

2016 VCE Dance performance examination report

General comments

Most students used safe dance techniques in the 2016 Dance performance examination; however, some of the choreography and dance technique involved risks that students were not equipped to manage. Students should be encouraged to further develop strength and control, and include only movements that reflect their physical capabilities and range. In some cases, movements such as falls, splits and backwards walkovers were executed with a lack of control and safe technique.

Generally, students were well groomed and chose appropriate dance wear to effectively showcase a range of physical skills. Many students chose to change their costume for the Composition solo to enhance their stated intention; however, in some cases it was clear that students had not rehearsed sufficiently in full costume prior to the examination as they experienced a malfunction that interfered with the execution of the solo.

Students generally selected appropriate music to accompany both solos. While there were many original sound choices for the Technique solo, a number of students used regular, beat-driven music that lacked dynamic variation. In some cases, this choice of music limited the range selected in terms of the body actions and the arrangement of time and energy.

Many students used spoken-word soundtracks such as narrations to accompany the Composition solo. In such cases, students overlooked the requirement to structure the dance into sections, and relied too heavily on interpreting the words through their movement selection rather than honouring their intention and formal structure.

The majority of students used MP3 players or smart phones; however, some students presented with laptops. Where this was the case, students were advised to ensure the laptop screen faced away from the performance area.

Specific information

Unit 3 – Technique solo

Selection of an expressive intention

Many students chose to base their expressive intention on an exploration of the assessment criteria, while others based it on a theme. Either of these methods was appropriate.

Movement vocabulary

Generally, students based their choice of movement vocabulary on a personalised movement selection. Where a particular style(s) was selected, some students were not able to fulfil the requirements of the examination and demonstrate skill in relation to the criteria at the highest level. Actions such as locomotion and falling were often overlooked, and the range of movement vocabulary was often limited.

When performing in hip-hop or tap style(s) students should consider the range of movement vocabulary selected and avoid repeating movement vocabulary in exactly the same way throughout the choreography.

Criteria 1–4 required students to demonstrate control of physical skills within a range of body actions.

Students who gave high-scoring performances demonstrated a personalised movement vocabulary that was safely executed and addressed the criteria using complex and well-structured manipulations of body actions and the elements of movement. These students explored an extensive range of body actions to illustrate a skilful application of all required physical skills.

Students who gave lower-scoring performances demonstrated a more limited range of body actions and physical skills, and at times opted for more basic and repetitive movement choices. Generally, students struggled to control movement(s) and engage skills such as alignment and muscular strength. This was obvious when students attempted more complex sequences of body actions that included movements such as falling and turning, and when engaging in movements beyond their capacity.

Criteria 5–7 required students to demonstrate skill in the varied use of each element of movement – time, space (shape) and energy – to communicate the expressive intention throughout the solo.

In high-scoring performances, students demonstrated a skilled and artistic interpretation of the dance by arranging combinations of time, shapes and energy in a variety of ways throughout the phrases/sections of the dance. These students varied the use of tempo and rhythm, and adapted the phrases to suit the timing and structure of the music. They explored curved and angular shapes through complex combinations and varied the use of energy qualities, which resulted in skilful manipulations of force and flow.

In lower-scoring performances, students struggled to expressively arrange these elements and showed a more basic understanding of how these tools could be used to manipulate movement phrases and sections. Some students included movement phrases that directly worked with the rhythm/tempo of the music and/or the lyrics of the music, which led them to repeat the same combinations. They also made little or no attempt to manipulate the energy qualities and/or body shape throughout the solo.

Criterion 8 required students to demonstrate skill in the projection of the whole body, including transitions between phrases and sections, and use of eye line to communicate an artistic and expressive execution of movement.

Students who gave high-scoring performances generally established a strong connection to their audience by using smooth transitions between the phrases and sections of their unified composition. Every movement was given the appropriate amount of attention and was effectively projected using eye/body focus to engage the audience, establish a mood and expressively communicate the choreography.

Students who gave lower-scoring performances often avoided eye contact and at times seemed underprepared as they appeared focused on trying to recall the choreography.

Unit 4 – Composition solo

Selection of an expressive intention

Students chose a range of stimulus from which to develop an expressive intention and choreograph an artistic and expressive dance work that allowed them to demonstrate skill in relation to the criteria. Students are reminded that the choice of expressive intention is an important step when choreographing this solo, as the intention will inform the number of sections or formal structure and the selection of movement vocabulary. It will also dictate how the movement vocabulary is arranged to progress the expressive intention in terms of the manipulation of spatial organisation (level, direction, eye/body focus and dimension) and choreographic devices.

Statement of Expressive Intention form

On this form, students were asked to record the expressive intention to be communicated throughout the different sections of the dance, the number of sections and formal structure used and briefly comment on the main choreographic devices used to structure or form the dance.

When outlining their expressive intention some students did not break it up into different sections, preferring to give a general overview or create a complicated backstory that was difficult to follow. Assessors were able to compare the student's movement response with the written statement more effectively when the intention of **each** section of the dance was outlined.

Generally, students noted down the number of sections they had created and indicated a plausible formal structure.

The form also required students to make brief comments about **how** some of the choreographic device(s) were used to structure and progress the intention of the solo. The purpose is to provide assessors with a 'glimpse' into the student's choreographic process. Some students wrote in too much detail, which was unnecessary as the examination assessed the choreographic devices demonstrated within the performance, not the written comments.

Criteria 1–4 required students to demonstrate skill in the varied use of spatial organisation.

In high-scoring performances, students demonstrated an expressive arrangement of spatial organisation to communicate the expressive intention of the solo. It was evident that students had manipulated and arranged these elements in a skilful and purposeful way to progress the intention throughout the sections of the dance.

In lower-scoring performances, students struggled to create a connection between the use of spatial organisation and the intention as the arrangement was either not plausible or was not selected to specifically communicate the written intention.

Criteria 5–7 required students, throughout the sections of the composition with a formal structure, to demonstrate skill in:

- the expressive selection of movement vocabulary
- the varied arrangement of movement into related phrases and sections to create an appropriate formal structure
- the choreographic manipulation of a range of choreographic devices
- expressing the intention of the choreographer.

Selection of movement vocabulary

In high-scoring performances, students skilfully selected movement vocabulary to effectively communicate the expressive intention. They often showed evidence of thorough exploration and/or abstraction before making a final selection.

In lower-scoring performances, students chose basic movement combinations that relied too heavily on the use of gestures, were based on combining dance with drama or were literal movement responses that did not reflect the ideas in the stated expressive intention.

Arrangement of movement vocabulary to create a formal structure

Assessors were looking at the clarity of each section and how effectively the sections were structured in relation to the stated intention and formal structure. Students needed to demonstrate skill in the use of transitions between phrases and sections, the use of linking to create contrasting and/or complementary movement vocabulary, etc., to demonstrate a sense of clarity and unity that was relevant to the whole composition.

In high-scoring performances, students presented a final work where the movement vocabulary was skilfully arranged into related phrases and sections to create the stated formal structure and effectively communicate the expressive intention. The work had a clear sense of organisation and unity when viewed in conjunction with the written statement of intention.

In lower-scoring performances, students often did not demonstrate clarity in terms of organising and/or structuring movement material in relation to the statement of intention. Some students described a particular formal structure in their written statement; however, the arrangement of phrases and sections did not reflect their choice and/or the arrangement of phrases/sections lacked clarity, which made the sections and expressive intention difficult to see. Others relied too heavily on the use of music to create the sections without paying any attention to how to form related phrases into sections to create their stated structure and progress the intention.

Expressive manipulation of choreographic devices

Students who gave high-scoring performances manipulated choreographic devices in sophisticated ways to clearly arrange the movement vocabulary. They demonstrated a skilful and successful integration and development of appropriate devices to link and progress the expressive intention throughout the sections to create a sense of unity.

Students who gave lower-scoring performances often did not demonstrate an understanding of the role that choreographic devices played in effectively structuring the composition to progress and communicate the intention, as selected devices were not appropriate to express the stated intention and/or the devices were often disjointed and not integrated and developed to create unity.

Criterion 8 assessed the use of performance processes, practices and artistry in communicating the choreographer's expressive intention.

Students who gave high-scoring performances consistently demonstrated skilled performance practices and artistry, using facial/body expression to effectively communicate the expressive intention. Students executed movement to its full expressive capacity, established a mood relevant to the intention and performed with confidence.

Students who gave lower-scoring performances were often under-rehearsed and students seemed to internalise their performance without establishing a connection to their audience.