

## BALLET PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### Methodology

Guam Conservatory of Arts utilizes the teaching methods of the Royal Academy of Dancing (RAD) and of the Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet. Each method has a comprehensive syllabus that provides direction for the lesson plans of each level of training.

The RAD syllabus emphasizes pure movement devoid of affectation. Dancers from this tradition of training are known for their clean footwork, simplicity of movement and regal carriage. RAD is the principal training method used at the Royal Ballet School in London, United Kingdom.

The Vaganova method takes its name after Agrippa Vaganova, a Russian ballet dancer who, after retiring from the stage, gave her life to teaching. Her syllabus is the principal training method used at the Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet, the Mariinsky Ballet Company, the Bolshoi Ballet Academy and the Paris Opera Ballet School. Dancers trained in the Vaganova method are known for their expressive movement quality, extended lines, and most of all, the exquisite use of their back and shoulders (Fr: “épaulement”).

Younger students will learn the fundamentals via the RAD system. Gradually, as they pass to higher levels of training, they will be taught in the Vaganova tradition. In addition to making it our goal to offer our students a comprehensive ballet education, we aim to prepare students in such a manner so that they can confidently compete for dance scholarships at universities and gain employment in entry-level positions in professional dance companies. (See below: Completion of Training.)

### Levels

Each student is assessed on his abilities and for his maturity commensurate to the level to which he will be assigned. The assignment will take place subsequent to the audition process. After the student receives notification of acceptance into the pre-professional division, the student, parent and Conservatory representative will meet to discuss which level is deemed appropriate for the student and what the specific program entails. If the student needs financial assistance for tuition, the Conservatory will assist the student and parent in the scholarship application process.

### Curriculum

In addition to technique class (traditionally known as ‘ballet class’), advancing students will take classes in: pointe (girls), pas de deux (partnering), variation, repertoire, character/folk and tap dance. Character dance is an excellent form of theatrical dance and learning it is vital for students who wish to participate in musical theater. Tap dance is excellent for learning rhythm and recalling combinations of movements. For boys, there is ‘men’s class’ where they will learn the essentials of jumping and turning and learn the choreography to classic men’s solo variations. Pas de deux (partnering) class is also required for our advancing male and female students. Male dancers are required to be strong in order to lift female dancers overhead; therefore boys will learn the fundamentals of weightlifting. It is part of the Conservatory’s vision to build a gym wherein all students may utilize fitness equipment to correct physical imbalances and improve overall strength.

## Completion of Training

Guam Conservatory of Arts seeks to offer certification to its students upon completion of each graded level. Such certification will be awarded in partnership with affiliates of the Royal of Academy of Dancing and Vaganova School of Russian Ballet after the student has been tested at each term's end and has successfully demonstrated artistry and mastery of requisite combinations of movements. It is important to acknowledge, however, that mastery of ballet cannot be compared to general scholastic achievement, and as such, diplomas, as it were, are not highly valued or as relevant in the professional world of classical ballet. In short, Guam Conservatory of Arts does not award diplomas to its students.

The element of time and the earning of credits that are so important for obtaining degrees in academic fields are less applicable in the field of professional ballet training. The number of years of ballet instruction necessary to the formation of a dancer varies not only with the individual talent of a student but also with the age at which the instruction began, the intensiveness of the program attended, and the quality of instruction received. Moreover, a dancer's training continues beyond formal training at the Conservatory, and completion should not be marked arbitrarily by the delivery of a certificate. A dancer's education at Guam Conservatory of Arts may be considered successfully completed when he or she is deemed ready to join a professional company.