

# Central School of Ballet

## Feedback and Assessment Policy

Policy revised September 2025  
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This Feedback and Assessment Policy outlines the principles and practices that guide how feedback is delivered and assessments are conducted at Central. It aims to promote transparency, consistency, and fairness in evaluating performance, progress, and development. By fostering a culture of constructive feedback and meaningful assessment, Central supports continuous improvement, personal growth, and the achievement of high standards across all areas of training and learning.

### **1. Feedback**

#### ***1.1 The importance of feedback***

Feedback is an integral part of your training and learning at Central. It is important that students know what and how they need to improve, therefore feedback and 'feed forward' should empower the student to move forward in a positive way. The aim of feedback is to help students set targets, have autonomy, and take ownership of their work. Feedback is not a grade or mark. Ongoing feedback and feed forward is used to help to explain and contextualise the level the student is achieving (within the assessment band descriptors- see below for more information, as well as to develop the student's confidence and encourage them to become an autonomous learner. Tutors will have a copy of the band descriptors, and these are referred to during your individual feedback opportunities.

While much feedback is provided after Formal Assessments, students receive ample opportunity for regular feedback on a daily basis, by virtue of attend paid to both group feedback as well as feedback and given to other individuals. Interactions with tutors during and after the module should not be considered an end point, but act as feed forward, i.e. in collaboration with a tutor, the student is to come up with solutions and suggestions on how to grow and move forward as a dancer, across all modules. It is expected that students actively and in-the-moment implement and rehearse feedback and feedforward given throughout classes, without the need for the tutor's prompt.

#### ***1.2 The role of the student in the feedback process***

Central aims to give you feedback soon after assessment; this will be oral or written, depending on the tutor, and will relate to your achievement of the assessment criteria for the subject. You are given feedback by the subject tutor which you should record and keep for reference and reflection throughout your course. In the event of a feedback conversation, students are expected to talk about their progress, achievement, self-assessment and the targets they are setting for the coming period. There is opportunity for the students to gain further clarity if required through questions and discussion. Students should use feedback to set relevant learning targets and goals for the next stage of the course, therefore students are strongly encouraged to record feedback and reflections on your feedback for your own records.

In certain cases, formal and continuous feedback is provided at the same time to make for a richer conversation on student progress.

In the case of Formal Assessments, tutors provide feedback first and then give students an indication of the band into which their marks fall. The reasons for giving feedback before the grade are:

- *It focuses on the learning, not just the performance.* When you receive feedback first, the student is more likely to reflect on what they did well and where they can improve rather than fixate on the grade. This approach reinforces the idea that your ability can be developed through effort and learning, rather than being defined by a grade.
- *It promotes deeper thinking.* Grades can trigger anxiety, disappointment or defensiveness whereas feedback invites curiosity and openness to change. Students are also more likely to engage critically with their work when they are not distracted by a grade.
- It improves future performances by *making feedback actionable*, resulting in telling students *how* to improve. A grade only tells students *how well* they did (and often, in a snapshot moment). Students who internalise feedback tend to perform better in future tasks as they understand the criteria for success better.
- *It builds trust and motivation.* Students are more likely to review, reflect and act on their training when they feel supported rather than judged.
- It nurtures the understanding that each dance style / class setting / point in the course has its *own context and expectation*, and that grading and feedback will always shift with this positionality and might feel different to the student according to this context.

*Central understands that receiving feedback can sometimes feel overwhelming and we ask that you take on feedback with openness and curiosity. If feedback and feed forward is shared during a conversation we encourage you to ask questions as to how you can apply feedback.*

## **2. Assessment at Central School of Ballet**

Assessment is used to evaluate your skills and knowledge in the different areas of the course against the assessment criteria and offers a formal opportunity to provide feedback to orientate you to your current performance, provide feedback to improve, and build a supportive teacher-student relationship. All modules are assessed, and details of assessment are given in your module briefs.

There are two modes of assessment used in undergraduate study: Continuous Assessment and Formal Assessment. In Continuous Assessment, all your work and active engagement in class is taken into consideration; Formal Assessments take a variety of forms but are concerned with evaluating you at one given time and usually allow students to prepare for in advance. Modes of formal assessment include showings of work (such as a dance class); performances; and mock auditions. In addition, your Contextual Studies assignments are submitted for Formal Assessment.

Each mode of assessment (or component of) exists to evaluate your knowledge, skills and abilities against the defined assessment criteria, which are designed to show what students have learned as part of the module's intended learning outcomes. Assessment is then expressed in feedback and a mark. All feedback and marks then provide information on the ability and progress of each student in fulfilling the aims of the course and empower the student to understand their individual areas for development.

Throughout their studies at Central, students receive regular assessment literacy and information from the Higher Education team and tutors. This information details what assessment and feedback is, what the process of continuous and formal assessment is each

year, how the process is equitable and what measures are in place if you do not pass assessment.

All assessment processes adhere to the [University of Kent Credit Framework](#).

## **2.1 Continuous Assessment and Feedback process**

Continuous Assessment is undertaken by tutors at key points in the course in accordance with published assessment criteria. Tutors measure your engagement, progress and achievement in each class which is consolidated in regular formal feedback. Continuous assessment gives credit for progress, effort, preparation, engagement and participation, achievement gained- all of which are linked to your attendance. It also provides you with a continuous opportunity to understand how you can develop as a dancer, allowing you to take on board feedback and become an autonomous learner. Continuous Assessment constitutes a specific percentage of your overall module grade. Formal Continuous Assessment feedback is given verbally or written, depending on the subject and tutors. The feedback is also associated with a mark that is part of a University of Kent band descriptor. Whenever students receive formal feedback, they are asked to raise any concerns or issues with their relevant tutors so that they can be discussed. Students are strongly encouraged to take their own notes from the feedback received so they can take appropriate action.

Please note that, in line with the Attendance and Engagement policy, a student's attendance and engagement affect continuous assessment. For more information, consult the full Attendance and Engagement policy.

It should be noted that language used in class may not necessarily reflect the full language of a band in the grade descriptors. For example, if a tutor says to you "Very Good" or "Excellent" following an exercise, this may refer to your effort or your achievement relative to your form and in the moment, being used to acknowledge your effort and further encourage you. Where possible, the tutor will provide individual information, but this is not always manageable within a studio setting. Your overall continuous assessment mark brings together the overall approach of all engagement, progress and achievement across several areas and criteria.

Continuous Assessment feedback should be shared with parents/guardian by the student.

## **2.2 Formal Assessment and Feedback process**

During the year, students have formal assessments in all subjects. There are a variety of types of formal assessments, such as presentation of work in a studio setting and can include both prepared and unseen work, class work and repertoire performance; presentation to an audience of prepared repertoire which usually takes place in a theatrical setting; written or oral work as part of the Contextual Studies module.

Please note that, in line with the Attendance and Engagement policy, a student must have optimal attendance to participate in formal assessments. For more information, consult the full Attendance and Engagement policy.

**2.2.1 Practical formal assessments** are considered to be a 'snapshot', i.e. the work is evaluated in the moment. A panel of three assessors then identify areas of strength and improvement in students' work based on what the panel has seen there and then. Each assessor completes an assessment sheet that details their attributed mark and comments, which can be shared with the students as part of their feedback. Following the assessment, the marking panel meets for the moderation very soon after the assessment has taken place, and discuss each student individually. The assessors provide comments which are recorded by the module tutor. The process of discussion leads to a decision about the awarding and allocating of marks, held by the moderator. Assessors reach a decision about a grade by consulting the assessment criteria and band descriptors and by using one of the 23 grades according to the University of Kent marking scale.

As confirmed by Central's External Examiners, Central's assessment moderation process is rigorous, thorough, mindful and balanced.

The outcome of formal assessment is in- depth feedback from the assessor panel, provided by the tutor, and associated grade. Tutors will then help students make meaning of this feedback and share areas for growth to be considered for future assessments and performances. Students should always refer to the criteria and band descriptors for a greater understanding of the standard of work following assessment. Tutors will provide feedback and feed forward in written or verbal ways, depending on the subject and the assessment.

**2.2.2 Contextual studies assessments** are marked independently by one tutor with a sample second-marked by another tutor. Written assessments in the Contextual Studies strand are marked by academic staff using the published learning outcomes, marking criteria, and band descriptors for the relevant level. Markers provide clear and constructive feedback to support student development. These assessments may be marked by either permanent or sessional staff, all of whom receive guidance on marking standards and expectations. Oversight of assessment quality rests with the Head of Studies.

To ensure consistency and fairness, all written work is subject to internal moderation. A member of the Higher Education Team who was not involved in the original marking reviews a stratified sample of submissions from each marker. The moderator checks that marks align with the criteria, that feedback is clear and helpful, and that academic standards are applied consistently. Moderation outcomes are recorded using a standard form and are shared with external examiners as part of quality assurance procedures.

The school aims to give feedback on assessments as soon as possible. There are no stipulated turnaround times for grades and feedback.

### **3. Marks or grades**

Central will release marks in the form of a scorecard at the end of each Term. All assessment marks remain provisional until confirmed by the Board of Examiners at the end of the academic year.

Students have the right to appeal against decisions of the Board of Examiners but may not appeal against academic judgement. If you have a query about your assessment comments or your feedback, it is important that you speak to your tutor and/or the Head of Studies.

### **4. Mitigating Circumstances**

A student may sometimes not be able to perform or hand in their work on the designated date for a legitimate reason.

Reasons for requesting an extension that are normally considered legitimate:

- Illness or injury
- Family or personal problem
- Diagnosed Specific Learning Difference / English not the first language

Reasons for requesting an extension that are NOT normally considered legitimate:

- Computer, internet or printer problems
- Poor personal time management
- Moving house
- Holiday
- Books not available in the library
- Left the work at home/on the bus/stolen etc.

If you have a legitimate reason for not being able to participate in an assessment or to submit work on time, then you may request an assessment extension, which will grant you a fair amount of extra time to complete the work or prepare for assessment based on the circumstances. An extension will usually be offered for an equivalent amount of time to that which you were indisposed. For example, if you were ill for three days, you can ask for a three-day extension.

- All requests for **extensions for practical work** should be made through your tutor and the Head of Studies. As part of the Support through Studies Framework, the relevant staff will consider your request. You will be notified of the date for the deferral assessment.
- All requests for **extensions for written work** should be made through the Head of Studies and Learning Development Manager. A new date for submission will be discussed, agreed and noted via email.

Please note:

Extensions must be applied for **at least 3 working days** before the deadline. Only in very exceptional circumstances will extensions be allowed closer to the deadline or once the deadline has passed. Extensions will be considered differently for different types of assessment (such as group performance/ presentations, Solo work, written work) and will incorporate individual and group circumstances.

Illness must be supported by certification as appropriate (self-certification – five days and under; GP certification – above five days).

On occasion it may be necessary for a student to repeat modules (for example if half or more of the credit required to progress to the next stage of study has not been obtained).

Where a repeat of a year is required due to injury or illness and extenuating circumstances apply, any repeat year is recommended by the Mitigation Committee and must be approved by Board of Examiners.

## **5. Failure to submit work or attend an assessment**

At Central, attendance has an impact on assessment. Students must reasonably attend all classes to be eligible for continuous and formal assessment. Please consult the Attendance and Engagement Policy for further details.

If a student does not complete an assessment and does not have good reason for missing the assessment, under the Kent Credit Framework, they would normally record a fail or a mark of zero for that assessment.

Students will have opportunities to retrieve formal assessments for failed strands of modules, which is called a Referral. Modules passed through retrieval will be capped at the pass mark (40) for the whole module, including all strands. Failed continuous assessment will also be capped at the pass mark (40) for that strand, and therefore the whole module. Retrievals are confirmed at the Board of Examiners at the end of each academic year.

Where there are known mitigating circumstances in advance of an assessment, then the appropriate conventions will be applied in line with Annex 9 of Kent's [Credit Framework](#) and students will take a Deferral, i.e. will take the assessment at a later stage with no penalty nor cap.

## **6. The role of the Board of Examiners and External Examiners**

External Examiners are expected to make an informed, independent assessment of the course. They ensure that all students are treated fairly and that Central's standards are in line with other degree courses in the country. The External Examiner has access to all assessed work. They are invited to see performances and are asked for advice concerning learning, teaching and assessment on the course. They attend the annual Board of Examiners and write an annual report for the University of Kent. Occasionally the External Examiner meets a group of students to discuss their work.

The External Examiners' reports are considered at relevant committees. External Examiners have the right to recommend that marks be adjusted if they believe they are too high or low (this recommendation is noted at the Board of Examiners meeting at the end of the academic year). All assessment marks are provisional until finally approved by the Board of Examiners. The Board usually takes place late July with representatives from the University of Kent and the External Examiners. Leading up to this meeting all marks are subject to a range of moderation processes. The Central staff who serve on the Board of Examiners are approved by the University of Kent, are the Director of Higher Education, Head of Studies and Artistic Director.

The External Examiners are appointed by the University of Kent and are currently: Carla Trim-Vamben and Kit Holder. Under no circumstances should students contact the External Examiners directly.

## **7. Progression to the BA (Hons) in Professional Dance and Performance (Top-Up degree)**

It is important to note that the Foundation Degree and the BA (Hons) Degree are two separate courses. Completion of the Foundation Degree does not guarantee automatic progression to the BA (Hons) top-up degree.

In addition to successful completion of the Foundation Degree in Professional Dance and Performance and submission of the application form, students will need to demonstrate the following personal profile:

- A commitment to and aptitude for intensive professional dance training.

- A wide interest in all aspects of dance and related studies, practical and academic.
- An enthusiasm for group work and performance, and the ability to work long hours.
- Motivation to attain high standards of technical accomplishment achieved through healthy working practices; to work creatively; and to develop personally and intellectually.
- High technical accomplishment in Ballet (For applicants from the Foundation Degree in Professional Dance and Performance, this is usually demonstrated by Ballet assessment scores, continuous and formal, of 55 and above).

Acceptance onto the BA (Hons) Top-up Degree course is at the discretion of the Artistic Director.