



ASSESSMENT POLICY

Introduction

Assessment and reporting should be a positive experience for teachers, parents and students, enabling them to understand clearly where students are going right or wrong and what they need to do to make further progress. The Royal Ballet School prides itself on taking students of high dance potential but of mixed academic ability, and it is inevitable that individual academic performances will vary a great deal. It is important that any assessment process is used for individual target setting, positive encouragement, identifying errors and noting areas for correction and progress.

All students entering the school in years 7, 8 or 9 take a MidYS test which provides useful feedback to staff. Formal dance assessment occurs in the Spring Term in Lower School and the Summer Term at Upper School. Formal academic assessment in the form of external and internal examinations takes place in the Summer Term. Year 11 students also take mock GCSE examination in the January of their final year.

The Academic and Pastoral Head will ensure that

- a) Students follow syllabuses and enter examinations in those subjects approved by the Governors
- b) National tests are applied in accordance with the statutory framework
- c) Teachers receive training on how to use formal assessment methods and use these in lesson planning
- d) Marking of students' work complies with school guidelines
- e) Student progress and marks are recorded and used to keep a check on value-added and individual student performance
- f) All students receive a report twice a year written in accordance with written procedures
- g) Parents are informed of the progress of their children
- h) Any major changes are reported to the Governors

Schedule for reporting and parents' meetings (by Year groups 7-13)

	Oct	Dec	Feb	Apr	Jun	July
Parents' academic meeting	7	10,11		12,13		
Parents' ballet meeting	11	8,9	7,10	12,13		
Full academic report		All but year 11	11			All
Full ballet report		All				All
Academic progress reviews to parents	All	10,11	7-10	All	All	
Ballet progress reviews	7-11	7-11	7-11	7-11	7-11	

Marking

Marking students' work enables teachers

- a) summatively to assess each student's knowledge and understanding of the work covered and their skill in using what they have learned
- b) formatively to guide students towards further progress. Marking should be used not only to test, but also to inform.

A mark without any explanation as to where the student has gone wrong or how they can improve is likely to lower rather than increase the student's levels of motivation.

Marking can take many forms and each department will establish its own marking guidelines. Departmental handbooks should contain a clear statement of how work is to be marked for each age group. Where possible this should tie in with assessment methods e.g. if a subject at AS level is examined using Assessment Objectives then these should also be applied to internal assignments.

Marking should be done promptly and regularly. As a general rule a subject studied for two periods per week should have work marked at least once a fortnight while a subject with at least four periods per week should have work marked each week.

The school encourages teachers to use peer and self assessment as a positive tool in the marking of an individual's work.

The school does encourage its staff, where possible, to mark public exams at some stage of their career, since it provides a valuable insight into the processes of effective teaching and learning.

Ballet appraisal

All new students will have a physical assessment at the start of the first term. This will enable medical staff and teachers to identify physical weaknesses and design their training accordingly.

As students grow their bodies, minds and emotions develop. They may become more or less suited to a career in classical ballet. The potential which audition panels spotted originally may reduce or increase. It is for this reason that places at the school are subject to review on an annual basis.

All students receive regular feedback from their teachers both during and at the end of class. This should be positive and encouraging with the teacher, where possible clearly illustrating how improvements can be made. A full report is written twice a year and copies sent to their parents.

Appraisal in the first two terms is carried out internally. During the Spring Term (Lower School) and Summer Term (Upper School) a more formal appraisal takes place before a panel of examiners and assessors. The results of this appraisal dictate whether or not students progress to the next year group.

In the final assessment students are appraised in classical technique, pas de deux, variations, contemporary and character. The mark for appraisal will be composed of 40% of the mark of the assessing panel and 60% of the mark given by the appropriate teacher. The year mark will be based upon progress and the work attitude shown throughout the year. Marks (out of 100) are awarded under each category with grade boundaries as follows:

85-100	Honours
80-84	Highly Commended
75-79	Commended
65-74	Standard Plus
50-64	Standard
0-49	Not up to standard

The Year 11 demonstration classes take place before Half Term in the Spring term when the students are assessed by the Director for the purpose of gaining a Certificate. All Year 11 students are invited to audition for the Upper School. Following the final auditions the Director and/or Ballet Principal interview each student individually to discuss offers of placement at the Upper School.

Preliminary auditions for other vocational schools are held at these schools or at Lower School. Parents are encouraged to investigate all options, to view schools and attend open days during the Autumn Term if at all possible as this is difficult to accommodate during the Spring Term. Parents should note that they are responsible for the completion of application forms and for arranging transport to any preliminary or final auditions at other vocational schools.

Reports are issued twice a year. Parents have a formal interview with teachers at the end of the Spring Term. The report following the final appraisal will contain a full breakdown of marks allocated to each category of the dancer's training. Feedback and self assessment forms are completed by students as part of the Ballet unit in the BTEC in Performing Arts.

It is important to remember that students do not necessarily progress automatically from one year group to the next. In the case of students following two year examination courses (GCSE) it is expected that all students will progress from Year 10 to 11. The Graduate class at Upper School is by invitation only and progression from 1st to 2nd Year at Upper School is conditional on the student's performance in the end of year formal appraisal. However, having said this, we would still expect the vast majority of our students to progress though to the Graduate class without any problems or referrals.

The Director and teaching staff will make the final decision on whether or not a particular student progresses to the next stage of their training.

Students who are unable to take part in the assessment due to injury or illness will have an opportunity to be assessed at a later stage or will be given a Provisional Pass on the strength of their work through the year. However, this does not apply to the Graduate Diploma. Students must sit the examinations required to obtain this Diploma and 're-sits' are not usually possible. An inability to be appraised will need to be supported by a report from a doctor or physiotherapist.

Academic assessment

At the Lower School parents will receive two full academic reports and four progress cards during the academic year. Ballet reports are issued twice a year. Progress meetings are held at each half term and with input from ballet, academic and pastoral staff. New students in years 7, 8 and 9 take MiDYS tests on joining the school. These are used to monitor progress and value-added and to set attainment targets where necessary. Examinations take place at the end of years 7,8,9 and 10 to assess the progress of all students in their academic subjects. All students will be expected to take 8 GCSE's and an AS in Dance Studies at the end of year 11. Students will be also complete mock GCSE examinations in the January of year 11.

At the Upper School there is are progress meetings of the dance, academic and pastoral staff in the Autumn and Spring Terms to review the progress of each 1st and 2nd Year student in turn. Notes are kept, and the information is used in the School to enable students to progress. All students will complete studies which are subject to external assessment in some form. Students will be informed of the exact nature of these assessments by their subject teachers at the start of the year. Formal academic reports will be issued at the end of the first and third term. There will be a chance for parents to discuss their child's academic progress with teachers at the end of the second term.

Self-appraisal

Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning through

- a) Assessing their own work and where appropriate the work of other students
- b) Setting targets with their tutor as part of the schools reporting and review system
- c) Asking for help and advice in improving their work