

RSCDS Ottawa Branch Classes

Class Level Self-Assessment Tool

Dancers get the most out of classes when they are dancing at the correct level.

The Ottawa Branch has 3 levels of teaching classes: level 1 is the first level attended, and levels 2 and 3 only follow successfully when skills from the previous level are transferred and demonstrated in a dancer's ability. There is much to be learned when first discovering or rediscovering Scottish Country Dancing. A number of years at each level is very useful, very common, and recommended .

As a dancer proceeds through their dancing career, their skills may alter for many reasons. One may, for example, realize that a level 1 or level 2 class would more accurately reflect their dancing ability in a given year, even if they have previously danced at a higher level for some years. An assessment, done conscientiously each August, would help to accurately choose the right level for the upcoming year.

When you are dancing in the correct class, the lesson is focused on the things you are likely to need to progress. Dancing in a class that is too difficult is frustrating for the dancer as it is not focused on their needs. It is also frustrating for the other dancers as it slows the progress of the class that is targeted towards the goals in the Branch Syllabus.

In order to guide class selection, please review the checklist of steps, formations, and dance concepts below. **Dancers should be able to perform the step/formation correctly with only a quick reminder briefing.** If you select "all of the time" for approximately 85% of the criteria, you are likely ready to move up.

Do not hesitate to review the attached assessment with your teacher. They want you to succeed and will be happy to discuss your progress.

Dancers may be asked to review this self assessment with their teacher in the event that their class selection needs to be modified.

Advancing from Level 1 to Level 2

Criteria		None/little of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Steps:				
Slip step to the right and left				
Skip change of step (forward and backwards)				
Pas de basque (on the spot, turning, moving forward, moving backwards)				
Strathspey travelling step (forward and backwards)				
Strathspey setting				
Stepping up and down, in time to the music				
Bow and curtsy				
Formations:				
Advance and retire	2 bars			
	4 bars			
Allemande	2 couple			
	3 couple			
Back to back				
Casting	Any number of places, off or up			
	Cross and cast			
	Set and cast			
	Turn and cast			
Chains	Grand chain (3 couples)			
	Ladies' Chain			
Corner Formations	Turn corner partner corner partner			
Dance, nearer hands joined				
Figure of 8	Across the dance			
	Half figure of eight across the dance			
	On the sides			
Hands across	3 hands			
	4 hands			
	4 hands across and back			
	4 hands across halfway			
Hands round and back				
Lead down the middle and up				
Lead down the middle and up followed by cast off				
Poussette (quicktime - 2 couple)				
Promenade	3 couple			
	3 couple followed by cast off			
Reels of 3	Right and left shoulder			
	Mirror and parallel			
	6 and 8 bar			
Reels of 4 on the sidelines				

Rights and lefts	Half			
	Full			
Turns (2 and 4 bar)	Right hand and left hand			
	Both hands (strathspey only)			
Dance Concepts:				
Ability to do a simple dance from a walkthrough				
Basic covering (alignment with other dancers dancing same pattern)				
Difference between a reel and a jig, and between a strathspey and a slow air				
Forming sets, counting couples, and keeping lines straight				
Understanding standard progressions (2, 3, 4-couple dances)				
Identifying corners				
Knowing how to count to the music and recognize 8-bar phrases				
Teamwork (dancing with a variety of partners, good eye contact, remaining alert, proper use of hands)				
Dance etiquette (waiting for dance to be called, joining sets at the bottom, thanking partner and set, dancing within capabilities)				

Advancing from Level 2 to Level 3

Criteria		None/little of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Steps:				
Correct rhythm and execution of all standard steps (identified in table above)				
Maintain correct execution of steps during formation practice and a dance				
Highland Schottische Setting step				
Smoother transitions between all steps in all tempos				
Formations (be able to competently dance the following without a walk and in jig, reel and strathspey time unless otherwise specified):				
All of the formations listed in the level 1 evaluation				
Allemande (4 couples)				
Balance in line				
Chains	Cumulative Grand Chain			
	Men's chain			
Corner formations	Corner Chain			
	Corner Pass and Turn			
	Set to corners			
	Set to corners and partner (i.e., Hello-Goodbye)			
	Set to and turn corners			
Double triangles				
Figure of eight	Double			
Knot	2 couple			
	3 couple			
Petronella turns				
Poussette	Strathspey half			
	Strathspey full			
Promenade	2 couple			
	4 couple			
Reels	Inveran			
	Tandem (full, half, and with lead change)			
	Reel of 3 on opposite sides and on own sides			
	Reel of 4 (diagonal)			
Rights and lefts (diagonal)				
Rondel				
Set and link (2 couple)				
Turn halfway and cast (i.e., half turn and twirl)				
Dance Concepts:				
Ability to do a straightforward level 2 dance from only a briefing				
Ability to maintain awareness of the dance as a whole, thinking ahead to what comes next and where one needs to be				

Awareness of how various types of music affect the mood or spirit of the dance			
Frequent, easy eye contact			
Phrasing - smooth transitions between formations, growing recognition of where careful phrasing is needed, an ability to alter length of step appropriately			
Strong teamwork and a sense of dancing with others at all times			
Understand covering and be able to demonstrate this in some formations and dances			
Willingness to dance with all other levels of dancers			