

New Zealand Branch Class Guidelines

Technically Skilled High Impact

If you apply for this class, you should already:

- Be technically skilled in all aspects of Scottish Country Dancing and be able to keep to this standard independently of other dancers.
- Have a thorough knowledge of all the steps in the RSCDS Manual and have mastered transitions between steps, in particular where a change of foot is required.
- Have a thorough knowledge of the commonly danced formations listed in the RSCDS Manual and be able to dance them to a very high standard without prompting. For example (but not limited to): the Tournee, the Knot and The Rondel.
- Have excellent footwork, handing, phrasing and covering and be able to maintain that standard for the entire duration of the class.
- Have an understanding of the musical rhythms in Scottish country dancing and display rhythmic dancing in Reel, Jig and Strathspey time.
- Be comfortable with basic Highland steps and be prepared to learn more technical Highland steps.
- Be able to cope with unusual and complex dances.

The teacher will be looking to improve your already accomplished dancing so you should be prepared to accept all constructive critiquing of your dancing.

The Very Advanced class is physically demanding, so you will need to be free from injury and have a level of physical fitness that will enable you to consistently dance at this very high level of dancing for the entire class. Unless you are injured during the class you will be expected to take part fully in the class.

This is the highest technically skilled and physically demanding class to be offered by the New Zealand Branch and as such, you and the other dancers should be able to get a sense of achievement by dancing with others of a similar very high level.

Technically Skilled Low Impact

The Technically Skilled Low Impact class is for dancers who have previously danced at the Technically Skilled High Impact level (please refer to guidelines for that class), but are now unable to maintain this high standard for the entire duration of the class.

Dancers are still expected to:

- Have a thorough knowledge of the steps and formations listed in the RSCDS Manual, and be able to dance them well without prompting.
- Be able to maintain handing, phrasing and covering throughout the class.
- Have an understanding of Scottish country dance music and display rhythmic dancing.
- Be able to cope with unusual and complex dances.
- Be able to maintain the standard of the class independently of other dancers.

Your teacher will be placing more emphasis on what's happening above your hips rather than below them! If you are unable to dance every dance, you will be welcome to sit out occasionally.

Social Dancing Skills

As the name implies, the Social Dancing Skills class is not as physically demanding as other classes. You do not need to have danced to a high standard to attend this class.

This a relaxed, easy going and social class, suited to dancers with a moderate level of fitness, however you will still be expected to:

- Have a good knowledge of the steps and formations listed in the RSCDS Manual, and be able to dance them well.
- Be prepared to dance unusual dances.

Advanced

Dancers applying for the Advanced class should already:

- Be comfortable with all aspects of Scottish Country Dancing and be able to dance well without relying on others.
- Have be confident dancing the steps and many of the formations listed in the RSCDS Manual. You will need to be able to dance well without prompting commonly danced formations such as (but not limited to): Double Triangles, Set to and turn corners and Reels of three and four.
- Have footwork, handing and phrasing that is to a high standard and be able to maintain that standard for the entire duration of the class.
- Have some understanding of transitions between steps, especially where a change of foot is required.
- Be prepared to learn basic Highland steps.

The teacher will be improving your footwork, rhythm, phrasing and technique so that your dancing will be of a high standard, this will involve some constructive critiquing of your dancing.

As with any class involving emphasis on footwork and technique, you should be fit and free from injury before the class starts.

Intermediate

This class is designed for dancers who are already familiar with core movements of Scottish Country Dancing and who have attended at least one Elementary class or been dancing regularly for over two years.

You should already:

- Be able to dance the steps and many of the formations listed in the RSCDS Manual such as (but not limited to) Allemande, Promenade and Ladies chain.
- Be able to dance your steps, maintain your phrasing, handing and technique to a reasonable standard for the duration of the lesson.

The teacher of the Intermediate class will be improving the accuracy of your steps (including transitions between steps), and the level of your technique and phrasing. You will be introduced to more demanding formations and variations on the steps you already know.

Elementary

The Elementary class is for those dancers who have attended a Beginners class or have been dancing with a group for up to a year.

By now you should be familiar with the five basic steps used in Scottish Country Dancing:

- Skip Change
- Pas de Basque (setting)
- Slip Step
- Strathspey Travelling
- Strathspey Setting

You should be comfortable with movements such as (but not limited to): Hands across, Rights and Lefts and Figure of eight.

The teacher will be improving your footwork and introducing you to more challenging formations.

Beginners

Welcome to Scottish Country Dancing.

If you are attending this class then all you need is a pair of soft soled shoes, comfortable clothing and a sense of adventure!

Your teacher will be introducing you to:

- The basic steps of Scottish Country Dancing, including the foot positions required to achieve them.
- How a group of dancers make up a “set” and how each person progresses through the set during the dance.
- Easy movements that will enable you to complete simple dances with confidence.

Senior JAM

The Senior JAM class is for dancers aged between 13 and 19 years, and younger dancers of appropriate ability and maturity, as assessed by the Summer School organiser in consultation with the Youth Co-ordinator and Education & Training Co-ordinator.

The focus of the class will be improvement of the steps, technique and formations of the Senior JAM's, in anticipation of the dancers progressing to the adult Advanced class. Because of the age of the dancers in this class, it is expected that there will be a lot of energy & exuberance expended!

Junior JAM

The Junior JAM class is for dancers aged between 8 and 12 years, and younger dancers of appropriate ability and maturity, as assessed by the Summer School organiser in consultation with the Youth Co-ordinator and Education & Training Co-ordinator, with input from the class teacher.

The focus of this class will be on the basic steps and formations, but tailoring the class to the ages and abilities of the dancers attending, with a mixture of dancing and social activity, in a relaxed environment.

This class is aimed at giving children confidence in Scottish Country Dancing, advancing their current ability, and working on the skills necessary to participate in mixed age dancing.

Teacher Preparation

This class is for anyone who wants to begin teaching Scottish country dancing, whether you are already teaching a club or group or have never taught at all. It is a good beginning point for you if you are considering taking the RSCDS Teaching Certificate at a later date. You should already be a competent dancer.

Some of the skills you may cover are:

- How to teach a step, a formation and how to put these together to teach a dance.
- Doing a warm up before a class and a cool down at the end.
- An introduction to working with musicians.
- How to put together a dance programme for a club night or evening function.
- Preparing and delivering briefing notes and recaps.
- Dance analysis, lesson planning and the selection and use of music.
- Developing attributes such as manner, use of voice, demonstration and class management.

The object of the class is to give you confidence to teach a group of dancers while developing basic teaching skills in a friendly, supportive and non-critical environment.