



**2013** **VCE VET Dance: GA 2: Performance examination**

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

The VCE VET Dance performance examination was based on the 21764VIC Certificate II in Dance and assessed students' technical ability and interpretive skills in performance. Students performed two solo dances of different styles from a list of styles as prescribed in the qualification and documented by the VCAA. The dances were learnt from the established dance repertoire of a choreographer or teacher. Each solo should have been presented as a single, live, uninterrupted performance and been between two and five minutes in duration. The dances selected should have allowed students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge developed in the following units of competency from the Certificate II in Dance.

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

While students can select from a wide range of styles, most students this year chose contemporary and various genres of commercial dance, with most commercial solos being derived from the movement vocabulary normally associated with jazz and hip-hop/street dance. Tap and ballet were also selected, but not with the same frequency.

The solos presented were generally appropriate in terms of duration; however, some classical variations did not meet the two-minute minimum requirement and this had an impact on students' marks. The selection of movement vocabulary applicable to the skill level for individual students was generally appropriate; however, some students with limited technical skills would have benefitted from shorter solos with less repetition of movement vocabulary. The stamina and technical execution diminished as these solos progressed, and this was reflected in students' achievement.

It is appreciated that it can be challenging to select repertoire that is sufficiently challenging for the student, yet within their technical expertise, particularly if choreographing a dance for a number of students with differing dance expertise to perform. It is suggested that teachers personalise the choreography for their students to ensure that the pieces are technically challenging, yet within the technical expertise of the student. This may mean modifying the dance in some way, such as altering the sustained balances or complexity of the turning steps and elevations. There were some instances where the choice of solos had such a limited and repetitive movement vocabulary that it did not allow students to show a full range of technical skills.

Movement vocabulary was usually stylistically consistent with the nominated dance style. Most students' stated styles were reflected in their attire and footwear; however, there were some instances of inappropriate footwear in social dance solos. Some students also performed with hair falling over their faces, which they then adjusted during the performance. This affected their ability to sustain performance quality and their ability to effectively 'spot'.

In some instances the two solos presented were very similar in their use of dynamic qualities and movement vocabulary, despite the fact that they were assigned to different styles. It is appreciated that some overlapping of techniques and the use of some dynamic qualities in some styles may occur, but to maintain the integrity of the study, teachers are encouraged to select solos that are demonstratively different in these aspects. The rationale for the study of two discrete dance styles from the prescribed list within the qualification is that it will assist students in developing their employability within the dance industry, as it is accepted that most professional Australian dancers need to be conversant in more than one dance style to enhance their employment prospects.

Teachers generally selected solos that were within the student's technical capacity. Movements selected were generally safely executed. Falls were generally performed with soft tissue areas of the body making contact with the floor, rather than bony appendages. 'Spotting' actions were mostly used for turns, and jumps were executed with safe alignment of the knees, ankles and feet, commencing and ending with a plié.

Some solos did not have clear endings and often assessors were unsure if a dance had reached its conclusion. It is suggested that the choreography and music both have a defined ending.

A significant number of students presented to the examination with no photo identification or Performance Program Sheet. Teachers should ensure that students are aware of these requirements as stated in the performance examination advice materials.



Most students used an iPod or iPhone to play their music. If students do not have another student accompanying them in the examination to play their music, it is recommended that students allow sufficient 'lead-in' time prior to the beginning of the recorded music to enable them to press play and assume their opening position.

The revised scored assessment arrangements for the VCE VET Dance program based on the CUA20111 Certificate II in Dance with selected units of competence from the Certificate III in Dance will begin in 2014. Examination specifications that include the revised examination performance criteria and information on arrangements for 2014 will be available on the examinations page of the VCAA website in Term 1, 2014.

## **SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

### **Interpretation of Criteria**

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. This is the means used to distinguish between levels of performance in the demonstration of various criteria.

Both solos are assessed using the same set of criteria. The published assessment criteria are designed to assess performance skills and a range of technical dance skills specific to and consistent with the stated dance styles. Each criterion is weighted equally and is marked on an eight-point scale (0–7). The first seven criteria address students' technique, while the latter three criteria address interpretation.

### **Criterion 1: Skill in the expressive use of movement dynamics**

Most students were able to score well for this criterion, with a range of style-specific movement dynamics. Solos that demonstrated in an integrated style-specific range of dynamic qualities such as, but not limited to, swings, suspends, sustained actions, percussive and collapsing movements, had the potential to score well. Solos that contained only a limited range of movement dynamics with little evidence of variations in the application of force and flow, scored less well.

### **Criterion 2: Skill in using correct posture and body alignment**

Students were generally able to apply and maintain correct posture and body alignment, allowing for anatomically safe and efficient movement. Students with less dance experience were able to demonstrate correct posture and alignment when static but their alignment when moving was compromised. Students should be encouraged to develop an awareness of their core strength as a means of increasing their stability and ability to move safely. Teachers should encourage students to develop awareness of their weight placement to facilitate ease of movement and a sense of breadth of movement in the upper body area, to allow for more efficient breathing and less physical fatigue when executing their solos.

### **Criterion 3: Skill in isolating and coordinating the upper and lower body**

The isolation and coordination of upper and lower body parts was generally good, and students demonstrated this in an integrated and style-specific manner. Teachers should ensure students have access to regular technique classes in their selected styles to assist in the development of their technical expertise. It is suggested that students begin to learn their solos early in the year to allow time to refine technical accuracy, including the definition of arm, head and eye lines.

### **Criterion 4: Skill in the dance principle of balance**

Most students were able to demonstrate a range of style-specific movement sequences that displayed their skill when performing movement sequences involving sustained movements. Choreography that integrated complex sustained balances using a range of body parts as the balance points enabled students to score well. Encouraging students to develop their awareness of their weight placement may assist in their execution of balances. Nerves affected some students' ability to execute more complex sustained balances.

### **Criterion 5: Skill in the dance principle of flexibility**

This aspect of assessment was generally very well done, with a very large cohort of students scoring very highly. These students demonstrated flexibility both within a range body parts and sustained balances using various body balance points in an integrated manner. A small percentage of students with less established dance skills found this criterion challenging. Teachers may assist in the development of flexibility by regularly including systematic safe stretching and conditioning techniques in their style-specific skills classes.



**Criterion 6: Skill in the dance principle of transference of weight and control**

Students generally found this the most challenging criterion. Teachers can assist students in this area by selecting solos that have anatomically logical movement transitions, reinforcing the safe transfer of weight in movement phrases and selecting movement vocabulary that enables students to maintain control and connectivity between movement phrases. Developing core strength and an awareness of weight placement and shifts in the centre of gravity when moving may assist in the development of skill and control in the safe, smooth transference of weight within solos of all styles.

**Criterion 7: Skill in the dance principle of stamina**

Stamina was generally maintained throughout the solos. Teachers can assist students to develop their stamina by ensuring sufficient rehearsal and performance opportunities of solos under examination conditions prior to the examination in order to develop their endurance and cardiovascular capacity. Excessively long and/or fast tempo solos had the potential to impact on students' achievement for this criterion as they became fatigued and less able to maintain their technical execution and performance qualities.

**Criterion 8: Skill in the use of individual artistic quality through interpretation and expression**

Students generally scored very well for this criterion, and appeared to have an artistic connection with their solos. Teachers must ensure that students are sufficiently prepared for the examination so that they can focus on their interpretation rather than on what step comes next. There were also a few instances where solos appeared to be improvised or where students forgot significant sections of the dance and lost the sense of artistic quality and expression.

**Criterion 9: Skill in the use of spatial arrangements**

This criterion was generally very well addressed by most students; however, in some commercial solos that used the movement vocabulary of street/hip-hop dance, there was a very limited use of space, which impacted on students' achievement for this criterion. A variety of spatial arrangements including movement phrases that travel forwards, backwards, diagonally, sideways and in circular patterns may assist students to score higher for this criterion. To score well for this criterion, floor and aerial pathways should include complex and varied movement patterns other than simple walking or running.

**Criterion 10: Skill in the interpretation of music and rhythm**

Overall, this was the highest-scoring criterion for most students. Most students were able to consistently dance in time with their accompanying music. Where musical accompaniment was allegro or presto in tempo throughout the piece, some students became fatigued, and their technical accuracy and ability to stay with their music were affected. Choreography that used a range of tempos and contained variation in the rhythmic patterns and musical accents enabled students to demonstrate a greater sensitivity and score more highly.