

2019 VCE VET Dance performance examination report

General comments

The VCE VET Dance performance examination assesses students' technical ability and interpretive skills in performance. Students perform two solo dances of different styles from a prescribed list of styles as in the CUA20111 Certificate II in Dance with selected units of competency from the CUA30111 Certificate III in Dance qualification and documented by VCAA. The dances are learnt from the established 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. Each of the solo dances performed must correlate to the elective units of competency the student is enrolled in as part of the Units 3 and 4 sequence of the VCE VET Dance program. Each of the two dances must demonstrate use of a distinctly different style and movement vocabulary as consistent with the student's selected dance styles.

The dances selected should allow students to demonstrate their style-specific technical and expressive skills as developed in the following units of competency from the Certificate II in Dance, with selected units of competency from Certificate III:

- CUADAN305 Increase depth of jazz dance technique
- CUADAN306 Increase depth of ballet dance technique
- CUADAN307 Increase depth of cultural dance technique
- CUADAN308 Increase depth of contemporary dance technique
- CUADAN309 Increase depth of street dance technique
- CUADAN310 Increase depth of social dance technique
- CUADAN311 Increase depth of tap dance technique.

Contemporary, jazz and street styles were the most frequently selected choices, with tap, social, cultural and ballet selected but not with the same frequency.

The majority of solos selected met the two-minute minimum duration, used safe and style-appropriate movement vocabulary and were targeted appropriately for the student's technical skill set. There were occasions when the movement vocabulary chosen was exceedingly difficult and while the students were able to execute the choreography, it was at the sacrifice of their artistry and polish, and/or with some loss of muscular control and alignment. There were some instances of unsafe movements such as jumping with legs in second position directly down into side splits. Solos selected should clearly contain the hallmark movement characteristics of the stated style and must be the work of a choreographer/teacher and not the student's own choreography.

Generally, students performed with equal proficiency in both solos, demonstrating effective preparation in terms of memory retention, focus and accurate technical execution.

The attire and footwear worn by students was generally appropriate and allowed for clear visibility of the body lines. The VCE VET Dance performance examination specifications state that socks are not appropriate footwear. There were some safety issues for students who elected to perform in socks or footed tights with no shoes or a single turning shoe. There were also instances where

inappropriate and revealing garments were worn. The use of leg covering such as tights is recommended.

There were instances where music was played so loudly as to be considered unsafe. Students should be encouraged to take their phones from the case to secure connectivity to the audio jack. Music should also be prepared with sufficient lead time for the student to press play and assume their starting position comfortably.

The Industry Statement

In many instances the Industry Statements did not accurately reflect the performances viewed. There are VCAA Industry Statement samples on the VCAA website. The statement should be written by the student, not the choreographer. The specific practitioners, historical periods, movement practices and principles referenced in the statement should be evident within the solos presented. They should not contain any identifying names.

'Context' refers to the setting for the dance, meaning where it would/could be performed. This may include proscenium arch theatrical setting, as part of a music video clip, cruise ship entertainment or audition piece. It may also include the placement of the piece if it is part of a larger work; for example, 'The solo is the third movement in The Nutcracker pas de deux, from Act 2 of the ballet The Nutcracker'.

The 'appropriate market/audience for this performance' refers to who would or could watch the performance.

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 a range of both performance skills and technical dance skills specific and consistent with the stated dance style. Each criterion is weighted equally and is marked on a ten-point scale (0–10).

1. Correct posture and body alignment

Most students demonstrated accomplished style-specific posture and skeletal body alignment throughout their solos. Students who scored highly on this criterion were able to maintain style-specific appropriate gravity and levity throughout their performance while moving and in stillness.

Some students missed marks for this criterion due to tension in the upper body when executing movement vocabulary that was too difficult for their current skill set.

2. Balance

This criterion was generally executed well by students and the solos selected enabled them to demonstrate a range of style-specific balances. There were instances where either nerves or weight placement too far back impacted on stability when executing static balances.

The assured demonstration of complex movement phrases integrating balance using a wide range of body parts as balance points resulted in higher scoring responses than those who performed less complex or varied balances or were unstable in their balances.

3. Flexibility

Style-specific flexibility should be integrated within the choreography and be underpinned at all times by safe dance practices. It should be informed by student skill level rather than static acrobatic or gymnastic movements that may not reflect the movement vocabulary of the selected dance style.

Students who scored highly on this criterion demonstrated flexibility within complex movement phrases that integrated style-specific flexibility using an extensive range of body parts within the solos.

Students who scored lower on this criterion demonstrated less complex movement phrases, less variation in body parts used to demonstrate flexibility or demonstrated limited flexibility in the limbs, joints and spine. Students who maintained an upright torso with little release when performing contemporary scored lower.

4. Stamina

This criterion assesses the level of muscular and cardiorespiratory stamina students can sustain throughout their performance. Most students were able to competently sustain their levels of muscular and cardiorespiratory stamina throughout their solos.

Students who scored lower on this criterion showed signs of physical fatigue or low muscular stamina as the solo progressed.

5. Isolation, coordination, weight transference

This criterion was the most problematic for students. The coordination and control of style-specific movements including isolation and articulation of upper and lower body parts, and the safe transfer of weight and movement transitions within movement sequences, required students to perform with style-specific technical accuracy in terms of foot placement, and coordination of arms, legs and body, while considering their weight placement and transitions between movements.

Students who scored highly were able to demonstrate sustained coordination and control of complex style-specific movements with skill in the isolation, coordination and articulation of upper and lower body parts, with secure changes of direction and movement transitions.

Students who scored lower on this criterion lacked clarity in regard to the isolation and articulation of upper and lower body parts, weight transferences, changes of direction and movement transitions and demonstrated less accurate footwork.

6. Travelling and spatial awareness

Most solos allowed the student to demonstrate a variety of integrated pathways and patterns. Students' navigation of personal space and general performance space was good.

Students who scored well expertly performed solos that allowed them to demonstrate an extensive range of complex movements with varied patterns, pathways and locomotor techniques integrated in a style-specific manner in their solos. They danced at an appropriate distance from assessors, and used their personal and general performance space effectively.

Lower-scoring performances were more static and/or used simple pedestrian actions such as walking or running to navigate the space and create pathways. There were also occasions where the solos were choreographed with minimal travelling patterns or simple locomotor movements such as walking or running to change position in the space, making it difficult for students to score highly on this criterion.

7. Expressive use of movement dynamics

Most solos were executed expressively with sufficient variation in style-specific movement dynamics and variations in the force and flow of movements.

Students who scored highly on this criterion performed a wide range of style-specific expressive movement dynamics, and their release of energy was integrated, coordinated and controlled throughout their performance.

Students who scored lower performed a more limited range of style-specific expressive movement dynamics.

8. Musicality, rhythm and timing

Most students maintained an authentic connection with the accompanying music and were able to maintain their timing and connection to the music throughout their performances. There were some solos that had accompanying music that was either difficult for the student to follow due to its rhythmic complexity or lacking in variation in tempo and rhythmic patterns.

Students with high scores confidently demonstrated movements of different speeds and accents with complex rhythmic patterns within movement phrases.

Students who scored lower had difficulties maintaining an authentic connection between the music and dance, and were not able to sustain their timing, racing ahead or falling behind the accompanying music. In some cases the selected solo did not allow the student to demonstrate sufficient variations in speed and accents of movements and rhythmic patterns within movement phrases.

There were some instances where the musical accompaniment selected did not have clearly defined rhythmic patterns or accents and this made it difficult for students to make an authentic connection with the music.

9. Memory retention, concentration and focus

Most students were able to score highly on this criterion performing with unwavering concentration, focus and movement memory.

Students who did not score highly on this criterion either had lapses in their movement memory, adjusted their costume or lost their focus and concentration in one or more parts of their performance. There were instances where students wore their hair unfastened and at times it covered their face when dancing, particularly when turning. This resulted in their focus being broken as they moved their hair from their faces and this impacted on their achievement on this criterion.

10. Artistic and interpretive expression and polish

Students who sustained their interpretative expression and polish to create stylistically authentic performances maintaining the intention of their Industry Statement scored highly on this criterion.

Students who scored lower presented solos with less stylistic nuance and/or with some lapses in performance presence. Some danced with their eye focus on the floor or had limited artistic expression and polish in their performances.