

Medal Tests for Young Dancers

The Syllabus

Revised 2022

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Foreword

The RSCDS Medal Tests for Young Dancers were introduced in 2003, revised in 2011/12 and following a comprehensive consultation exercise have been rewritten in 2022. The dance book and the syllabus booklet have been combined to produce a book with all the information in one volume. A new CD for use with the Medal Tests has been produced.

The new syllabus includes most of the changes that Medal Test teachers and assessors who took part in the consultation thought were required. It provides coverage of all the basic technique, formations and progressions through the grades from Introductory to Grade 5.

Much work has been done to ensure that there is a structured balance to each grade so that candidates will be working progressively through from Introductory to Grade 5. The new syllabus includes more dances, some of which are from more recent publications. Strathspey dances are now included at Grade 4.

The dance instructions given use 'Standard Terminology' and a diagram is provided for each dance.

Included in the book is a list of all the formations required to teach the dances at each grade. The new CD includes music for all the dances and additional tracks for the Introductory Grade warmup dance and step practice.

The dances in this volume span the history of Scottish country dancing including those dating back to the 18th century published side by side with recent 21st century compositions. Traditionally these dances were written for sets of mixed couples, denoted as men and women to describe the movements, formations and progressions. In the accompanying diagrams the men are represented by circles and the women by squares. Scottish country dancing is for all and everyone is encouraged to dance together with a partner of their choice.

The diagrams in this book are based on the notation system developed by F L Pilling and his successors and were provided by Keith Rose. A key to the symbols used is provided in the Appendix of this document. It is also available at <https://my.strathspey.org/u/keithrose/> There is a link to this from the RSCDS website under: Learn > Resources for Dancers

We hope that you find this revised Medal Test Book and CD useful, providing resources for dancers and teachers to enjoy learning together.

RSCDS Education and Training Committee.

RSCDS Membership Services Committee.

October 2022.

Scottish Country Dance Medal Tests for Young Dancers

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Introduction

This syllabus for Scottish country dance tests is designed to help teachers provide structured and progressive learning for their pupils, to encourage young people to maintain and develop their interest in Scottish dance and to improve the standard of their dancing.

The Introductory Award is suitable for young children generally in their first year of dancing. Although there are no formal lower and upper age limits for candidates taking these tests, Grades 1 – 5 are aimed at dancers aged 7 – 16.

The grades should be taken sequentially, but experienced dancers may enter at an appropriate level. Dancers may be entered for Grade 1 without having taken the Introductory Award. To prevent inappropriate entries, teachers should ensure that candidates, particularly younger dancers, have had sufficient experience and practice to maintain the sequence of the dance/s throughout the assessment. Strathspey is introduced at Grade 4 when children should have sufficient experience to attempt the steps.

It is the expectation that teachers will leave an interval of at least one year between entering candidates for successive tests to allow dancers time to develop between grades and to enable them to experience other aspects of Scottish country dancing, such as festivals, dances and ceilidhs. Only in exceptional circumstances will teachers be permitted to enter candidates for more than one grade at the same assessment session. Permission must be sought in writing to the RSCDS office, before or along with the provision application form, giving reasons for the exception. Unsuccessful candidates may re-take tests after further preparation.

General Conditions

RSCDS medal tests are open to all children attending classes in Scottish country dancing.

In the first instance teachers should contact their local RSCDS Branch to book tests. If a teacher does not have a local Branch or their group is not organised by the local Branch, the RSCDS should be contacted (address under Further Information).

The booking must be made at least 12 weeks before the proposed date of a test.

The venue for the tests may be where the candidates usually dance or a central location, where different groups join to form a viable number. For some regions, where different groups are expected to join together, an assessment date may be fixed by the RSCDS. **A minimum of eight candidates is required for an assessment session.** If the number of candidates is large, over 40, more than one assessor may be appointed.

Assessors will be appointed by the RSCDS. Assessors should not test candidates known personally to them. The entry fee, which is set by the RSCDS, must be paid in advance to the organising Branch or group by the candidates.

If a candidate cancels 14 days or fewer before the assessment without a medical certificate the fee is non-refundable. For any cancellation more than 14 days before the assessment, fees are refundable but must be claimed no later than 14 days after the assessment date. Candidates who cancel may be replaced with new candidates but their details must be confirmed with the RSCDS office at least 14 days prior to the assessment.

Introductory Award

Steps

Dance rhythmically using skip change of step and slip step with good phrasing and showing enjoyment in the social spirit of Scottish country dancing.

Formations

1. Hands round and back
2. Hands across and back
3. Turn partner with right and left hand
4. Dance down the middle and up
5. Casting off
6. Figure of eight on the side

If formations are not performed within the dances candidates may be asked to demonstrate them separately.

Dances

All dancers are required to perform 2 dances, one from each section.

SECTION 1	A Reel for Jeannie	Reel	Book 40, No. 1
	The Waratah Weaver	Jig	Graded Book 2, No. 4
SECTION 2	Leap Year	Jig	Graded Book, No. 1
	Mr Michael Bear's Reel	Reel	Graded Book 2, No. 5

The jig **The Flying Scotsman** may be danced as a non-assessed 'warm up' dance. Alternatively, one of the prepared medal test dances may be danced as a warm up before the start of the assessment.

Further Examinations and Awards

Youth Leadership Award (YLA)

The YLA has been introduced to encourage young dancers to continue dancing into their teenage years and develop additional skills useful to them in general life, as well as within the Scottish dance community. It creates a link between the Medal Tests and the Dancing Achievement Award

[YLA Guidelines for Teachers and Young Dancers](https://www.rscds.org/get-involved/young-dancers/working-young-people/youth-leadership-award)

<https://www.rscds.org/get-involved/young-dancers/working-young-people/youth-leadership-award>

Dancing Achievement Award (DAA)

The DAA is to encourage a higher standard of dancing and is open to all members of the RSCDS. Dancers can be assessed at three different levels ~ Intermediate, Advanced and Very Advanced.

Applicants must be over 12 years of age at the date of the examination and be a member of the Society. Further information is on the RSCDS website at

<https://www.rscds.org/article/dancing-achievement-award-daa>

The Teaching Certificate Part 1 and Part 2

This is a course of training which leads to the award of the RSCDS Teaching Certificate. The two-part structure consists of five units.

Teaching Certificate Part 1 is comprised of:

- Unit 1 – written paper.
- Unit 2 – practical dancing
- Unit 3 – teaching level 1

Teaching Certificate Part 2 is comprised of:

- Unit 4 – teaching practice
- Unit 5 – teaching level 2

Further information about the above examinations is available from RSCDS Headquarters or <https://www.rscds.org/get-involved/qualifications/become-dance-teacher-through-rscds>

Resources

The Manual of Scottish Country Dancing 3rd Edition May 2013 contains descriptions of all the techniques and formations required in the syllabus.

Instructions for all the dances in the syllabus are contained in this document. Suitable recorded music is available for all the dances.

"Jigs and Reels" - a set of lesson plans with accompanying music for primary school teachers, which also links to a CPD course delivered by the RSCDS.

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