**VCE Music Performance 2017–2022**

School-based assessment report

This report is provided for the first year of implementation of this study and is based on the School-based Assessment Audit and VCAA statistical data.

All official communications regarding the *Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Music Performance Study Design* are provided in the VCAA Bulletin. It is recommended that teachers subscribe to the VCAA Bulletin to receive updated information regarding the study. Schools are required to alert teachers to information in VCAA Bulletins, especially concerning assessment schedules. Important Administrative Dates and assessment schedules are published on the School administration page of the VCAA website.

Unit 3

GENERAL COMMENTS

Responses to the Unit 3 School-based Assessment Audit questionnaire for VCE Music Performance indicate that most teachers have successfully made the transition from the previous study to the reaccredited *VCE* *Music Study Design 2017−2022*.

For Unit 3 Music Performance, students undertake three outcomes, two of which are School-assessed Coursework tasks.

Outcome 1: Performance, involves performances of both solo and group works by each student. Students should be regularly performing in class to practise their skills and should be aware of the ten criteria that they will be marked against for the end of year recital. This outcome is assessed only as S/N and doesn’t contribute to students’ coursework score for Unit 3.

The Outcome 2 task requires students to develop and use a structured program of material that will support their overall development as an instrumentalist/vocalist and assist them to prepare works selected for Outcome 1 for performance. Most schools have successfully developed tasks that meet all the requirements of this task, as outlined in the chart on page 38 of the study design. Some schools adapted tasks from previous years by adding a requirement for students to create their own exercises either to assist in development of their overall technique or to address specific issues relating to performance of works selected for Outcome 1, removing unprepared performance components and changing the written part of the task to an oral or multimedia format. This task can present authentication issues and it is important that teachers monitor the development of student created exercises in class to ensure that the work is the students’ own. It is also important to structure the oral/multimedia discussion component of the task so that students respond to previously unknown questions/prompts rather than submit material they have developed over the semester such as a practice journal. Teachers should note the weightings for this task – the demonstration is marked out of 40 and the discussion (oral or multimedia) is marked out of 10. Preparation for this task should be commenced in the first couple of weeks of the teaching and learning period for Unit 3 in order to gain maximum benefit. Many schools assess Outcome 2 early in second term in order to spread out the assessment tasks.

The task for Outcome 3 includes three parts: aural and theory, written (listening and critical response) and practical. The weightings for the three parts of the task are specified in the chart on page 38 of the study design. Teachers will decide on the weighting for particular skills within each part of the task through their task design. For example, whilst each of the practical key skills should be practised in class, the task should only assess a cross section of these skills. Otherwise an onerous amount of time would be needed to assess each student. Some tasks submitted during the audit showed confusion around the elements/aspects of performance that may be referred to in listening/critical response questions for this task. Some schools included questions referring to terms such as texture, melody, harmony and rhythm. The eight elements that may be referred to in these questions are all matters that a student can manipulate in their own performance: *tempo, dynamics, articulation, tone colour, phrasing, balance of music lines, blend of instrumental voices, improvisation/embellishment/ ornamentation.* By focusing on these aspects of the recorded performances, students learn how other performers use these elements to create expressive outcomes and can then apply this to their own performance.

Teachers are recommended to review the Sample Aural and Written Examination paper when they are planning their Outcome 3 task. For example, the sample paper includes three question types in Section A – Listening and interpretation. Including questions based on these models, particularly a question involving comparison will give students the chance to practise these skills. The audio tracks provided with the sample paper should be used as a reference for formatting stimulus material for questions such as identifying scale/modes forms, or harmonic, melodic and rhythmic transcriptions.

Assessment

Some tasks submitted during the School-based Assessment Audit did not have the correct mark allocation for the outcomes in Unit 3: 50 marks for Outcome 2 and 50 marks for Outcome 3. The audit revealed that some schools used mark allocations from the previous study design. Each SAC is now marked out of 50 allowing for greater differentiation between students. It is very important that the task design allows all students the opportunity to show their level of skill and demonstrate their expertise. Outcome 3, in particular, needs to have a range of difficulty in the questions.

For all tasks, teachers must inform students not just of the format and structure of the task, but also about how it will be assessed. For example, a marking schedule that outlines the assessment criteria and weighting of each aspect of the task should be provided with the task instructions. The task description from the study design should be included in the instructions developed by the school. Information about how student work will be authenticated should also be provided in the task instructions.

For some schools the instructions to students were unclear or contradicted the task as outlined in the study design. Some of the assessment rubrics did not address the key skills listed for the relevant outcome. It is extremely important that students have a clear understanding of what is required of them and how they will be assessed. Ideally they should be given an assessment booklet at the start of the school year which lays out all of the required information in a clear and concise manner.

Each SAC contributes 10% to the study score. Teachers need to peruse the study design carefully for the weightings of each component the tasks.

Use of commercially available School-assessed Coursework tasks

Quite a few schools used commercially available tasks for Outcome 3. If schools choose to use a commercially prepared task, they need to be aware that these tasks and the answers are also available to students and their tutors. If using commercially available tasks, teachers should alter them sufficiently to ensure that students have not seen the paper before they complete it.

Procedures

Teachers should be aware that procedures for VCE are the same for all VCE subjects. Teachers should download a copy of “Procedures for Assessment in VCE Studies” in order to make sure they are clear on policies such as satisfactory completion of a unit of work, authentication and redemption procedures.

School-assessed Coursework audit questionnaire responses

Many of the audit questionnaire responses showed an excellent understanding of the *VCE Music Study Design* and methodical planning of the teaching and learning program. Some responses were limited in the information that they provided and these teachers were asked to provide more detail. Some of the issues that came up were:

* Outcome 1: Students perform both solo and group works.
* Outcome 2: Lack of clarity in the authentication of students writing their own exercises. Not specifying that students need exercises that address their general challenges as well as repertoire specific challenges. Incorrect weightings or marking.
* Outcome 3: Some schools included a very narrow range of skills in the practical component or did not include any ‘complex’ questions such as the ‘listen, play, note’ key skill. Including a range of skills with different levels of complexity is an important aspect of task design. For example, students’ ability to play previously unheard music provides information about their development of aural memory and their ability to recognise aspects such as scale forms, rhythmic patterns and melodic contour. Their ability to notate this material provides feedback about development of aural memory and understanding/familiarity with notation conventions. Other schools omitted entire sections, such as the listening section, the theory and aural section or the practical section from the task or used incorrect weightings and marking schemes. Some schools chose not to have multiple staves on melodic transcription and rhythmic transcription questions. If this is the case, students will need to practise those contexts before the end of year written examination. Examples of different formats for these questions are provided in the Sample Examination paper.

Specific information

Unit 3: School-assessed Coursework

Outcome 1: Performance

*On completion of this unit the student should be able to prepare and perform a program of group and solo works, and demonstrate a diverse range of techniques and expressive qualities and an understanding of a wide range of music styles and performance conventions.*

Task type options

Performance

Outcome 1 is an S/N task which involves students presenting part of their end of year recital program. Page 17 of the study design provides advice about the expected duration of this recital.

*“The Unit 3 school-based performance program presented for assessment of Outcome 1 should be about 15 minutes in duration for soloists and groups of one to three assessed performers. For groups of four or more assessed performers the program should be about 20–25 minutes in duration.”*

Most schools choose to complete this task in a formal recital setting, either during the school day or at night with an audience. This offers students the opportunity to practise their presentation techniques as well as demonstrating the musicianship skills required.

It is important to understand that, in order to complete this task, students must perform in **both** solo and group contexts. This is because different skills are learnt and demonstrated in these different settings.

Students performing as a soloist at the end of the year may meet the requirement to perform in a group by performing with a school ensemble at a school concert.

Students performing in a group at the end of the year may meet the requirement to perform as a soloist using a backing track and choosing a style that they are working on with their ensemble. This can be done during class or at the recital.

Some schools either did not complete both contexts or were not specific about their approach to this outcome in their audit responses. Rehearsing and performing in these different settings enables students to develop more rounded musicianship skills and thoroughly understand all the elements used in the analysis section of Outcome 3: *tempo, dynamics, articulation, tone colour, phrasing, balance of music lines, blend of instrumental voices, improvisation/embellishment/ornamentation.*

The Music Performance course is designed for all skills to relate back to performance. The more links are highlighted and continually referred to, the more the students will gain from the course.

Assessment

Although this is an S/N task, many schools mark this recital using the same 10 criteria that students will be marked on at the end of the year. These can be found in the [Music Performance examination specifications](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/exams/music/musicperf-perfexam-crit-w.pdf). This approach helps students identify each criteria and work towards fulfilling it to the best of their capabilities.

Outcome 2: Preparing for Performance

*On completion of this unit the student should be able to demonstrate and discuss techniques relevant to performance of selected works.*

This outcome contributes 50 out of 100 marks allocated to School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3.

Task type options

Demonstration and discussion

Most schools chose to have a 6–8 minute demonstration of technical skills with the discussion during or immediately following the demonstration.

This task needs to be started early in the school year to be fully effective. Students can conceivably add an extra exercise each week; therefore building up a comprehensive program of techniques that will help them progress towards a better recital outcome. During the assessment task the teacher should ask the student to perform selected exercises from the technical work program. They must present at least two exercises they have created themselves as well as other material.

This task can present some issues with authentication. Students need to create at least two exercises of their own, designed to address some challenging aspect of their technique. This is in order to increase their skills in overcoming their own difficulties when practising at home or rehearsing with a group/ensemble.

In-class workshops that model a process for developing exercises and evaluating worked examples are a helpful pre-task learning activity for this component of the task. In terms of completing their own created exercises, it is recommended that students complete the task in class so the work can be authenticated as their own.

Where instrumental music teachers are involved in pre-task learning for this task, authentication processes and communication strategies need to be in place to ensure a common approach. For example, teachers might work together to frame the task instructions and develop a workbook of learning activities. Instrumental teachers can then work with students to identify challenges, discuss aspects of the technique that students need to work on and provide feedback about work-in-progress. The actual writing of the exercises could take place in classroom sessions.

Assessment

The marking schedule for Outcome 2 needs to be based on the key skills outlined in the study design. This outcome is marked out of 50, with 40 marks for the demonstration material and 10 marks for the discussion of how this material has assisted the student to develop their overall technique or address identified challenges. Not only are students being assessed on their technical prowess, but they need to clearly demonstrate that they have a deep understanding of their own technical limitations and how to best go about addressing these challenges. This outcome is not just about performing scales and exercises at a high level of technical proficiency. It is about students understanding how to identify their own technical challenges and then to create a program of work that will best address these challenges.

Outcome 3

*On completion of this unit the student should be able to identify, re-create, notate and transcribe short excerpts of music, and discuss the interpretation of expressive elements of music in pre-recorded works.*

This outcome contributes 50 out of 100 marks allocated to School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3.

Task type options

Written test and practical test

For Outcome 3, most schools developed a task that included a written test of 60–90 minutes and a practical test of roughly 5 minutes. It is important to note that these tasks are not to be overly lengthy. A shorter written paper than the end of year exam is quite acceptable as students also have to present the practical aspect which contributes 20 marks out of 50.

It is advisable to present the written paper in a similar format to the end of year paper to give students practice at the given structure. As the practical task is worth a significant amount it is logical to spend a reasonable amount of class time practising the skills. The duration of this section of the task will vary according to the questions/skills that are included. If a ‘listen, play, notate question’ is included more than 5 minutes will be required.

Assessment

Teachers should note the weightings for this task is 20 marks for theory and aural, 10 marks for listening and interpretation, and 20 marks for the practical test. If the test paper is marked out of higher mark the final score will need to be reduced to the required mark before the scores are entered into VASS.

Unit 4

GENERAL COMMENTS

Responses to the Unit 4 School-based Assessment Audit questionnaire for VCE Music Performance indicate that most teachers have successfully made the transition from the previous study to the reaccredited *VCE* *Music Study Design 2017−2022*.

For Unit 4 Music Performance, students undertake three outcomes, one of which is a School-assessed Coursework task.

Outcome 1, Performance, involves performances of both solo and group works by each student. This outcome is assessed only as S/N and doesn’t contribute to students’ coursework score for Unit 4. Most schools chose to fulfil this outcome by having the students perform their full recital as a practice run for their end of year external recital. The assessed S/N component of that practice recital is usually ‘performances of the pieces not performed for the Unit 3 recital’. Solo students generally performed with a school ensemble to fulfil the group work requirement, whereas group students performed a solo piece in class to fulfil their requirement of having to perform a solo work. Students were encouraged to address any issues that came up with their Unit 3 recitals over the course of Unit 4.

The Outcome 2 task requires students to develop and use a structured program of material that will support their overall development as an instrumentalists/vocalist and assist them to prepare works selected for Outcome 1 for performance. This outcome is a SAC and contributes 10% of the final study score. The weightings for this task are the same as Unit 3 – the demonstration is marked /40 and the discussion (oral or multimedia) is marked /10.

Page 39 of the Music Performance *Advice for Teachers* gives a useful description of the skills required for Outcome 2 in a rubric.

Asking students to reflect on and evaluate their skills after their Unit 3 assessment is an important part of the preparation for this SAC. Many schools run this SAC in about week 6 of term 3, in order to not crowd the end of term with too many assessments. This timing means that students need to start work on this SAC early.

The task for Outcome 3 includes three parts: aural and theory, written (listening and critical response) and practical. This task is an S/N task for Unit 4.

Common practice is to run the written tasks as a practice examination in order to give students a good understanding of how their end of year paper will run.

The practical side (singing intervals etc.) is generally run in class.

Teachers are recommended to review the Sample Aural and Written Examination Paper, or past papers from 2017 onwards when they are planning their Outcome 3 task. Giving the students the same structure on their practice exam as the end of year paper enables them to prepare more thoroughly.

Assessment

Although Outcome 1 and 3 are S/N tasks, providing a structured assessment task gives students valuable feedback.

For Outcome 1, many schools use the ten criteria that students are assessed on at their end of year recital. This helps focus students’ attention on their areas of strength and identifies areas for improvement. Some schools use these ten criteria each time students perform in class as a constant reminder of what the students will be assessed on. These criteria can be found in the [Music Performance examination specifications](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/exams/music/musicperf-perfexam-crit-w.pdf)

The Outcome 2 SAC is now marked out of 50, the same as Unit 3, allowing for greater differentiation between students.

Although Outcome 3 is an S/N task, following the structure of the Sample Aural and Written Examination Paper enables a marking structure for teachers to provide students with feedback about how they are progressing in each area. The practical task is generally marked as S/N in Unit 4.

Use of commercially available assessment tasks

Quite a few schools used commercially available tasks for Outcome 3. If schools choose to use a commercially prepared task, they need to be aware that these tasks and the answers are also available to students and their tutors. If using commercially available tasks, teachers should alter them sufficiently to ensure that students have not seen the paper before they complete it. Schools should also take into account their particular cohort and their level of ability when designing the paper.

Procedures

Teachers should be aware that procedures for VCE are the same for all VCE subjects. Teachers should download a copy of “Procedures for Assessment in VCE Studies” in order to make sure they are clear on policies such as satisfactory completion of a unit of work, authentication and redemption procedures.

School-based Assessment Audit questionnaire responses

Many of the responses to the audit showed an excellent understanding of the 2017 study design as well as methodical planning of the teaching and learning program. Schools that provided limited information were asked to provide more detail. Some of the issues that came up were:

Outcome 2:

* lack of clarity in the authentication of students writing their own exercises
* not specifying that students need exercises that address their general challenges as well as repertoire specific challenges
* incorrect weightings or markings
* some teachers used old marking schedules that specify different skills to the ones required for the current study design.

Specific information

Unit 4: School-assessed coursework

Outcome 1: Performance

*On completion of this unit the student should be able to prepare and perform a program of group and solo works, and demonstrate a diverse range of techniques and expressive qualities and an understanding of a wide range of music styles and performance conventions.*

Task type options

Performance

Outcome 1 is an S/N task which involves students presenting part of their end of year recital program. Page 17 of the study design provides advice about the expected duration of this recital.

The Unit 4 school-based performance program presented for assessment of Outcome 1 should be about 10 minutes in duration for soloists and groups of one to three assessed performers. For groups of four or more assessed performers the program should be about 10–15 minutes in duration.

Most schools choose to have their students present their entire program with the assessed S/N part being ‘performances of the pieces they did not perform for their Unit 3 recital’. This task is usually conducted in a formal recital setting, which offers students the opportunity to practise their presentation techniques as well as demonstrating the musicianship skills required.

It is important to understand that, in order to complete this task, students must perform in both solo *and* group contexts. This is because different skills are learnt and demonstrated in these different settings.

Students performing as a soloist at the end of the year may meet the requirement to perform in a group by performing with a school ensemble at a school concert.

Students performing in a group at the end of the year may meet the requirement to perform as a soloist using a backing track and choosing a style that they are working on with their ensemble. This can be done during class or at the recital.

Some schools either did not complete both contexts or were not specific about their approach to this outcome in their audit responses. Rehearsing and performing in these different settings enables students to develop more rounded musicianship skills and thoroughly understand all the elements used in the analysis section of Outcome 3: *tempo, dynamics, articulation, tone colour, phrasing, balance of music lines, blend of instrumental voices, improvisation/embellishment/ornamentation.*

The Music Performance course is designed for all skills to relate back to performance. The more links are highlighted and continually referred to, the more the students will gain from the course.

Assessment

Although this is an S/N task, many schools mark this recital using the same 10 criteria that students will be marked on at the end of the year. These can be found in the [Music Performance examination specifications](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/studies/music/musicperformunits3-4/musicperformunits3-4index.aspx)

This approach helps students identify each criteria and work towards fulfilling it to the best of their capabilities.

Outcome 2: Preparing for Performance

*On completion of this unit the student should be able to demonstrate and discuss techniques relevant to performance of selected works.*

This outcome contributes 50 out of 100 marks allocated to School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3.

Task type options

Demonstration and discussion

Many schools ask students to prepare 10–12 minutes of technical work. In order to keep the length of the individual SACs manageable, teachers can then choose 6–8 minutes worth of the prepared exercises to hear on the day. Common practice is to have the discussion during or immediately following the demonstration.

This task needs to be started early in the semester to be fully effective. Students can conceivably add an extra exercise each week; therefore building up a comprehensive program of techniques that will help them progress towards a better recital outcome. They must present at least two exercises they have created themselves as well as other material. They must present exercises that deal with their general challenges as well as ones that are instrument or work specific.

This task can present some issues with authentication. Students need to create at least two exercises, designed to address some challenging aspect of their technique. This is in order to increase their skills in overcoming their own difficulties when practising at home or rehearsing with a group/ensemble.

Where instrumental music teachers are involved in pre-task learning for this task, authentication processes and communication strategies need to be in place to ensure a common approach. For example, teachers might work together to frame the task instructions and develop a workbook of learning activities. Instrumental teachers can then work with students to identify challenges, discuss aspects of the technique that students need to work on and provide feedback about work-in-progress. The actual writing of the exercises could take place in classroom sessions.

Assessment

The marking guide for Outcome 2 needs to be based on the key skills outlined in the study design. This Outcome is marked out of 50, with 40 marks for the demonstration material and 10 marks for the discussion of how this material has assisted the student to develop their overall technique or address identified challenges. Not only are students being assessed on their technical prowess, but they need to clearly demonstrate that they have a deep understanding of their own technical limitations and how to best go about addressing these challenges. This Outcome is not just about performing scales and exercises at a high level of technical proficiency. It is about students understanding how to identify their own technical challenges and then to create a program of work that will best address these challenges.

Outcome 3: Music language

On completion of this unit the student should be able to identify, re-create, notate and transcribe short excerpts of music, and discuss the interpretation of expressive elements of music in pre-recorded works.

Task type options

Written test and practical test

For Outcome 3, most schools developed a task that included a written test of 90 minutes and a practical test of roughly 5 minutes. It is advisable to present the written paper in a similar format to the end of year paper to give students practice at the given structure.