/tests) in both ballet and academics.

It is, at all times, the aim of the School to use reporting and assessment as a means to guide students and parents in making the correct choices in terms of ongoing artistic training and academic education. There will always be an element of professional judgment involved in this process but parents and students should be reassured that it is our goal to enable every student to continue with us, if it is right for that young person to do so.

## THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The assessment of a student's artistic or academic progress, is ongoing. It takes place in class and in prep, or in the studio on a daily and weekly basis. This is known as formative assessment and is about the continuous process of a teacher providing feedback to a student on what is going well and what requires further work. At certain points in the School year this formative assessment is underpinned by a summative assessment, or what might be called a 'test' or 'exam' or a 'quantifiable' record of the standard of a student's work at that point in time, perhaps in the form of a written report.

The annual summative artistic Assessment for all students at The Royal Ballet School (formerly referred to as 'Appraisal') takes place in the spring term. Academically the key summative assessment points (whether external, such as GCSEs, or internal) are spread throughout the year although the main examinations tend to be in the summer term. For the Degree, which forms the core of the academic programme at Upper School, there are regular assessment deadlines and many A Level subjects will have termly or half-termly tests to measure progress when written reports are due.

Academically, students are taught by following Schemes of Work that facilitate progress and enable students to meet the relevant assessment requirements throughout their education. The standard of work in each year will become more demanding. For example, the work undertaken in Year 8 will be harder than that in Year 7. Some years will have a bigger 'step-up' in standard than others. A good example of this would be a student who works very hard and does really well to get a B grade pass at GCSE Maths but who would still not meet the desired requirement for studying Maths at A Level. To be successful at A Level Maths a student usually needs at least a good A grade at GCSE.

The process is very similar for artistic training. The School's System of Training sets out the requirements of the artistic programme for each year group. As with an academic subject the demands will be greater as a student moves up the School. This may mean that a student will meet the required standard in Year 8 but may not be able to cope with the technical demands of training in Year 9. Similarly a student who meets the standards of Year 11 may still not be successful in the audition for Upper School, where the standard will again be significantly greater.

This makes Year 9 an especially important year for artistic assessment as the decision being made at that point is a commitment to two years of further training, rather than one year. This is to enable a student to complete the important GCSE years academically. It is, therefore, of vital importance that a student who progresses to Year 10 and 11 will be able to cope physically, mentally and technically with the significant step-up in artistic demand that occurs in these years. We would again emphasise that a decision not to offer further training at this point will only be made if the School believes it is in the best interests of the student but we would, nonetheless, recommend that all parents of students in Year 9 should give some consideration to what alternatives might be suitable at this point.

When a student is not offered further training, it is always very difficult news to hear. We would stress that we have no reason to wish to assess a young person out of the School: quite the contrary. If a student meets the standard required for ongoing artistic training (i.e. they will be able to cope with the demands and requirements of the next stage of training) and it is right for them to continue that training (taking into account their motivation, physical capability and wishes), then we would very much want to keep them in the School.

The annual artistic assessment is based on the criteria listed below which are measured to the standard of The Royal Ballet School.

## **ARTISTIC ASSESSMENT**

The annual artistic assessment is based on the criteria listed below.

1. Technical Application and Coordination:
  - a. Achievement of vocabulary
  - b. Correct posture and alignment
  - c. Correct weight placement/balance
  - d. Transfer of weight
  - e. Use of turn-out
  - f. Effective and integrated use of the body
  - g. Flow of movement
  
2. Physical Application:
  - a. Appropriate strength and use of muscles
  - b. Stamina
  - c. Appropriate intensity
  - d. Spatial Awareness

3. Artistry, Musicality and Dynamics:
  - a. Stage Presence, presentation and projection
  - b. Interpretation
  - c. Phrasing and synchronicity with accompanist
  - d. Musical interpretation
  - e. Appropriate use of dynamics and a clear understanding of phrasing
  
4. Aesthetics Currently Observed for Classical Ballet
  - a. Aesthetics
  - b. Flexibility
  - c. Natural hip rotation (turn-out)
  - d. Natural elevation

These criteria will be graded by each member of the Assessment Panel and by the relevant teacher against the standards set by The Royal Ballet School. The marks will be combined using the weightings outlined in the table below. In the early years of training the mark is weighted in favour of the teacher's assessment. They are aware of the quality of a students' work on an ongoing basis and so can mitigate the effect of performance nerves or other factors negatively affecting the assessment class itself. As the years progress, greater emphasis will be placed on the assessment class itself as the ability to meet expectations in performance conditions is very much part of a dancer's skill set.

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Teacher's Mark</b>	<b>Combined Panel Mark</b>
7 - 8	60%	40%
9 - 11	50%	50%
1 <sup>st</sup>	40%	60%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	20%	80%
3 <sup>rd</sup>		100%

All teachers' assessments are moderated throughout the year by the Artistic Director, often in combination with the Head of Outreach & Access, the Artistic Managers and other experienced guest teachers who observe and work with the classes.

If a child is ill or injured at the time of the assessment and unable to complete any, or only part of the class, alternative arrangements will be made for the assessment to be completed at another time. There may be some circumstances in which this would not be the case, such as a student no longer wishing to continue their artistic training, a very long-term injury that will fundamentally affect a student's artistic progress, the risk of assessment affecting recovery from injury and so on. In exceptional circumstances, therefore, a decision may be made at the discretion of the Artistic Director and the artistic team, to offer a further year of training or not, without a student being formally assessed.

For the written reports the following additional criteria will be assessed by the teacher.

1. Professional Behaviour
  - a. Self-motivation, self-discipline and drive.
  - b. Ability to effectively work with others
  - c. Ability to process feedback in a constructive manner
  - d. Ability to maintain respectful working relationships with the teacher, pianist and peers
  - e. Ability to maintain respect for the working environment (studio/theatre)
  - f. Punctuality and attendance
  - g. Being prepared for lessons and rehearsals
  - h. Appropriate personal presentation
  
2. Professional Application (*the ability to translate instruction into effective action*)
  - a. Appropriate application of technical and artistic information and corrections
  - b. Retention of technical and artistic information
  - c. Active participation in training

These criteria will also be considered, together with the technical criteria above, when making decisions about the offer of continued training at the School. Classical ballet is a demanding and disciplined career and success requires not simply technical accomplishment but also full commitment and motivation.

Staff must consider not only the standard currently attained but also the potential to meet the requirements at the next stage of training when making these decisions. Other factors will also need to be considered such as injury, illness, recent growth etc. and so the professional judgement of the artistic team will always be an important element of the decision-making process.

The assessment process also includes regular Tutorials for the student and teacher to ensure that your son or daughter understands what areas are going well and what areas they should be working on. These tutorials as well as the regular and annual artistic assessment process will all take account of the other factors listed above, such as injury, illness, recent growth etc.

Each of the criteria is measured against the following Grade Descriptors:

Level	Grade Descriptor
9	The student has achieved the technical and artistic requirements of this level of training to an outstanding level.
8	The student has achieved the technical and artistic requirements of this level of training to an excellent standard.
7	The student has achieved the technical and artistic requirements of this level of training to a very good standard.
6	The student has achieved the technical and artist requirements of this level of training to a good standard.
5	The student has achieved the technical and artistic requirements of this level of training to a satisfactory standard.
4	The student's technical and artistic standard is less than satisfactory.
3	The student's technical and artistic standard is unsatisfactory.
2	The student's technical and artistic standard is poor.
1	The student has not met any of the basic requirements of this level of training.

The table overleaf outlines the cycle of assessment for each year group.

## THE ROYAL BALLET SCHOOL DIPLOMA AND CERTIFICATE

Admission to the 3rd Year at Upper School is by invitation only. At the end of the 3rd Year the award of the Diploma or Certificate to graduating students will be based on the following criteria:

- a. Assessment results
- b. Professional Application
- c. Professional Behaviour
- d. Successful completion of the 3rd Year Careers Module
- e. Attendance
- f. Academic effort
- g. Meeting the School's expectations in terms of attitude, motivation and behaviour.

A Diploma Committee, which would typically consist of the following and/or their nominated deputies: the Artistic Director, the Academic & Pastoral Principal and other senior artistic and academic staff and teachers and they will assess each student against the above criteria and either award The Royal Ballet School Diploma or The Royal Ballet School Certificate. Students will be advised of the decision during the second half of the summer term.

The Diploma will be awarded to those students who attain the highest standards of artistic attainment and meet the School's expectations in the other criteria. The Certificate will be awarded to those students who attain a satisfactory standard of artistic attainment and meet the School's expectations in the other criteria. Where expectations in criteria b) to g) are not met, this will be taken into account when deciding on the final award.

In exceptional circumstances it may not be possible to award either a Diploma or Certificate to a student who has not been able to fully complete the course. In this case a Record of Attendance may be awarded.

***An explanation of the artistic criteria and a short glossary of relevant artistic terms is included at the end of this document and the cycle of artistic assessment and tutorials is outlined in the table below.***

Year Group	October	December	January	February	April	May
<b>7</b>	Tutorial - before 1/2 term <b>Goal setting</b>	Ballet Report followed by parent meeting and report feedback	Tutorial – start of Spring term. <b>Goal setting</b>	Assessment & assessment result letter Tutorial – after ½ term Assessment de-brief and one-to-one	Tutorial - start of Summer term <b>Goal setting</b>	Ballet Report Optional tutorial after ½ term– one-to-one
<b>8</b>	Tutorial - before 1/2 term <b>Goal setting</b>	Ballet Report followed by parent meeting and report feedback	Tutorial – start of Spring term. <b>Goal setting</b>	Assessment & assessment result letter Tutorial - after 1/2 term Assessment de-brief and one-to-one	Tutorial - start of Summer term <b>Goal setting</b>	Ballet Report Optional tutorial after ½ term– one-to-one
<b>9</b>	Tutorial - before 1/2 term <b>Goal setting</b>	Ballet Report followed by parent meeting and report feedback	Tutorial – start of Spring term. <b>Goal setting</b>	Assessment & assessment result letter Tutorial - after 1/2 term Assessment de-brief and one-to-one	Tutorial – start of Summer term <b>Goal setting</b>	Ballet Report Optional tutorial after ½ term– one-to-one
<b>10</b>	Tutorial - before 1/2 term <b>Goal setting</b>	Ballet Report followed by parent meeting and report feedback	Tutorial – start of Spring term. <b>Goal setting</b>	Assessment & assessment result letter Tutorial - after 1/2 term Assessment de-brief and one-to-one	Tutorial - start of Summer term <b>Goal setting</b>	Ballet Report & Future Planning Open Meeting Optional tutorial after ½ term– one-to-one
<b>11</b>	Tutorial - before 1/2 term <b>Goal setting</b>	Ballet Report followed by parent meeting and report feedback	Tutorial – start of Spring term. <b>Goal setting</b>	Assessment & assessment result letter Tutorial - after 1/2 term Assessment de-brief and one-to-one	Upper School Audition Tutorial - start of Summer term <b>Goal setting</b>	Ballet Report Optional tutorial after ½ term– one-to-one

<b>1st</b>	Tutorial - before 1/2 term <b>Goal setting</b>	Ballet Report followed by parent meeting and report feedback	Tutorial – one-to-one at start of Spring term.	Tutorial - before 1/2 term <b>Goal setting</b>	Assessment & assessment result letter Tutorial - start of Summer term <b>Goal setting</b>	Ballet Report Optional tutorial after ½ term– one-to-one
<b>2nd</b>	Tutorial - before 1/2 term <b>Goal setting</b>	Ballet Report followed by parent meeting and report feedback	Tutorial – chat at start of Spring term.	Tutorial - before 1/2 term <b>Goal setting</b>	Assessment & assessment result letter & letter regarding offer of training for the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tutorial - start of Summer term <b>Goal setting</b>	Ballet Report Year Optional tutorial after ½ term – one-to-one
<b>3rd</b>	Tutorial - before 1/2 term <b>Goal setting</b>	<b>November:</b> Assessment & result letter <b>December:</b> Ballet Report	Tutorial – chat at start of Spring term.	Parent Meeting (Optional) Tutorial - after 1/2 term <b>Goal setting</b>	Tutorial - start of Summer term <b>Goal setting</b>	Ballet Report & Diploma decision Optional tutorial after ½ term– one-to-one

## ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

The academic assessment process is based on the regular measurement of Attainment (the achievement of appropriate academic standards at each stage of a student's education) and Effort (the focus, determination and level of independent study given to the completion of academic tasks).

In both cases the grades awarded will be a combined measurement of ongoing work in both class and prep (homework). After the internal exams in the summer the % mark or grade equivalent obtained by the student in each subject will also usually be given. All students are allocated an Academic Tutor who will monitor their progress on a regular basis and support a student with reviewing their individual progress once a term.

It is important to remember that even when Effort grades are high a student may still not achieve the top grade for attainment. Although high levels of effort will generally improve attainment grades, and although good teaching will also help enable students to do better than they might otherwise, still, not every student will be able to get to get a top attainment grade. We aim to ensure that every student gets the best possible grade that they can, to reflect their hard work and the high quality of teaching provided.

When a student joins the School in Years 7 to 9 we undertake a form of baseline testing called, MidYIS. This is a national standardised test (for which there is no need to prepare) that provides an indication of likely GCSE outcomes based on a student's ability at that point in time. Schools use this baseline data to measure what is called 'Value Added'. When GCSE results are published, these are compared to the MidYIS predictions and the Value Added calculated. In recent years the Value Added at GCSE for The Royal Ballet School has shown that the majority of students do significantly better than a person of their ability would have done at another, similar School. Students joining the School will also undertake additional literacy screening to ensure that we can provide the appropriate support on an ongoing basis where needed.

All academic assessment and teaching will take account of any specific learning needs of a student. Please advise us of any concerns that you may have or any previous assessment of learning needs so that we may make appropriate provision to support your son or daughter. If we observe any concerns in this regard we will speak to parents in order to assess any future need for additional support, special access arrangements for exams and so on. Parents, and students, are encouraged to speak with their Academic Tutor, their Head of Year or indeed any teacher about any academic matter of concern. Staff are always happy to help.

All students at The Royal Ballet School are highly talented and they are offered a place at the School purely based on their ability and potential in classical ballet. Some of our students also have very high academic ability in some or all subjects, and other students may find conventional academic study a challenge. Academically, therefore, we are truly an all-ability School. All academic departments are experienced at teaching across this all-ability spectrum with suitable provision being made for both the least and most academically able in each subject. Highly able and gifted students will be stretched in the classroom and those less so, will be supported in making the best possible progress.

## GRADE EXPECTATIONS

### Effort

Level	Grade Descriptor
<i>a</i>	An exceptional level of effort in class and prep, if applicable.
<i>b</i>	A very high standard of effort in class and prep, if applicable.
<i>c</i>	A good level of effort in class and prep, if applicable.
<i>d</i>	A level of effort that is below expectations in class or prep, if applicable, or both.
<i>e</i>	An unacceptable level of effort in class or prep, if applicable, or both.

All students are expected to achieve an Effort Grade of c or above.

### Attainment

Level	Grade Descriptor
<b>9</b>	A student consistently achieves an outstanding standard of work, in class and prep, if applicable.
<b>8</b>	A student consistently achieves an excellent standard of work in class and prep, if applicable.
<b>7</b>	A student routinely achieves a very good standard of work in class and prep, if applicable.
<b>6</b>	A student routinely achieves a good standard of work in class and prep, if applicable.
<b>5</b>	A student regularly achieves a satisfactory standard of work in class and prep, if applicable.
<b>4</b>	A student occasionally achieves a satisfactory standard of work but there may be some limitations in class or prep, if applicable, or both.
<b>3</b>	A student is rarely achieving a satisfactory standard of work in class or prep, if applicable, or both.
<b>2</b>	A student is very rarely achieving a satisfactory standard of work in class or prep, if applicable, or both.
<b>1</b>	A student's level of achievement in class or prep, if applicable, or both, is unsatisfactory.

A student who is achieving a Grade 4 or 5 is likely to be reaching the expected attainment standard at that point in their education. This might mean, therefore, that a student who has achieved a Grade 8 in History in the summer of Year 9 might only achieve a Grade 4 at the start of Year 10 when the demands of GCSE mean that the standard has been raised significantly. Attainment grades will, therefore, vary over time.

Although the numbering of these grades is broadly linked to the new GCSE 9 point grading structure, in the context of a School report they should not be read as a predictor of an eventual GCSE grade. The grades awarded in a report reflect attainment in the previous reporting period: they are not a prediction of what might be achieved in the future. In the summer term, grades will reflect attainment and effort over the WHOLE academic year.

A student may have done particularly well in an English topic in the Spring Term of Year 10 that will earn them a Grade 7, but when considering their overall attainment in the subject by the end of Year 11, they may expect to achieve a Grade 6 in the final examination. Conversely, a student in Year 11 may achieve only a Grade 4 in the October report, but still be capable of a Grade 8 in the summer, if the right amount of effort is put in.

In the Autumn Term of Year 11 all students will be issued with Current Anticipated Grades based on the evidence of attainment and effort up to that point. It will also include an assessment on the part of the teacher of what a student is capable of if they put in maximum effort, and the examination itself does not throw up any unexpected surprises. After the GCSE mocks in January of Year 11, the students will be given Predicted Grades. These grades are used for references provided to other Schools. It is, therefore, vital that students understand the importance of revising and preparing thoroughly for these mock examinations.

If a student is achieving Grades 3 or below, the member of staff will be in touch to discuss their concerns and the proposed strategies for enabling the student to make improved progress.

The cycle of Subject, Academic Tutor, peri music and House reports is outlined in the table below.

## ACADEMIC REPORT TIMINGS AND PARENT MEETINGS

	October	November exeat	December	February	Easter	June	July
<b>Year 7</b>	Short Report <i>Parent Meeting</i>			Short Report			Full report
<b>Year 8</b>	Short Report	<i>Parent Meeting</i>		Short Report			Full report
<b>Year 9</b>		Short Report		Short Report	<i>Parent Meeting</i>		Full Report
<b>Year 10</b>			Short Report	<i>Parent Meeting</i>	Short Report		Full Report
<b>Year 11</b>	Short Report		<i>Parent Meeting</i>	Full Report		Valedictory Report	
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Year</b>			Short Report <i>Parent Meeting</i>		Full Report	Short report	
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Year</b>			Short Report <i>Parent Meeting</i>		Full Report		

*Full Report* – Attainment & Effort grades, Subject, Academic Tutor & House comments.

*Short Report* - Attainment & Effort grades for each subject, optional Subject comments, short Academic Tutor & House comments.

Full and Short Reports will both include Instrumental/Voice reports.

*Valedictory Report* – Academic Tutor, House Comments & Principal's remarks only.

Reports will not be written for the PE and Healthy Performer Programmes as these are co-curricular activities. Studies in Religion will only report in the spring and summer terms.

## **ARTISTIC TERMINOLOGY**

Students are assessed in the following sections of the ballet lesson/assessment:

### **Barre Work**

Barre work prepares a student for all that comes in the centre. Repetition of the same exercises and movement allows students to gain strength and to focus on body alignment, turn-out, flexibility, head positioning and balance. Students should develop a clear understanding of vocabulary and how it is executed, posture, alignment, port de bras, extensions, stability and balance.

### **Centre Work**

In the Centre, a student should be able to transfer the vocabulary and skills learnt at the barre in dance combinations/exercises of ever increasing complexity as the years progress.

### **Allegro**

Allegro is the term we use to describe the technique of jumping. The use of coordination, strong footwork and dynamics are essential, alongside a natural ability to jump (ballon).

### **Pointe Work**

For the female ballet dancer, pointe work is the defining element of classical and contemporary ballet choreography. The learning of this technique can only start after a child has acquired the necessary strength in her feet and awareness of core stability.

All of the above areas of the lesson are assessed in the following categories:

### **Technical Application**

Classical ballet requires a high level of technical application in order to meet the requirements of the dance profession. In each area of the lesson students should demonstrate the achievement of vocabulary, correct posture and alignment, correct weight placement/balance, transfer of weight, and use of turn-out relevant to the level of training undertaken.

### **Physical Application**

Classical ballet demands of the professional dancer a high level of physicality. In each area of the lesson students should demonstrate physical strength, stamina, appropriate use of muscles, appropriate physical intensity, and spatial awareness.

### **Musicality and Coordination**

The combination of musicality and coordination embodies the natural grace and elegance of the classical ballet dancer, and the awareness of music and rhythm is intrinsic to dance. Musicality includes phrasing, musical interpretation, and synchronicity with the accompanist. Coordination includes the effective and integrated use of the body, and the flow of movement.

## **Artistry and Dynamics**

As a profession, classical ballet is an expressive artistic pursuit. For the student the development of technique should always be matched by the development of individual artistic interpretation and dynamics. Artistry includes appropriate interpretation and style, conveyance of character to an audience, presentation, projection, and stage presence. Dynamics includes its appropriate use, and a clear understanding of phrasing.

## **Aesthetics Currently Observed for Classical Ballet**

“Aesthetics Currently Observed for Classical Ballet” is the way in which a student currently uses their physical ability and attributes to produce the necessary aesthetic lines and technique of classical ballet to the standard required for The Royal Ballet School.

In addition the ballet teacher assesses the following:

### **Professional Behaviour**

Throughout their training students should demonstrate behaviour that is appropriate to the profession of classical ballet. The attributes of professional behaviour include the ability to work effectively with others, process feedback in a constructive manner, maintain respectful working relationships with the teacher, pianist and peers, and maintain respect for the working environment (studio/theatre). Also taken into consideration is punctuality, being prepared for lessons and rehearsals, and attendance.

### **Professional Application**

In order to apply themselves effectively to their training students should demonstrate the ability to apply and retain technical and artistic information and corrections, self-motivation and drive, self-discipline, and active participation in, and a responsibility for, their training.

## GLOSSARY

These descriptions are illustrative and not exhaustive.

<i>Alignment:</i>	Relates to the arrangement of the limbs in space relative to the body.
<i>Ballon:</i>	A jump demonstrating ease and lightness with a swift rebound from the floor.
<i>Coordination:</i>	The ability to use different parts of the body together smoothly and efficiently in order to effectively execute classical ballet technique.
<i>Dynamics:</i>	The appropriate degree of energy or force used to execute a movement.
<i>Extensions:</i>	Height, stretch and length of leg and foot, achieved through a combination of flexibility and strength.
<i>Musicality:</i>	Musical interpretation through the matching of movement and form to the rhythm, melody and mood of the music being played.
<i>Physical Aesthetics:</i>	Possessing the physical aesthetic appropriate to classical ballet.
<i>Port de bras:</i>	Movement and shape of the arms, in and through the distinct classical positions, involving the use of the eyes, head and upper body.
<i>Turn-out:</i>	Leg rotation in the hip socket and its enhancement through training, to be continually sustained through movement.
<i>Posture:</i>	The appropriate visual stacking of the skeletal system and maintaining correct core control when the body is static and also moving through space.
<i>Presentation:</i>	The student's ability to engage an audience through their dancing.
<i>Vocabulary:</i>	Understanding and application of the classical ballet steps required at that particular level of training.
<i>Weight placement:</i>	The correct distribution of weight between the three points of the foot (1 <sup>st</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> metatarsal and front of heel) to facilitate correct posture and ease of movement.