

2025 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject:	Dance
Level:	1
Achievement standard(s):	91938, 91939

General commentary

Compared to previous years, the quality of responses has strengthened. Reference to the relatively new achievement standards, in addition to the assessment specifications will support understanding of these assessments further. Across both standards, candidates who focused on direct responses to the task tended to perform better than those who focused on length of response.

Report on individual achievement standard(s)

Achievement standard 91938: Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between cultural context and key features of a dance genre or style

Assessment

The assessment required candidates to describe key features of a dance genre or style and then link these to the cultural context. Candidates were provided a task with three questions and were required to select and respond to two. In 2025 the features were clothing or costumes, dance elements, and setting. Within each question candidates were required to describe the key feature and make a connection to how these key features reflect the cultural context (social, historical, geographical, or political conditions and circumstances) of their selected dance genre or style.

Commentary

Responses focusing on key features and cultural contexts, followed by an independent opportunity to complete the report performed well. Choosing genres or styles where there is a strong connection between the cultural context and the key features also allowed candidates to achieve better results, as a strong connection supports the understanding required for this achievement standard. Candidates whose responses showed evidence of an authentic connection, most often through participation or personal connection to the dance genre or style, often attained higher levels of achievement.

As the standard requires understanding of more than one key feature it is important candidates responded to two of the questions in the task. Candidates should clearly identify which two questions they are responding to and respond to all parts of the question. Additional information or activities beyond the questions were not required, and at times detracted from the specificity of the response. Stronger adherence to the specifications and assessment task released each year will support the evidence.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- identified and referred to two of the three questions in their submission
- described two of the key features from the questions in the task (clothing or costumes, dance elements, setting)
- made a connection between the cultural context and the key features they had described.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- clearly identified the questions they were responding to and clearly responded to both parts of the question
- described both key features with detail and connected the descriptions to the cultural context of the dance genre or style
- provided with some specific supporting evidence such as dates, people, locations, to support their responses
- focused on a single genre or style in detail (rather than comparing two), or narrowed down the range of a genre or style, for example focusing on one time period or style of a genre in the submission rather than the genre as a whole
- included evidence that was concise and relevant, rather than large sections of additional information with little or no relevance.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- provided focussed and specific information selected in response to two of the questions from the task
- communicated how the key features and the context were closely connected to one another with relevant, specific and carefully selected supporting evidence such as dates, people, locations, related works or groups and/or genre specific language to support their discussion
- provided information that was well considered, reflective or perceptive.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- produced a report that may have only responded to one question or did not clearly respond to the questions in the task
- responded with short or limited responses
- described key features, at times in detail, without making any connection to the cultural context
- described the history of a dance genre or style with no connection to how this connects to its key features.

Achievement standard 91939: Demonstrate understanding of the elements of dance in a dance sequence

Assessment

Candidates were required to produce a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates their understanding of the elements of dance and their components. Candidate portfolios consisted of a dance sequence they had performed in during the year and reflection on the use of dance elements and their

components during two 10–15 second sections in the sequence. The performance of the sequence itself was not assessed, but used to support the reflection. Candidates described how the relevant dance elements and their components are seen in the selected sections and how the dance elements and their components work together to communicate the purpose of the sequence.

Commentary

Candidates were required to discuss two 10–15 second sections of their sequence and how the elements of dance and their components were used to communicate the purpose of the dance. Candidates who talked about more than two sections often demonstrated more breadth rather than the depth required to attain higher levels of achievement.

Within both 10–15 second sections, candidates benefited from clearly identifying the elements of dance and the components used, describing how they were seen and then commenting on their effectiveness in communicating the purpose of the sequence.

Some candidates did not discuss the purpose of the dance work which is required to achieve this standard. In many cases the purpose of the dance work was best described at the beginning of the response as its own subheading. Some students did not explain the effect of the components discussed, which was required to achieve at Merit or above.

Screen shots from videos and any supporting materials, for example images related to choreographic intention, helped significantly with student explanations. Some students included annotated labels which further supported their explanations.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- identified two sections of their dance work, in most cases making it clear with time stamps and screen shots
- briefly described the purpose of the dance sequence
- described how the elements of dance and / or their components were seen in the sequence, in some cases may have focused on the general element grouping rather than focus on the specific components of the element of dance
- implied or inferred how the chosen element or component related to the purpose of their dance sequence
- demonstrated simplistic understanding of the elements of dance.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- clearly described, in detail, how chosen elements are seen in the sequence
- explained the effect of the dance elements and components they had identified
- provided clear, detailed and accurate definitions
- used appropriate vocabulary and terminology in the description of their chosen sections
- provided multiple examples of various components under their chosen element, for example for body; discussing body base, body shape, non-locomotor and locomotor movement
- addressed more complex components, such as exact, complementary, and contrasting unison.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- clearly illustrated their examples, often with screenshots to support their discussion
- addressed the elements of dance and their components in depth, with thorough examples

- discussed how components of the elements of dance work together to communicate the purpose or create impact
- explained the impact of choreographic choices with insightfulness.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not describe the purpose of the dance sequence
 - described only one element or its components
 - supplied inaccurate examples of the element of dance or its components
 - described or interpreted the sequence without using appropriate elements vocabulary, for example without using the terms 'traveling' and 'synchronized' for 'locomotor movement' and 'unison'
 - discussed production technologies such as music or costume with no relationship to the elements of dance.
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