

The Australian Ballet School

Southbank, Melbourne, Australia



Founded in 1964 as the national training ground for The Australian Ballet, pairing VCE study with daily classical technique in Southbank.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	55/100
Academic outcomes	42/100
University placement	28/100
Prestige & heritage	61/100
Alumni network	1/100
Facilities	55/100
Transparency	62/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

The Australian Ballet School occupies a narrow, serious niche: pre-professional ballet training tied to a conventional senior secondary route. Founded in ****1964****, it has had six decades to define its role, and the role is clear. This is not a broad independent school with strong dance on the side; it is a specialist conservatoire-style school for students aged 12-18 who want daily classical training alongside the VCE. In market terms, that matters. Families are not buying a rounded all-purpose campus experience. They are buying **professional formation**, **technical discipline** and a direct line into the world of classical performance.

What puts it on a shortlist is that focus. The school exists to train dancers, not to decorate a mainstream education with studio hours. Its Southbank location places students in Melbourne’s main arts precinct, and the school’s public performance calendar gives training a public edge. The link in its founding purpose to The Australian Ballet also carries weight: this institution was set up as the national training ground for the company, and that heritage still defines its credibility. For the right student, that creates *clear vocational intent*, *high-stakes artistic training* and a peer group built around the same ambition. For the wrong student, it narrows life fast.

The ideal pupil is not a casual dance enthusiast. This school suits the young dancer who already works with intensity, accepts correction, and wants a timetable organised around ballet rather than around a conventional school identity. Boarders and day students both need resilience, physical durability and a tolerance for repetition. Parents also need a clear eye. Specialist schools ask for trade-offs: less breadth, more pressure, and a stronger sense that adolescence is being channelled into one discipline. If that discipline is the point, The Australian Ballet School earns attention. If a family wants *academic breadth*, broad co-curricular choice or a less exacting adolescence, this is the wrong shortlist.

STRENGTHS

- Official training school of The Australian Ballet, founded in 1964, giving top graduates a direct pathway to company contracts.
- Located in Southbank's arts precinct adjacent to Arts Centre Melbourne, giving students proximity to professional theatres and the national company's studios.
- Combines full-time classical ballet vocational training with the VCE academic curriculum, allowing students to complete secondary schooling alongside dance training.
- Boarding facilities are available on-site, supporting interstate and international students who relocate for the program.
- Long institutional history with alumni who have gone on to dance with The Australian Ballet and other international companies.

TRADE-OFFS

- Entry is via highly selective national and international auditions, with only a small number of places offered each year.
- Curriculum is narrowly focused on classical ballet vocational training, leaving limited scope for broader academic subjects or extracurricular variety.
- Full-time dance training is physically demanding and carries injury risk; not all enrolled students complete the program or progress to a company contract.
- The vocational, single-discipline model is unsuitable for students or families wanting to keep a wide range of career options open.

ADMISSIONS

Entry is by audition, generally for students around the early secondary years, with assessments of technique, physical aptitude and potential rather than academic scores alone. Auditions are held annually in Australian capital cities and occasionally overseas. Places are limited and competition is significant given the school's status as the official training body for The Australian Ballet. Boarding is available for students relocating from interstate or overseas, and academic study follows the VCE alongside full-time dance training. Prospective families should contact the school directly for current audition dates and fee schedules.

WTS RATING 

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