



2010 VCE VET Dance GA 2: Performance examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The VCE VET Dance performance examination is designed to assess the students' technical ability and interpretive skills in performance. Students perform **two** solo dances, of different styles, learnt from the dance repertoire of a choreographer or teacher. Each solo should be presented as a single, live, uninterrupted performance and be between two and five minutes in duration. For further information please refer to the examination specifications, which are available on the VCAA website on the VCE VET Dance study page. The dances selected should allow students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge developed in the following units of competence from the Certificate II in Dance:

- VBQU068 Refine basic dance techniques
- VBQU069 Apply basic dance techniques for performances.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Selection of Solos

Generally, the selection of the two solos was stylistically appropriate and gave students the opportunity to demonstrate their awareness, understanding and practical application of the characteristics of each of the dance styles.

The movement vocabulary selected for the solos was generally appropriate for the students' level of technical skill. If one 'class' dance is being used for a whole cohort of students, teachers should ensure that the dance can be modified or enhanced to cater for individual students' skills levels. Most students presented a repertoire that underpinned the knowledge, understanding and application of safe dance principles and was within their physical capabilities, enabling them to execute their solos safely. It should be noted that dance content is required in all dance styles. Simple walking, arm and hip movement and gestures are not sufficient movement vocabulary in any style and will not score highly.

Solos were generally of the correct length; however, the solos of some less skilful students were unnecessarily long for the limited skill set and basic movement vocabulary of the student. This resulted in the student scoring lower on the criterion related to stamina than they may have if the solo was shorter, as physical fatigue had begun to negatively affect the technical performance. There were also several instances of solos that were too short; dances must meet the minimum time length required. In some cases, the solo was extended to meet the requirement with a slow walking entrance (or promenade), posing and bow or reverence. This approach is not appropriate as the task is designed to assess students' technical ability and interpretive skills in an uninterrupted performance and affects the student's ability to demonstrate a range of technical skills.

Students are required to study two styles of dance in VCE VET Dance in order to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the dance industry, as most professional dancers in Australia need to be proficient in more than one dance style. Most dances presented were stylistically consistent with the stated style; however, it is appreciated that there is some overlapping of techniques in some styles. To maintain the integrity of the study, teachers should ensure that their choice of movement vocabulary for the two solos is different, thus avoiding the use of 'generic movement vocabulary'.

Solos that used commercial dance and hip-hop movement vocabulary were better constructed this year, with less repetition of movement vocabulary and greater use of varied spatial arrangements; however, they were often accompanied by a mix of music tracks cut together. If this music technique is used, teachers and students should ensure that there are smooth music transitions to ensure the continuity of the performance and that it adds to the choreography; for example, showing another dynamic quality or variation in the movement vocabulary. The student needs to continue moving between the tracks unless a specific 'freeze' is part of the choreography at this time so that the dance is not seen as two distinct and separate parts with no linkage between the two.

Some contemporary dances used the choreographic devices of repetition and manipulation excessively, thus limiting the range of movements executed by the student. Similarly, the use of excessive literal gestures to the lyrics of the accompanying music in all styles was an issue.

Dress

Generally students were appropriately attired for the examination. Some students would benefit from considering how they style their hair, as hair over the face can be distracting and inhibit 'spotting action'. In addition, adjusting one's hair during the performance breaks the performance quality and results in a loss of focus. Students should rehearse in the clothing they intend to wear during the examination to ensure they feel comfortable in their clothing. This will also



bring to light any potential problems with the clothing, such as tops riding up or down, pants slipping down or the need to adjust clothing during the performance.

Students are also encouraged to practise in the footwear they intend to wear in the performance prior to the examination. This is of particular importance if the student intends to wear high heeled shoes.

Music Preparation

It should be noted that there can be some slight variation in playing speeds between various tape players and students should prepare for this during the rehearsal period.

When a dance is accompanied by mixed music (a number of music tracks cut together), care needs to be taken to create a smooth transition to ensure the continuity of the music. There were instances where it was difficult for assessors to determine when the dance ended.

Excessively long musical introductions should be avoided as they leave the student standing nervously or appearing unfocused.

Interpretation of Criteria

In order to distinguish between levels of performance in the demonstration of various skills, a common understanding of the term 'skill' must be reached. For the purpose of the VCE VET Dance performance examination, skill encompasses: the level of ability that a student demonstrates in all criteria, the use of a range of skills in each criterion and the degree of difficulty involved in meeting each criterion. The same set of criteria applies for both solos. If a student's dance does not allow them to demonstrate a range of movements in each of these areas, or if the student's technical execution is not proficient in a specific technical area, they will score a lower mark for those criteria. Therefore, the repertoire selected must be technically challenging for the student but within their technical expertise.

The published assessment criteria are designed to assess performance skills and a range of technical dance skills. Each criterion is weighted equally and is marked on an eight-point scale (0–7). The assessment criteria used in assessing both solo performances is the same. The first seven criteria address students' technique, while the next three criteria address interpretation.

The assessment criteria are grouped under two categories – technique and interpretation – and criteria are applied in relation to execution of aspects of technique and interpretation consistent with each selected dance style.

Technique

- skill in the expressive use of movement dynamics
- skill in using correct posture and body alignment
- skill in isolating and coordinating the upper and lower body
- skill in the dance principle of balance
- skill in the dance principle of flexibility
- skill in the dance principle of transference of weight and control
- skill in the dance principle of stamina

Interpretation

- skill in the use of individual artistic quality through interpretation and expression
- skill in the use of spatial arrangements
- skill in the interpretation of music and rhythm

Generally there were no major concerns in addressing the criteria, other than those addressed in 'Selection of Solos'. Some solos lacked spatial variation which affected Criterion 9 (skill in the use of spatial arrangements). Teachers are encouraged to create or select solos that make logical movement transitions, thus assisting students to make safe and smooth weight transferences and score well in Criterion 6 (skill in the dance principle of transference and weight control).

Teachers are urged to encourage students to develop a sense of performance to strengthen their response to Criterion 8 (skill in the use of individual artistic quality through interpretation and expression). Students should show a clearly

2010 Assessment Report



defined end to their dance and not simply walk away or gesture 'That's it'. Teachers should encourage students to define their eye focus throughout their performance. Miming the words of the accompanying song also distracts from the performance quality.

Strengths and Weaknesses

While students can select from a wide range of styles, contemporary, various genres of commercial dance and ballet accounted for most of the choices.

In terms of music, most students used mp3 players as their music source and were familiar with how they functioned. Recordings accompanying the performances were generally of good quality and with sufficient 'lead in' time. Appropriate use of the pre-performance time in the examination room enabled students to play their music at a suitable volume.

If students are using cassettes, teachers should ensure that students are familiar with the operation of the supplied audio equipment.

Some students still presented for their examination with CDs for their accompaniment. This is not recommended as CDs can skip or miss and not all CDs can be read by the sound system provided. It should be noted that VCAA examination advice states that CDs will not be permitted for the reason stated above.