



Equality and Diversity Policy (Reviewed 2026, originated July 2016)

General

VMA DANCE is committed to promoting an environment where all individuals are encouraged to achieve their full potential and develop their skills, encouraging its teachers to maintain an open approach towards the different talents and abilities offered by all their students.

It undertakes to comply with the requirements of equalities legislation in force at the time and to ensure that it has systems in place to ensure that it does not discriminate against any member, employee or candidate either directly or indirectly.

Direct discrimination occurs where the reason for a person being treated less favourably than another is one of the following, which are known as protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Being pregnant or having a child
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion, belief or lack of religion or belief
- Being married or in a civil partnership
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Being or becoming a transsexual person

It therefore requires of all VMA DANCE's teaching staff, that they do not discriminate in any of these respects, as additionally noted in the ISTD Code of Professional Standards and Practice. Teachers must adhere to current legislation, including the Equality Act 2010.

In order for the VMA DANCE to prove itself as unprejudiced, students' personal details are requested upon registration with VMA DANCE. We hope this does not offend, but need to ask these questions in order to prove that we operate equal opportunities throughout the organisation. Please note VMA DANCE will observe the guidelines of the Data Protection Act. Personal information will be held on file only as necessary for the operation of our business and will not be disclosed to any party outside of VMA DANCE without the consent of the person involved.

Exams & Qualifications

There are two circumstances of which teachers must be aware:

- Minimum age limits apply for entry to some examinations and qualifications. This is either to protect the health and safety of the candidate where physical development may be insufficient to meet the demands of certain syllabi; or where they are responsible for children in class.
- Certain sections of some performance examinations are designed particularly for either male or female dancers. This reflects the realities and requirements of the dance profession and should in no way be construed as sex discrimination. Candidates, including transgender candidates, may enter for their preferred syllabus according to the gender with which they choose to identify in relation to dance. Update: These are now labelled as pathways A & B and either pathway can be taken by either gender

The VMA's qualifications with examining bodies are developed to be open to all, and achievement is measured against assessment criteria according to their ability. As part of this process VMA undertakes to consult with its members to ensure there are no barriers in the design and equal assessment of qualifications particularly in regard to:

- those with disabilities (those who are disabled)
- those who may be of any specific ethnic group
- transgender students, or either gender

It will ensure that the syllabi and assessments proposed do not disadvantage such candidates, or give those with disabilities an advantage over non-disabled candidates, whilst maintaining the competence standard for the level of the examinations.

In the Equality Act of 2010, a person is "disabled" if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term effect that is on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities. VMA reminds its teaching members that it should not treat disabled students less or more favourably than non-disabled students simply because of their disability. The overriding approach taken by teachers is that so far as possible all students should be afforded the same treatment, and that where they have a disabled student, adjustments should be made to their normal teaching conditions as far as reasonable.

The VMA's examining bodies monitor their entries and examination results by gender, age and ethnicity in order to ensure as far as possible that there are no barriers, and that results are

awarded consistently. Candidates' ethnicity is not indicated to examiners for performance examinations, but age is, as it is relevant to the particular entry of groups on an examination timetable. All written examinations are anonymous to the markers.

It may be the case that the individual would endanger his/her personal safety or that of the other students in the class so should be prevented from undertaking that activity on health and safety grounds. If teachers have any concerns on the ability and safety of a student VMA advises that they should undertake a risk assessment and must seek the appropriate medical and legal advice, and discuss with the parent/guardian before reaching a final decision.

Policy and procedures for disabled candidates

VMA's examining bodies recognise that there are some candidates who have coped with the demands of the course, and can demonstrate their ability in the dance technique and performance skills being assessed, but for whom the normal examination arrangements may provide difficulties that could be removed without affecting the validity of the examination. In this case the teacher can apply for a variation in the examination conditions, as suitable for the candidate. This may include candidates with physical limitations in certain parts of the examination only, who must demonstrate to the best of their physical capability, and who can additionally discuss what they are trying to achieve.

They will only refuse entry to a particular candidate because of a reasonable belief that undertaking the examination will create a risk to their health or safety. Any pregnant candidate who wishes to take a practical examination must use the reasonable adjustments process before being entered, so that the risk can be assessed by the examining body. The examiner also has the right to stop an examination if s/he considers that there is a risk to the health or safety of the candidate if they continue.

Pregnant candidates may enter for written examinations.

Candidates with requiring reasonable adjustments to assessment conditions

Assessment conditions may be varied, for example, in the following ways, on an individual candidate basis, by means of advance permission from the examining body only:

Extra time may be granted in performance examinations for recovery between dance exercises, or for repetition of instructions by the examiner. The time granted will depend on the length of the particular examination and number in the group in which the candidate may dance.

Candidates in groups in examinations may be rotated so that the particular candidate may not be required to lead the group.

Additional equipment may be used within the examination, such as special microphones and hearing equipment for deaf candidates.

Candidates taking written examinations may be allowed extra time, a scribe, word processing equipment, coloured examination papers, translators etc. Specific adjustments of this nature relate to the level of disability, particularly in relation to dyslexia, and must be discussed with the Customer Services and Quality Assurance Department.

If the examination is being taken in any other country than England and Wales, and the candidate does not speak English, permission must be sought in advance for the use of a translator. All examinations taken within England must be in English, and in Wales, in English or Welsh.

This list is not exhaustive and advice should be sought from the Customer Services and Quality Assurance Department at our Examining Bodies regarding the appropriateness of assessment conditions and the permission process.

As stated in Ofqual guidelines, it is important both to disabled learners and to public confidence that the qualifications achieved are seen to be of the same value for all candidates, and provide a reliable indication of the knowledge, skills and understanding of the candidate. Therefore, what the candidate is being assessed on must be the same for all, and marking against those criteria may not be adjusted because of any disability.

The Examining body will seek as much information as possible from the teacher and professionals as appropriate in relation to a particular candidate's disability and severity, and encourages teachers to discuss the application in detail if they are unusual or complex, so that advice can be given. The Examining Body reserves the right to grant an adjustment according to its standard types of adjustments in relation to all similarly disabled candidates, rather than exactly as the teacher has requested. This is to ensure parity of adjustments as far as possible.

Candidates requiring special consideration

All cases would be considered on an individual basis by the Examining Body

Special consideration applies where candidates may have a temporary illness or an adverse effect that could affect their performance. It is not normally appropriate therefore for candidates to apply for this in the case of a disability or learning difficulty which are known to be permanent and covered by reasonable adjustments.