

# 2021 VCE Polish oral external assessment report

## General comments

The Polish oral examination assesses students' knowledge and skills in using spoken language. The examination has two sections – a conversation of approximately 7 minutes, during which students converse with the assessors about their personal world, and a discussion of approximately 8 minutes.

It should be noted that during the oral examination:

- students may be asked a variety of questions of varying levels of difficulty. Questions may also be asked in a different order from the one students anticipate
- assessors may interrupt students to ask questions during either section of the examination; this should be regarded as a normal process in a discussion
- assessors may also repeat or rephrase questions
- normal variation in assessor body language is acceptable.

Students are reminded that they must be prepared to use language spontaneously in unrehearsed situations. Students are not expected to be 'experts'; they are expected to have learnt strategies in order to respond to unexpected questions. It would be valuable for students to learn phrases such as, 'I have not studied this aspect of the topic, but I think ...', 'I don't know, but I feel ...' and 'I am not sure about this question, but I know ...'

Students will be assessed in both the conversation and the discussion in communication, content and language. The criteria are published on the VCAA website. It is important that all teachers and students be familiar with the criteria and descriptors, and that students use them as part of their examination preparation. This will help students to engage in a lively and interesting exchange with assessors. Although there are similarities between the assessment criteria for the conversation and discussion sections of the examination, the criteria assess two very different aspects of performance. Students who are well prepared are generally able to demonstrate their abilities and proficiency in the language.

## Section 1 – Conversation

Section 1 consists of a general conversation about the student's personal world, for example, school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations. It is an organic conversation about the student's personal world. These examples provide students with a basis for preparing a range of interesting and engaging ideas about their personal world, so that they can engage in a spontaneous discussion with the assessors about things that interest them.

Throughout the 2021 Polish oral examinations the students demonstrated great capacity to maintain and advance the conversation appropriately and effectively. A range of topics were covered in this section including reasons for studying Polish, future plans and aspirations, wellbeing, hobbies, lifestyle, family and traditions. The majority of students managed topic changes well and were able to engage in conversation appropriately. Students were well prepared and had very good pronunciation. Conversations that scored highly demonstrated an outstanding range of vocabulary and grammatical structures, and a high level of conversation skills including using formal language when addressing assessors, using appropriate body

language, correcting mistakes and seeking clarification. In some cases, students only gave a series of facts and opinions using limited vocabulary. Most errors were found in the areas of language transfer, such as the occasional anglicism and incorrect endings in the declension of nouns. Some students provided personal information such as their names and schools they attend, where this information should remain confidential. Overall, the language was appropriate for the context.

## Section 2 – Discussion

Following the conversation, the student indicates to the assessors the subtopic chosen for detailed study and, in no more than one minute, briefly introduces the main focus of their subtopic, alerting assessors to any objects brought to support the discussion. Suitable objects include photographs, maps or diagrams, and should include no text or very little text. The support material must have minimal writing, which includes only a heading, name or title.

The one-minute introduction should give assessors an indication of the area of discussion. The purpose is for students to briefly introduce their chosen subtopic; it is not an opportunity for students to list all their information or texts.

The focus of the discussion is to explore aspects of the language and culture of communities in which Polish is spoken, with the student being expected to make reference to the texts studied.

The choice of subtopic for the detailed study is very important. It should be an engaging topic that motivates students to become familiar with the content and vocabulary needed, and to elaborate on information, ideas and opinions. It is important that students and teachers select materials for the detailed study carefully so that students are exposed to a variety of views. The type of texts used by students should vary in complexity and be in Polish so that students can become aware of key vocabulary related to their subtopic. Students should be able to draw on the texts they have studied and make links between the texts to support, expand on and explore opinions and ideas on the subtopic and different aspects of the texts. Students should be able to relate this to the Polish-speaking community.

During the 2021 oral examination, the majority of students prepared a wide and relevant range of information, opinions and ideas. Information presented was logically sequenced and students used an array of culturally appropriate expressions relevant to their topic. In most discussions, speech was effortless and smooth as in a native speaker. The areas that required the most improvement were grammatical structures, lack of gender agreement between nouns and adjectives (*lubili ten poezji*), gender of nouns (*Świętego Elżbiety*), incorrect choice of vocabulary (*żeby upamiętać ten legendę, wskazywał światowi, został zastrzelony* instead of *postrzelony*) and noun declension (*do Kraków, do Wawelu, z Białorusia*). Some students were unable to expand on the discussion as their speech seemed to be too carefully rehearsed and did not flow naturally, such as relaying facts instead of providing unique viewpoints.