



Artistic Development & Pre-Assessment Guide

A Structured Framework for STAR 7, 9, & Gold Artistic Test Readiness

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INTRODUCTION

Artistic testing in Canada has evolved significantly over time, transitioning from a traditional evaluation model to the current STAR-based assessment system used by Skate Canada. Historically, Artistic (previously known as Interpretive, and Artistic before that) assessments were evaluated using broad and often subjective criteria, with limited consistency in how performance and expression were measured. While this approach provided general feedback, it did not always clearly define what was required to achieve a passing standard. As a result, expectations could vary between evaluators, and skaters were not always provided with specific, actionable guidance.

With the introduction of the STAR 1–Gold system, Skate Canada established a more structured and criteria-based approach to artistic assessment. Within this system, artistic programs are evaluated based on performance quality, expression, and overall execution, with clearly defined requirements and expectations. This evolution has improved consistency and accountability in assessment, while more closely aligning evaluation with skill development.

Despite these improvements, the structure of artistic program assessment can present challenges in a development environment. The combination of required movements within a program and multiple performance criteria may make it difficult for skaters to clearly understand what is required to meet the passing standard. In particular, the relationship between movement execution and overall program performance is not always clearly defined in a training context.

The purpose of this guide is to offer an expansion and development insight of the current Skate Canada framework. It does not replace or alter official testing standards; rather, it translates those standards into a consistent and accessible development model.

This guide introduces a structured approach to artistic program assessment based on two core areas:

- Technical Execution
- Performance Execution

Within this framework, all criteria are directly aligned with Skate Canada’s established assessment components. The intent is to provide clarity, consistency, and a clear pathway to test readiness.

A standardized rating scale is used throughout:

- Below Standard
- Standard
- Above Standard

This terminology clearly defines the passing level and supports skill progression. “Standard” represents the level required to successfully pass a test, while “Below Standard” and “Above Standard” indicate areas requiring improvement or exceeding expectations.

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The intent of this system is to:

- Improve clarity and consistency in development and assessment
- Provide skaters with a clear understanding of expectations
- Support coaches in delivering structured and effective instruction
- Maintain full alignment with Skate Canada testing standards

This guide is intended as a development and pre-assessment tool to support skaters preparing for artistic program assessments within the Skate Canada system.

1. PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide provides a structured approach to developing a well balanced program based on two core areas:

- **Technical Execution** (foundation of the element execution)
- **Performance Execution** (quality, interpretation, and presentation of the program)

The goal of this system is to:

- Clearly define what is required to meet the passing standard
- Provide consistent assessment criteria across all artistic levels
- Align with Skate Canada standards while improving clarity for training

2. ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Rating System

- **B – Below Standard:** Performance does not meet required level
- **S – Standard:** Meets passing requirements (passing level)
- **A – Above Standard:** Exceeds expectations with consistency and confidence

B = Below Standard	S = Standard	A = Above Standard
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Passing Requirements

- **Technical Execution:** All criteria must be Standard or better

<i>Technical Execution</i>	B	S	A	COMMENTS
*Content Requirements				
<input type="checkbox"/> Choreographic Step Sequence				
<input type="checkbox"/> Field Movement Sequence				
<input type="checkbox"/> 360 Degree Field Move (<i>GOLD ONLY</i>)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Artistic Spin				
Technical Execution: <input type="checkbox"/> 3/3 must be Standard or better				

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- **Performance Execution:**

- STAR 7: 3 of 4 must be Standard or better *including* ***Skating Skills & *Expression**
- STAR 9 & Gold: 4 of 4 must be Standard or better

Performance Execution	B	S	A	COMMENTS
*Skating Skills				
Form & Control				
Pattern / Ice Coverage				
*Expression				
Performance Execution: <input type="checkbox"/> 3/4 must be Standard or better <i>including</i> * (STAR 7)				
Performance Execution: <input type="checkbox"/> 4/4 must be Standard or better (STAR 9 & GOLD)				

- Both sections must meet requirements for a result of **Ready to Test**

Technical Execution:	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Both <u>Executions</u> must be YES to receive an overall assessment of READY TO TEST
Performance Execution:	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Result of Assessment:	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>READY TO TEST</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT</i>

**Content Requirements are based on the Program Level being assessed.*

Technical Execution can only be marked Standard or better when the Content Requirements are included & successful.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH SKATE CANADA STANDARDS

3.1 Relationship Between B / S / A and Skate Canada Ratings

Assessment Marking	Skate Canada Equivalent	Meaning
B (Below Standard)	Bronze	Does not meet required level
S (Standard)	Silver	Meets passing requirement
A (Above Standard)	Gold	Exceeds required level

3.2 Purpose of Terminology

The terms Below Standard, Standard, and Above Standard are used to:

- Clearly define the passing level
- Remove ambiguity in assessment language
- Support training and development rather than ranking
- Maintain consistency across all levels

3.3 Maintaining the Standard

- Standard represents the Skate Canada passing level
- This system does not lower or modify expectations
- All requirements remain consistent with official assessments

3.4 Alignment with Artistic Program Criteria

Assessment Criteria			Skate Canada Equivalent
Technical Execution			
*Content Requirements Choreographic Step Sequence Field Movement Sequence 360 Degree Field Move (GOLD ONLY) Artistic Spin			*Content Requirements Choreographic Step Sequence Field Movement Sequence 360 Degree Field Move (GOLD ONLY) Artistic Spin
Performance Execution			
*Skating Skills			Variety & Clarity / Phrase/Form / Power & Speed
<i>Accuracy</i>	<i>Edge Quality</i>	<i>Power & Flow</i>	
Form & Control			Variety & Clarity / Connections & Unity
Pattern / Ice Coverage			Pattern / Ice Coverage
Expression			Expression / Projection

4. TECHNICAL EXECUTION

4.1 CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

Definitions

Choreographic Step Sequence refers to the skater’s ability to perform a series of connected steps and movements that meet the required definition. Steps and positions should be clear, controlled, and correctly structured. Connections between movements should be continuous and well-managed. Overall quality is reflected in consistency, clarity, and control.

Field Movement Sequence refers to the skater’s ability to perform a series of field movements that meet the required definition. Movements should be clearly recognizable and maintained with control and balance. Transitions should be smooth and continuous. Overall quality is reflected in consistency, control, and movement definition.

360 Degree Field Move (GOLD ONLY) refers to the skater’s ability to execute a field movement that includes a full 360-degree rotation while maintaining the defined position. The movement should be controlled and sustained throughout the rotation. Entry and exit should be smooth and well-managed. Overall quality is reflected in consistency, control, and clarity.

Artistic Spin refers to the skater’s ability to perform a rotational movement that incorporates an artistic element, such as creative arm positions, difficult variations, or a defined entry. The spin should maintain control, centering, and clear positions throughout. The movement should achieve the required revolutions while maintaining stability. Artistic elements should enhance the quality and presentation of the spin without disrupting control. Overall quality is reflected in consistency, creativity, and control of rotation.

Below Standard	Standard	Above Standard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sequence does not meet definition; incorrect or unclear steps/positions. ● Spin lacks required revolutions or definition; positions unclear; centering and control are inconsistent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sequence meets definition; steps and positions are correct and controlled. ● Required revolutions are completed; positions are achieved; spin is mostly centered with moderately maintained control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sequence confidently meets definition; steps and positions are consistent, controlled, and well-defined. ● Revolutions are clearly achieved with speed; positions are well-defined; spin is centered, controlled, and consistent throughout.

5. PERFORMANCE EXECUTION

5.1 SKATING SKILLS

Definition

Skating Skills refer to the skater’s ability to demonstrate proper Accuracy, Edge Quality and Power & Flow throughout the program. Movements should be performed in the correct order and remain clearly recognizable. Errors should be minimal and not impact overall performance. Consistency should be maintained throughout. Edges should be well-defined and demonstrate consistent control and balance. Depth should be appropriate and maintained throughout execution. Steps should show stability and confidence. Movement should maintain consistent speed and avoid interruption. Power should be efficient and appropriate to the movement. Flow should remain smooth and continuous throughout.

Below Standard	Standard	Above Standard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Steps or turns are incorrect or out of sequence; steps lack clarity. Technique is weak or incorrect. ● Edges are flat, unclear, or lack control; balance is inconsistent. Limited variety of turns used. ● Movement is slow, laboured, or inconsistent; flow is interrupted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Steps and turns are correct; steps remain clear and recognizable. Technique is adequate. ● Edges are clear with control and appropriate depth. Some variety of turns used. ● Movement is continuous with adequate power and flow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Steps and turns are clean, precise, and consistently executed. Technique is strong and confident. ● Edges are clean, controlled and show consistent depth and confidence. Many turns are used. ● Movement is strong, continuous, and effortless with consistent speed.

5.2 FORM & CONTROL

Definition

Form & Control refer to the skater’s posture, body alignment, balance, and overall movement quality throughout the program. This includes maintaining a stable core, proper positioning of the upper body, and controlled use of the arms and free leg. This reflects the skater’s ability to present clean lines and precise movements that support both balance and the overall style and artistry of the program. Strong form & control contribute to clarity, consistency, and refinement in performance.

Below Standard	Standard	Above Standard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Posture and control are inconsistent; movements lack clarity. Transitions are weak. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Posture and control are maintained; movements are clear. Transitions are adequate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Posture is strong, with clean lines, and controlled, refined movement. Transitions are strong.

5.3 PATTERN / ICE COVERAGE

Definition

Pattern / Ice Coverage refers to the ability to place skating accurately within the intended pattern or program structure. Movements should align with correct placement and direction. Use of the ice should be balanced and effective. Control of direction and spacing should be maintained throughout. Overall quality is reflected in consistency, accuracy, and control of placement.

Below Standard	Standard	Above Standard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placement is inconsistent or incorrect; movements do not align with the intended pattern. Use of the ice is limited or uneven. Multi-directional skating is limited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placement aligns with the intended pattern, with minor deviations. Use of the ice is moderately appropriate. Multi-directional skating is adequate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placement consistently aligns with the intended pattern. Use of the ice is confident, controlled, and well-balanced throughout. Multi-directional skating is strong.

5.4 EXPRESSION

Definition

Expression refers to the ability to convey rhythm, style, and character through movement. Movements should reflect the style and intent of the music. Connection to the music should be consistent throughout. Projection and presence should be appropriate to the performance. Overall quality is reflected in clarity, consistency, and musical interpretation.

Below Standard	Standard	Above Standard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expression is inconsistent or unclear; limited connection to rhythm, style, and musical character. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expression reflects rhythm and style with some consistency; connection to the music and character is moderately evident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expression is clear and consistent; strongly reflects rhythm, style, and musical character with confident projection and presence.

6. READY TO TEST STANDARDS (Star 6 - Gold)

B = Below Standard	S = Standard	A = Above Standard
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Technical Execution	
Choreographic Step Sequence	B: Sequence/movements does not meet definition; incorrect or unclear steps/positions.
Field Movement Sequence	S: Sequence/movements meet definition; steps and positions are correct and controlled.
360 Degree Field Move <i>(GOLD ONLY)</i>	A: Sequence/movements confidently meet definition; steps and positions are consistent, controlled, and well-defined.
Artistic Spin	<p>B: Spin lacks required revolutions or definition; positions unclear; centering and control are inconsistent.</p> <p>S: Required revolutions are completed; positions are achieved; spin is mostly centered with moderately maintained control.</p> <p>A: Revolutions are clearly achieved with speed; positions are well-defined; spin is centered, controlled, and consistent throughout.</p>

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Performance Execution	
<p>*Skating Skills Variety & Clarity Phrase/Form Power & Speed</p> <p>*Accuracy *Edge Quality *Power & Flow</p>	<p>B: Steps or turns are incorrect or out of sequence; steps lack clarity. Technique is weak or incorrect. Edges are flat, unclear, or lack control; balance is inconsistent. Limited variety of turns demonstrated. Movement is slow, laboured, or inconsistent; flow is interrupted.</p> <p>S: Steps and turns are correct; steps remain clear and recognizable. Technique is adequate. Edges are clear with control and appropriate depth. Some variety of turns demonstrated. Movement is continuous with adequate power and flow.</p> <p>A: Steps and turns are clean, precise, and consistently executed. Technique is strong and confident. Edges are clean, controlled, and show consistent depth and confidence. A range of turns are demonstrated. Movement is strong, continuous, and effortless with consistent speed.</p>
<p>Form & Control Variety & Clarity Connections & Unity</p>	<p>B: Posture and control are inconsistent; movements lack clarity. Transitions are weak.</p> <p>S: Posture and control are maintained; movements are clear. Transitions are adequate.</p> <p>A: Posture is strong, with clean lines, and controlled, refined movement. Transitions are strong.</p>
<p>Pattern / Ice Coverage Pattern / Ice Coverage</p>	<p>B: Placement is inconsistent or incorrect; movements do not align with the intended pattern. Use of the ice is limited or uneven. Multi-directional skating is limited.</p> <p>S: Placement aligns with the intended pattern, with minor deviations. Use of the ice is moderately appropriate. Multi-directional skating is adequate.</p> <p>A: Placement consistently aligns with the intended pattern. Use of the ice is confident, controlled, and well-balanced throughout. Multi-directional skating is strong.</p>
<p>Expression Expression / Projection</p>	<p>B: Expression is inconsistent or unclear; limited connection to rhythm, style, and musical character.</p> <p>S: Expression reflects rhythm and style with some consistency; connection to the music and character is moderately evident.</p> <p>A: Expression is clear and consistent; strongly reflects rhythm, style, and musical character with confident projection and presence.</p>

Execution Standard must be consistent with the applicable Skate Canada assessment level.

8. TRAINING STRUCTURE

Weekly Rotation	Session Structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Content Requirements ● Skating Skills ● Power & Flow ● Form & Control ● Expression 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warm-up 2. Element development 3. Sequence / movement development 4. Program run-through 5. Feedback

9. TEST PREPARATION

A skater is Ready to Test when:

- Technical Execution meets Standard
 - *Consistently & consecutively on 3 pre-assessments*
 - *Content Requirements consistently meet definition*
- Performance Execution meets Standard
 - *Consistently & consecutively on 3 pre-assessments*

10. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

STAR Level	Content Requirements
STAR 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choreographic Step Sequence - Field Movement Sequence - Artistic Spin
STAR 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choreographic Step Sequence - Field Movement Sequence - Artistic Spin
GOLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choreographic Step Sequence - Field Movement Sequence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OR 360 Degree Field Move - Artistic Spin