

WHY THE SDS EXAMINATIONS

Teachers often ask “how do they explain the SDS to prospective employers.” The following is a brief explanation of what can be related.

The Spanish Dance Society is an excellent dance organisation based in many centres in the world and provides an examination system in Spanish dance. This approach to the art of dancing instils a discipline in the student which can be carried over to their daily lives and be of great personal benefit. Two lines of study are offered:

- A general syllabus covering all aspects of Spanish dance.
- A flamenco syllabus covering a basic technique in Spanish dance and a specialisation in the flamenco dances.

Candidates are given the opportunity to specialise in the Flamenco form of Spanish dance by means of a suite of examinations running parallel to the core assessments from Tercer Año.

The Society’s tiered scheme of assessment forms a series of graded external examinations which combine at each examination, a specification of skills, knowledge and understanding in the field of Spanish dance performance. The specification for each grade incorporates measures of competence by which candidates, teachers, parents, performers and employers may measure progress and development in acquiring genuine command in Spanish dance, whether for educational, vocational or social purposes.

Progression

The Society’s examinations offer progression from beginner level to a standard of proficiency and artistry that would be appropriate for entry to higher education study in the performing arts or progression onto the Society’s teaching qualifications. These examinations also develop the necessary performance skills appropriate for employment within the entertainment industry.

An examination for every candidate

The delicacy and explicitness with which the examinations are progressively defined, properly related to the individual learner, enable a teacher and candidate to prepare for whichever examination most closely matches the learner’s current and anticipated level of skills development.

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Throughout the syllabus, the candidate will increase their knowledge of Spanish dance terminology; the traditional costumes; music; history; and the styles and structure of the regional, classical and flamenco dances

Assessment

The Society's examinations test individuals' knowledge, skills and understanding in the field of Spanish dance by means of a formal practical examination conducted by an external examiner.

The Society's practical examinations in Spanish dance assess:

- individuals' appreciation, knowledge and understanding of techniques involved in the use of Spanish dance
- competence in composition of presentation sequences
- competence in performance of presentation sequences and dances
- the ability to discuss and demonstrate the principles of Spanish dance in relation to the presentation sequences

All assessment procedures by qualified examiners are valid, reliable, manageable, safe and appropriate to the needs of the students

WHAT CONSTITUTES A GOOD TEACHER?

The above question often arises when someone is looking for a good SDS teacher.

The important factor today is knowing that a dance society offers qualifications that have government recognition internationally, especially for the teachers' examinations. The SDS is intent on providing its members with the requisite teaching qualifications expected today as well as maintaining and improving teaching standards.

The SDS teachers' examinations provide members the opportunity to develop the practical skills required to teach but also to have knowledge that is essential to teaching and learning students from all different backgrounds, abilities and needs. Understanding subjects such as special needs; safeguarding; teaching styles; learning styles; safe practice; basic laws affecting teaching or learning, running a business; class plans; self-evaluation; observation skills and continual professional development are just some of the areas that are vital to becoming a respected and valued teacher.

Importantly, the SDS is able to keep the cost of the teachers' qualifications affordable and the examinations are substantially less expensive than any other available dance teaching qualification. Candidates are able to choose the time frame to study the work and finally present the examination all within their own schools and are not expected to attend any compulsory courses which could become costly.

The SDS, as small as it is, can be proud that its work is respected by the larger dance societies and is keeping abreast of the changes in the dance world and dance industry.

Prospective students should look at many factors before choosing a teacher. The following guideline highlights questions that should be asked and aspects that should be considered:

1. Where did the teacher train?
2. What is the teacher's qualification?
3. Have you seen the teacher's certificate of qualification and do you understand the teacher's qualification?
4. Has the teacher got a good reputation? This applies both to the teacher's results and personal qualities.
5. How long has the teacher been teaching?
6. What are the studio / school facilities like?
7. Does the environment of the studio / school meet your countries statutory requirements and that of the SDS regarding health and safety regulations?
8. Does the teacher attend any professional development courses or lectures?
9. This is vital as teachers are obligated to keep up to date with current teaching theories and methods in order to provide the best possible tuition.

10. Does the teacher / school have a code of ethics and practice in place?
11. How far do you intend to go with the examination system?
12. Would you eventually like to qualify as a teacher?
13. Do you intend to dance professionally?

These are just some of the questions students should be asking, but remember learning Spanish dance should be a pleasurable and happy experience. Enjoy and have fun!

THE CURRENT SDS TEACHERS QUALIFICATIONS

ENHANCE KNOWLEDGE

Teachers should make the education of their pupils their first concern, and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils.

Through obtaining the SDS government recognised teachers' qualifications members gain the following knowledge to:

1. Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils
2. Establish a safe and stimulating environment for pupils, rooted in mutual
3. Respect
4. Set goals that stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions
5. Demonstrate consistently the positive attitudes, values and behaviour which are expected of pupils.
6. Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils
7. Be accountable for pupils' attainment, progress and outcomes
8. Be aware of pupils' capabilities and their prior knowledge, and plan teaching to build on these
9. Guide pupils to reflect on the progress they have made and their emerging needs
10. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how this impacts on teaching

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11. Encourage pupils to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study.
12. Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge
13. Have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas, foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject, and address misunderstandings
14. Demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject
15. Plan and teach well-structured lessons
16. Impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of lesson time
17. Promote a love of learning and children's intellectual curiosity
18. Plan out-of-class activities to consolidate and extend the knowledge and understanding pupils have acquired
19. Reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching
20. Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils
21. Know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively
22. Have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these
23. Demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils' education at different stages of development
24. Have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.
25. Make accurate and productive use of assessment
26. Know and understand how to assess the relevant subject
27. Make use of formative and summative assessment to secure pupils' progress
28. Use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons
29. Give pupils regular feedback, both orally and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback.
30. Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment
31. Have clear rules and routines for behaviour in the studio, and take responsibility for promoting good and courteous behaviour in accordance with the school's behaviour policy

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32. Have high expectations of behaviour, and establish a framework for discipline with a range of strategies, using praise, sanctions and rewards consistently and fairly
33. Manage classes effectively, using approaches which are appropriate to pupils' needs in order to involve and motivate them
34. Maintain good relationships with pupils, exercise appropriate authority, and act decisively when necessary.
35. Fulfil wider professional responsibilities
36. Develop effective professional relationships with colleagues, knowing how and when to draw on advice and specialist support
37. Take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues
38. Communicate effectively with parents with regard to pupils' achievements and well-being.