

VCE Music Composition 2023–2027

Externally assessed task

Specifications and guidelines

Overall conditions

The *VCE Music Study Design 2023–2027* (specifically Unit 3: Music Composition and Unit 4: Music Composition) is the document to be used for the development of the externally assessed task.

The task will be assessed by a panel appointed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), using expected qualities for the mark range as published annually by the VCAA.

Further information, including guidelines and a marking sheet, is published annually.

Contribution to final assessment

The externally assessed task will contribute 50 per cent to the study score.

All of the key knowledge and skills that underpin Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 in Unit 4, and the definitions in the 'Cross-study specifications' in the study design (pages 12–14), are assessed.

Externally assessed task specifications

Students will submit a folio that contains an original work, or group of short works, audio recordings and documentation, including digital software files and/or notated score(s) as outlined below.

Original music work

- The original music work must be:
 - between 4 and 5 minutes in total
 - presented in an appropriate digitally notated and audio form.

Documentation

- Documentation for the original music work must not exceed 1100 words for the complete work, or group of works, including:
 - a description of the creative process
 - an analysis of the final work(s)
 - a discussion of how unity and diversity have been achieved in the work.
- The Unit 3 design brief should be submitted with the documentation, but does not contribute to the word count.

Assessment tasks and weightings

All students will be assessed on the extent to which they demonstrate their ability to address the assessment tasks outlined below.

Unit 4	Assessment tasks	Weighting (%)
Outcome 1 and Outcome 2	Original music work Manipulate the elements of music and use appropriate compositional devices, including repetition, variation, contrast, and transition to develop music ideas and material.	60
	Documentation Document and describe the creative process by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> including an outline of the intention and, as appropriate, references to stimulus material including an explanation of the development and refinement of the compositional process from conception through to final realisation, including decisions made at different stages in the creative process to achieve unity and diversity using appropriate music terminology and language. 	30
Total		90
Overall notation Notate and/or represent the musical responses in an appropriate format.		10
Total		100

Audio recordings and notation guidance

An audio recording in mp3 format and appropriate notation in PDF format must be provided for the original music work(s). The notation submitted should be in a format(s) that is appropriate to the music work.

Where students are using a format other than conventional western notation, for either the exercises and/or the original work, sufficient information should be provided for the reader to understand the relationship between the notation and the audio/sequenced recording.

If recording an actual performance, students, teachers and/or other musicians may perform the work.

Details of acceptable audio recording files and notation are outlined in the table below.

Music style of the work	Audio recording file	Notation
Western European 'classical' tradition or in styles that depend on complete notated parts, such as music for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> orchestral ensembles concert bands, stage bands or big bands choral ensembles 	Generated from a computer-based music notation application and/or Recording of an actual performance is not required, but is encouraged, where possible	Complete notated performance-ready score of the entire work (digital or hand-written)
Styles not generally dependent on full notation of individual parts, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contemporary pop and rock styles world-music influenced works 	Generated from a computer-based music notation application and/or	All main music ideas/material in full score form, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> main melodic lines bass lines riffs

	<p>Recording of an actual performance of the work</p> <p>Note: Recording may include multi-track recording, if necessary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • harmonic patterns • solo outlines • formal structure
<p>Jazz or other styles that may include improvisation</p>	<p>Generated from a computer-based music notation application</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Recording of an actual performance of the work</p>	<p>Full score notation of all parts in at least one major section of the work (e.g. all parts of an identifiable 'head') along with an outline of the formal structure of the work</p> <p>Note: If partial notation and a recording of a performance are submitted, the recorded performance of the work should authentically reflect the creator's intentions, and students need to take this into account during the creative process.</p>
<p>Finished work is intended to exist only in recorded form, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sample-based and digital audio works • soundscapes, synthesised and sound-design focused works • contemporary electronica, techno, hip hop, etc. 	<p>A recording generated from a computer-based Digital Audio Workstation</p> <p>or</p> <p>A captured recording of electronic music-making hardware alongside other instrumentalists</p>	<p>Appropriate visual representation of the completed work, such as screenshots/video walkthroughs/graphic representations, including, as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • showing effect and parameter automation which alter instrument and sound timbre • audio edits that represent the treatment of musical material (e.g. rhythmic placement of sample chops and drum edits) • visualisation that represents timbral density (e.g. spectrograms) • MIDI piano roll representation of rhythmic, harmonic and melodic ideas <p>If a work requires performers to play parts, notation/documentation should include appropriate representations of how performable elements should be performed. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • graphic representations of rhythm, tonality and timbral change over time • written or visual descriptors associated with cues.
<p>Works for mechanical analogue devices, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • music boxes • player pianos • installations 	<p>Recording of completed work</p>	<p>Analogue mechanical scores should include, as appropriate, graphic printouts/photos/charts of examples/representations of sequencing/programming mechanisms for instruments such as player pianos (rolls), music box cylinders and programming cards/tape for mechanical music installations</p>

Documentation guidance

Documentation in PDF format may include score annotations, prose, dot points and/or use of music examples.

- Completed scores should include indications of tempo (for example, words and/or metronome markings), phrasing, articulation, dynamics and other relevant notation conventions as appropriate to the style(s) of the exercises and work.
- Documentation accompanying the original music work created by the student should:
 - include a statement that indicates the creative intention of the work and, as appropriate, references to any stimulus material used, including reference to the Unit 3 folio design brief (The Unit 3 folio design brief should also be included in the documentation but is not included in word count, and is not assessed further.)
 - describe the processes used to create the work, including explanations of decisions made at the stages of development, refinement and final realisation
 - describe the technical and practical factors that influenced the creative process
 - describe and/or annotate how the treatment of the elements of music in the work relates to the original intention
 - describe and/or annotate the use of compositional devices, including how repetition, variation, contrast and/or transition have been used to develop the music ideas and/or material.
- Note: Documentation relating to authentication is **not** part of the word count for the task.

Folio submission guidance

Prior to submitting Student Assessment Materials, it is a requirement that individual student work be organised into separate folders containing all materials to be submitted.

It is critical to maintain copies of student work sent to the VCAA for at least one month after the VCAA submission date and preferably at least until the end of the school year. Schools should double check with their respective sectoral authority in regards to document disposal policies/guidelines that might apply to their school.

All student work must be submitted electronically to the VCAA via a secure file transfer site in the recommended file formats using standard filename conventions; specifically:

- the student files are to be stored separately for each student in folders
- the name of each folder must be the student's number (e.g. 90888888W)
- each folder needs to include all of the student's folio material to be presented for assessment
- a sub-folder needs to contain any files submitted that are not part of the student's work, such as marking sheets or student and teacher declarations.

The required folder structure is: School folder, then Subject folder, then folders for each individual student (named 90888888W for example).

The VCAA Assessment Operations Unit will provide login credentials and instructions for the secure file transfer site during Term 3.

All materials and the marking sheet must be received at the VCAA by 5.00 pm on the date given in the [Administrative Dates and Assessment Schedule](#) page on the VCAA website.

It is critical that teachers maintain copies of student work that have been submitted to the VCAA for at least one fortnight after the submission date.

Authentication

Students are required to document how they will organise and direct any assistance.

In this context, teachers are reminded of the need to comply with the authentication requirements specified in Section 1 of 'Scored assessment: School-based Assessment' in the *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*. This is important to ensure that 'Undue assistance ... not be provided to students while undertaking assessment tasks' (Section 1.2).

Undue assistance may occur during the composition and/or notation stages across both Units 3 and 4, and teachers need to be vigilant. Students are required to complete all aspects of their work individually; however, in some cases they will need to involve others. For example, students who choose to compose in a jazz or other popular music style may work with an ensemble to realise and record the work. Other students may seek assistance in using specific features of notation or recording software.

During the composition, performance, recording, notation and/or documentation stages of the task (as appropriate to the work the student is creating), teachers must plan and use observations of student work to monitor and record each student's progress as part of the authentication process (refer to the externally assessed task authentication form available on the VCE Music Composition page of the VCAA website).

All use of external support must be planned and documented on the authentication form and teachers must certify that such support does not constitute undue assistance; for example, noting that the work will be realised by an ensemble and the student will provide a detailed chart to guide performers in the improvised sections. This is to ensure that any use of external support is appropriately limited and that the student does not receive undue assistance.

Teachers are reminded that the authentication procedures must be followed for all student work in relation to the externally assessed task. The authentication form, signed by the teacher and the student must be included with the documents submitted for assessment.

Assessment

Teachers make an initial assessment of the student's work against the published expected qualities for the mark range and assess the work using the marking sheet provided. Only the knowledge and skills demonstrated by the student submitting the work must be considered in this assessment. Knowledge and skills demonstrated by, for example, other performers in an ensemble must not be considered.

In relation to improvised sections of the original music work, the teacher must only assess the compositional aspects of the improvisation and not the quality of the performance. The documentation provided by the student should identify the original music ideas they have created and used in the development of the work, and, as appropriate, include material that outlines how the student has maintained creative control (for example, information they have provided to performers about the expected treatment of elements of music, compositional devices, style and other relevant matters; that is, score markings, explanations, etc.).

Marking sheet

The externally assessed task marking sheet must be submitted with the folio materials. It is available on the VCE Music Composition page of the VCAA website.