

2017 VCE Dance written examination report

General comments

The 2017 Dance written examination consisted of six questions that comprised short-answer questions, questions where students were required to respond in table format, scenario-based questions and extended-response questions. All questions were compulsory. Questions 4, 5 and 6 related to dance works selected from the 2017 Prescribed List of dance works published annually on the Dance study page of the VCAA website. This list changes each year; therefore, it is important to carefully check the list at the start of each year before deciding on the selection of works to be studied. Generally responses indicated that students had studied appropriate works from the current prescribed list.

The majority of students attempted all of the questions on the examination. Some students included excess information in responses to short-answer questions then seemingly ran out of time to complete the extended-response questions. Students are advised to note the marks available for each question and allocate their time accordingly. The number of lines given for the response also indicates the length of the response required.

Specific information

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	7	4	6	11	12	16	44	4.4

This question assessed students' knowledge and understanding of pre-performance practices in solo dance works. It required a description of two relevant pre-performance practices capable of enhancing the student's artistry when performing their solo dance work.

High-scoring responses presented a comprehensive, well-developed and articulate description of two relevant pre-performance practices that were linked to how the student's artistry in performance was enhanced.

Generally, students should complete pre-performance practices within an hour of performing, i.e. immediately before the performance, not during the rehearsal process. Examples of relevant pre-performance practices could have included (but were not limited to):

- marking the dance in the performance space
- listening to the music backstage

- getting into character through the application of make-up or costume
- visualising the movements, character and emotions of the dance
- warming up the body to ensure movements can be executed properly.

Low-scoring responses:

- confused pre-performance practices with movement creation processes, rehearsal practices and/or performance practices
- lacked adequate detail about the stated process and/or included a list of practices
- did not link the stated process to how it enhanced artistry.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response.

- *One pre-performance practice is visualising the solo. (...) Not only does this help them connect the EI to moves, but it builds muscle memory. This means the dancer can focus on projection and adding artistry to the movements instead of focusing on what comes next. This means the choreography is performed with artistry (a sense of meaning, projection, captivating expression) and will be performed at fullest potential.*
- *Another pre-performance practice is relaxation and calming yourself down. This means the dancer will not be nervous, shaky or stressed when they go on stage to perform. It puts the dancer in the right headspace so they can focus on adding artistry to every single move. If the dancer goes on stage stressed, artistry will be lacking and movements will be of poor quality. Relaxation is essential before a performance to ensure artistry.*

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	6	7	22	19	46	2.9

This question assessed students' knowledge and understanding of elements of regular dance training and how they assist dancers to execute movement safely.

It is implicit in the wording of the study design that students partake in regular dance technique training and that they understand and experience dance technique training that is safe, actively avoids injury, and builds healthy understanding of the individual's own body.

All of the key knowledge and key skills under the heading of Dance Technique in Unit 3, Area of Study 3 except the dot point 'movement phrases and sequences used in the learnt group dance work', could have formed the basis of correct answers for this question. Answers could have been based on, or stem from, the following:

- processes used in effectively warming up and cooling down at appropriate times
- alignment principles that develop ability to safely align body parts in movement and stillness
- safe and accurate execution of physical skills and body actions
- systematically repeat and refine physical skills through appropriate exercises over time
- safe and accurate execution of physical skills and body actions
- safe and accurate execution of body actions and variations of the elements of movement through the development of physical skills
- memorise and safely execute complex movement phrases and sequences.

High-scoring responses presented a relatively detailed description of two relevant elements of safe dance practice, and demonstrated their knowledge of how these were linked to how the student's artistry was enhanced in performance. These responses included specific detail of one element of safe dance practice, or broad information about an element of safe dance practice. Many students included references to specific aspects of anatomy regarding engagement of small/large muscle groups to safely perform movement vocabulary.

In low-scoring responses, students included information that was not relevant to the elements of safe dance practice, or identified them correctly but did not discuss how the element identified assisted them to execute movement safely; for example, they may have explained the steps involved in a warm-up but did not explain how a warm-up assists in the safe execution of movement.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

- *A proper warm up is an area of regular training a dancer needs to do in order to get their muscles warm and blood flowing so they can use a full range of motion and be ready to execute all movements (safely). Cardio, dynamic stretching, and strengthening exercises are all part of a good warm up.*
- *Another area of regular dance training is the aspect of repeatedly practicing a step or movement until it can be done fluently and safely, such as practicing a roll onto the floor until it is smooth and safely executed, so the dancer builds strength.*

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	3	1	1	2	3	6	8	10	17	17	32	7.8

The question assessed students' understanding of the movement creation processes, namely improvisation, selection, arrangement, refinement and evaluation.

Most students were able to correctly identify the five movement creation processes. The majority of students listed them using the mnemonic ISARE; however, this was not required for students to gain full marks.

High-scoring responses often included information about **how** each process was used, and **why** it was used, i.e. what it helped the choreographer achieve. Many of these high-level explanations included information about how movement creation processes improved artistry. While artistry was not assessed, this link assisted students to form a clear and succinct response to the question.

Low-scoring responses:

- included incorrect processes, such as elements of movement, or rehearsal practices
- were unable to distinguish between the roles of refinement and evaluation
- gave definitions of each movement creation process without explaining how they are used.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response.

Firstly, a dancer can put on the music chosen for their solo and improvise to it, or even improvise without any music. Improvisation is the first step to developing the movement vocabulary for a solo. Once movements have been created through improvisation, the dancer can select movements to keep or adjust and create phrases. This step of selection begins to create the structure and phrases of the solo. Once movements have been selected, the dancer can then arrange the steps into sections or new phrases. The dancer should arrange their movements to clearly reflect their expressive intention and to suit the music of their solo. Once movements have been arranged into phrases and sections, the dancer can then refine the form of their solo and make changes to their movement vocabulary or expressive intention to ensure they have created a clear solo dance work. Finally, the soloist should evaluate the movement (...). They should also evaluate how successful they were in communicating their chosen expressive intention. (...)

Question 4

Work chosen	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
%	0	11	11	35	21	1	9	9	2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Average
%	2	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	4	8	6	8	12	15	37	12.4

This question assessed students' knowledge of physical skills. They needed to correctly identify physical skills used in the prescribed work, and demonstrate how the skill was used through describing movement vocabulary examples.

In the Dance study design the term 'physical skills' covers flexibility, strength, stamina, transference of weight, coordination, alignment, balance and control. Discussion of any three of these was required.

High-scoring responses correctly identified three different physical skills. They gave detailed descriptions of movement vocabulary examples, and also demonstrated how the physical skill identified was required within the movement example. A sophisticated knowledge of anatomy was evident in many student responses, such as the dancer finding their centre of gravity while transferring and distributing their weight evenly over the heels and soles of the feet, engaging the core-stabilising and quadriceps muscles to maintain balance, and demonstrating flexibility through hip-rotating muscles and joints.

Low-scoring responses:

- identified body actions or other movements rather than physical skills
- provided appropriate movement vocabulary examples but did not explain how the movement described demonstrated the physical skill identified
- provided little information about the movement vocabulary
- gave definitions of the physical skills without giving specific examples of movement vocabulary from the prescribed dance work
- used inappropriate movement vocabulary examples, i.e. movements that did not obviously require the linked physical skill, with no explanation of how the linked physical skill was required.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response. The response is referring to *Smoke* by Mats Ek.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical skill 2 <p style="text-align: center;"><i>CO-ORDINATION</i></p>	<p>Description of two movement vocabulary examples from the solo dance work that demonstrate the use of the physical skill identified</p>
	<p>Example 1</p> <p><i>In the beginning section (phrase 5) the dancer locomotes sideways, holding her dress in front of her with one hand. She performs various gestures with her other hand such as scratching, itching and shaking her dress. This requires coordination as the dancer performs different gestures and actions with each hand, while locomoting sideways.</i></p>

	<p>Example 2</p> <p><i>In the development section (phrase 4), the dancer locomotes in a semi-circle towards the front of the stage, she is in a (demi) plie with her arms gesturing at her hips, fingers splayed and vibrating. At the same time, the dancers head is thrown back with her focus towards the back wall. This requires coordination as the dancer locomotes focusing on balance with the head thrown backwards, while the hands are shaking at her sides.</i></p>
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Question 5

Work chosen	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
%	0	7	21	26	17	4	10	14	1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	Average
%	7	5	5	4	3	5	6	4	6	3	5	11	5	3	3	3	4	2	4	1	3	2	2	1	1	4	10.0

This question assessed students' knowledge of the element of movement energy and required students to demonstrate their knowledge through examples of movement vocabulary. The response did not require discussion of the other elements of movement (time and space) or the expressive intention of the prescribed dance work.

The study design defines energy as: The manipulation of qualities of movement such as swinging, sustained, suspended, percussive, vibratory and collapsing to create dynamic variations of force and flow.

In high-scoring responses, students discussed a variety of elements of energy within each movement example. They discussed a movement vocabulary example in detail and included information about the force and flow used in the movement, as well as the energy qualities (SSSPVC). These students also displayed a clear understanding of the separate elements of force and flow. Some high-scoring responses included some discussion of the expressive intention to help support their discussion of the use of energy within the movement vocabulary; however, information about the expressive intention on its own was not a requirement in responding to this question.

Low-scoring responses:

- contained large passages of movement vocabulary examples without any links to the use of energy
- discussed energy in terms of stamina, i.e. discussing whether movement required 'lots of energy' or 'not much energy', or that there was 'a sudden burst of energy'
- discussed stillness and pausing as qualities of movement
- discussed force and flow as if they were opposite qualities, i.e. discussing movements that were 'forceful' or 'flowy'. These responses did not identify that force and flow are both present simultaneously and each have two opposing qualities

- included extensive discussion of the expressive intention or spatial organisation with no links to the discussion of energy
- gave general information about the use of energy within a section of the dance, without giving specific movement vocabulary examples
- became a discussion about dance design and gave lots of information that **was not** answering the question being asked
- revealed an understanding of the qualities of energy but did **not** use the correct terminology.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response. The response is referring to *Les Sylphides* by Mikhail Fokine.

In the beginning section (phrase 1) the dancer performs a series of elevations or forwards splits jetes, broken up by little runs in between, locomoting en diagonale. She utilises a free flow demonstrated by her floating arms (...). Her runs are light and of percussive quality, with free flow as if she's running on air. Following in phrase 2, (...) the small petite jetes are performed with a percussive quality and bound flow, in contrast to the arms that again utilise free flow but with light force this time as they gesture a kiss to downstage left.

Question 6

Work chosen	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
%	1	8	15	1	0	19	3	15	38

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	3	3	6	6	8	8	7	6	8	10	5	5	4	6	3	3	3	2	2	0	2	8.3

This question assessed students' knowledge of influences, and how those influences affected the creation of the expressive intention.

An in-depth discussion of a range and number of influences that affected the choreographer(s) choices in relation to the expressive intention were required. To achieve this, the discussion and clarification of the expressive intention needed to be included.

High-scoring responses discussed three to four influences on the choices made by the choreographer. Each influence discussed had multiple pieces of information provided, and then each point was linked to the expressive intention. These responses clearly linked the influence with the development of the expressive intention. These responses often introduced the influence first then gave two or three points about the importance of this influence for the choreographer, before drawing examples from the work to reinforce their comments on its impact on the expressive intention.

Low-scoring responses included:

- an in-depth discussion of the expressive intention without links to relevant influences
- an in-depth discussion of the influences without links to the expressive intention
- discussion of movement vocabulary, sometimes in great depth, despite it not being part of the question
- discussion about how the influences affected the movement vocabulary or production aspects
- discussion of too few influences without enough detail
- identification of many (three or more) influences but without including adequate information about any of them
- discussion of group structures or spatial organisation that was not linked to influences or the development of the expressive intention.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response. This response is referring to 'Mutton Bird' and 'People' from *Mathinna – A girl's journey between two cultures* by Stephen Page.

THE STOLEN GENERATION: The expressive intention of Mathinna was influenced by the stolen generation, the generation of Aboriginal children who were forcibly taken by white settlers to be raised by European families. They were forced to adopt the social etiquette of the upper classes, made to speak, read and write in English and to renounce their Aboriginal culture and values. (...) The influence of the stolen generation on the expressive intention is evident in Bangarra's and Page's desire to improve the understanding and connection between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures.