



ISTD

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To whom it may concern

The ISTD is requesting permission for one or more of your pupils be released during the school day to take external examinations in dance.

The ISTD is an examinations board which has been established for over 100 years, recognised by the Office of Qualifications and Regulation (Ofqual) and Qualifications Wales. Our Graded Examinations in Dance are placed on the Qualifications and Credit Framework, with Grades 1, 2 and 3 at Level 1; Grades 4 and 5 at Level 2; and Grade 6 at Level 3. Similarly the Vocational Graded Examination in Dance: intermediation Foundation is at Level 2, Intermediate is at Level 3 and Advanced 1 and Advanced 2 at Level 4. We also have teaching qualifications at Levels 3, 4 and 6, and these can be studied at some Further Education colleges as well as specialist vocational colleges. For information on Graded Examinations in particular it may be helpful to look at the document produced on Graded Examinations on the Council for Dance Education website - <http://www.cdnet.org.uk/download/guide/Graded-Exams.pdf>

In addition the Level 3 qualifications (Grade 6, and the Intermediate Vocational Graded Examination in Dance) carry UCAS points, and pupils will need to work towards these to be able to use them for university entrance.

We hope that you will appreciate that these qualifications complement learning in the curriculum and help develop wider skills as well as confidence and commitment in learners. Dance classes, and therefore the examinations that go with them, also form part of a healthy lifestyle particularly in encouraging regular enjoyable exercise. All our examinations are based on progressive mastery – so it is important that pupils can start from an early age and develop the physical, technical and performance skills which will be refined over the years.

We examine nearly 200,000 candidates worldwide every year, about 80% based in the UK. Although teachers would prefer in the main for these to take place at weekends, I am sure you will appreciate that this cannot always be possible, especially at the peak times in terms. We fully appreciate the impact and interruption to a school day, but we would be grateful if you would authorise the pupil's absence for the purpose of taking an ISTD examination. We believe this can be granted under the School Attendance – Departmental Advice (Department of Education October 2014) as Code C (Leave of absence authorised by the school), given also that it is likely only to be for a short period and not regularly occurring.

We do hope that you will understand the importance of this to your pupils concerned, and enable them to gain this valuable experience.

Yours sincerely