



## Major Ballet Exams Update

9 August 2024

As the exams have completed for this year, we are looking at the syllabus and class content as we begin our preparation for the concert, 2025 exams and beyond.

The ballet program has always been a focus at Caper as it lays the foundation for all dance styles, develops musicality, proper alignment, core strength and correct technique as well as being a pathway to teaching qualifications.

Ballet is a discipline which means results are achieved in small gains through repetition and mastery. It requires patience and stamina and the results are most noticeable as all students progress through to their senior years of dance training. We would like to congratulate our students on reaching this point in their ballet training and encourage them to continue their dedication and commitment to ballet.

We have further information for each grade below, however please contact us if you have any questions as students may have varying needs and goals.

### RECENT GRADE 4 GRADUATES

We recommend students who have just completed Grade 4 begin their pointe preparation now with Inspired Physio (<https://www.inspiredphysio.com.au>). It is important to work with a physiotherapist who really understands the needs of dancers and pointe work.

Preparing for pointe work and undertaking pointe work is a process. It takes time to learn and strengthen the correct muscles to ensure a safe progression *en pointe*. Some students will need monitoring over several appointments and the process could take 6 to 12 months. In a Pre Pointe assessment, students are assessed on their foot/ankle range, turnout and core strength and will be given an exercise program to follow before being approved to progress safely onto pointe work. Since it is not often an immediate process, it can be beneficial to start the program early.

### RECENT GRADE 5 GRADUATES

The class will commence the *Major Vocational Exam* stream with the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD). It begins with Intermediate Foundation (IF) and it is recommended that with a workload of two classes per week, students should be ready in 18-24 months. We would like to consider entering students in an exam in an 18-month timeframe with the exam taking place in the latter half of 2025. This will depend on each individual student and their class attendance and ability to grasp and consolidate the syllabus.

In Term 3 and 4 students should:

- Remain in the current Tuesday 5pm class (IF syllabus and concert routine)
- Remain in the current Thursday 8pm class (IF syllabus only)
- Consider enrolling in the 9:30-10:15am class (IF syllabus). This would be beneficial for students hoping to complete the exam in 18 months.
- After the concert, there will be a pointe class from 10:15-10:45am on Saturdays (to replace the Concert class from now until the concert).

As advised this time last year, students should be seeing a physiotherapist about preparing for pointe. Please see the information at the end of this note.

### RECENT GRADE 6 GRADUATES

Some Grade 6 students would have completed Intermediate Foundation last year, Grade 6 this year and would be looking towards completing Intermediate in 2025.

If your goal is to enter Intermediate in 2025, you should attend/enrol in:

- Tuesday 7pm Intermediate class (syllabus only)
- Saturday 10:15-10:45am (Concert routine). This will become a pointe class after the concert. The concert routine will include pointe work so they are not losing any time spent working *en pointe*.
- Saturday 10:45-11:30am Intermediate class (syllabus only)

The current Thursday 6pm class will be taught the Grade 7 syllabus for the remainder of the year. We do encourage students to consider Grade 7 in 2025 alongside Intermediate. When attended alongside Intermediate, only one class per week is required for this syllabus.

### **INTERMEDIATE FOUNDATION STUDENTS**

Students who have just completed their Intermediate Foundation exam and have now progressed to Intermediate will need to change classes to learn the syllabus. The following classes below are required to be on the path for an Intermediate exam in 18-24 months:

- Tuesday 7pm Intermediate class (syllabus only)
- Saturday 10:15-10:45am (Concert routine). This will become a pointe class after the concert. The concert routine will include pointe work so they are not losing any time spent working *en pointe*.
- Saturday 10:45-11:30am Intermediate class (syllabus only)

For students who did not do an Intermediate Foundation Exam this year and are working towards the exam in May/June 2025, no class changes are required.

### **CONCERT ROUTINES**

If you would like to be in a concert routine and are only enrolled in classes that do not learn a concert routine, please enrol in the Saturday concert class (10:15-10:45am). For costume ordering purposes and safety (attendance) all class transfers need to be advised in writing via [caper@caperonline.com.au](mailto:caper@caperonline.com.au) by **Week 4, Saturday 17th August**.

### **TRANSFERING CLASSES**

If you need to change any classes to continue your exam preparation, please advise so in writing via [caper@caperonline.com.au](mailto:caper@caperonline.com.au) by Week 3, Saturday 10 August. In previous years we have had students just change class with no advice given which leads to errors in costume ordering and invoicing. Please do not just let the teacher know in class, all class changes must be communicated as advised.

### **VOCATIONAL EXAMS EXPLAINED**

After Grade 5, the RAD syllabus provides the option of continuing Graded Exams (i.e., continue to Grade 6, Grade 7 and Grade 8) or commence Vocational Exams (commencing at the Intermediate Foundation level).

#### *Vocational Exams:*

Completing the RAD Intermediate exam (which is the level after Intermediate Foundation) satisfies the entry requirement to enrol in the RAD Certificate in Ballet Teaching Studies (CBTS). However, we did want to communicate that candidates who have not completed the RAD Intermediate exam can still obtain the CBTS if they demonstrate ballet training achieved at a similar level and supply video evidence to supplement the application. It is also worth noting that many organisations provide teacher qualifications (not just the RAD).

If any student or parent ever have any questions about teacher training, they are always welcome to contact Kate and Beth for advice as there are many options that can be taken and considered that work best with the individual goals of the student.

#### *Graded Exams (for example, Grade 6, 7 and 8):*

Graded Exams are not a higher or lower level than the vocational grades, they are designed so that they can be learnt alongside the vocational grades and have a focus on performance, variations and musicality. One way to view the difference is that the vocational grades are a study of technique (like a technique class) and Grade 6, 7 and 8 put the technique into variations (like a choreography class). So, in Grade 6, 7 and 8 the technique is studied within a dance/piece of choreography rather than in its own repeated exercise. The Graded syllabus works alongside the Intermediate and Intermediate Foundation syllabus so it adds to their skills, it does not prevent acceleration in the major grades.

We see Graded Exams as a great option for:

- Students who enjoy ballet and who have done many years of ballet training but are not able to take on the commitment of vocational/major exams.
- Students who have a 2 year wait until their major exam (and this provides some challenge and motivation in the meanwhile). The Grade 7 syllabus works alongside the Intermediate and Intermediate Foundation syllabus so it adds to their skills, it does not prevent acceleration in the major grades.
- There is no pointe work in Grade 6, 7 and 8 as these exams have a further goal to be accessible to all ballet students (as some dancers may have physical limitations/injuries preventing pointe work).

Parents are also welcome to ask any questions about the benefits of each exam type.

### **POINTE WORK**

Undertaking pointe work is not something that is obtained with one reference letter from the physio. Regular physiotherapist appointments are required to ensure the muscle strength continues to be of the level required to safely

undertake pointe work. Students should also be attending two ballet classes to maintain the strength and range assessed in their original approval for pointe.

Please note that ballet exercises undertaken in flat shoes, or not *en pointe*, still work the muscles needed to undertake pointe work.

### **RESPONDING TO INDIVIDUAL NEEDS**

As students get older, their needs and objectives can change so you are welcome anytime to contact us for advice on how we can ensure your exam participation meets your individual goals and objectives.