



2009 VCE VET Dance GA 2: Performance examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The performance examination is designed to assess the students' technical ability and interpretive skills in performance. Students perform **two** solo dances learnt from the dance repertoire of a choreographer or teacher. The solos should be presented as a single, live, uninterrupted performance and be a minimum of two and a maximum of five minutes in duration. The dances selected should allow students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge developed in the following units of competence from the Certificate II in Dance:

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

Teachers should ensure students fully understand and apply correct posture and body alignment to ensure the safe execution of movement. The development of core strength and stability should be considered in technique classes throughout the year. Teachers are also encouraged to give students the opportunity to perform their solos under examination conditions regularly throughout the year to ensure that students know their dances thoroughly and can present them with confident performance quality, control and steady transference of weight.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Selection of Solos

Students' selection of the two solos was generally appropriate and allowed them to demonstrate their awareness, understanding and practical application of the characteristics of each of the dance styles. Although students can select from a wide range of styles, modern/contemporary, commercial dance: jazz and ballet were the most popular choices.

The movement vocabulary selected for the dances was generally appropriate for the students' technical skill levels. Most students presented a repertoire that underpinned the knowledge, understanding and application of safe dance principles and was within their physical capabilities, enabling them to execute their solos safely.

Solos were generally of the correct length; however, there were instances where the solo was too long. This resulted in the student scoring lower on the criterion related to stamina as physical fatigue began to affect the technical performance. Teachers need to be careful to assist students to choose or create dances which are not too long for less experienced dancers. There were also instances of solos that were too short; dances must meet the minimum time length required. In some cases, the solo was extended to meet the requirement with a slow walking entrance (or promenade) and bow or reverence. Similarly, some students performed two short dances that were combined with an extended pose between. Neither approach is appropriate as the task is designed to assess students' technical ability and interpretive skills in an uninterrupted performance.

Most dances were stylistically consistent with the stated style and enabled the students to demonstrate their proficiency in all criteria. Styles of dance that may not typically lend themselves easily to the assessment criteria, such as falling in ballet or tap and locomotion in some genres of commercial dance, were generally well handled, with teachers/choreographers selecting movement vocabulary that allowed students to show their skill level in all criteria.

Students are required to study two styles of dance in VCE VET Dance in order to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the dance industry as most professional dancers in Australia need to be proficient in more than one dance style. Teachers must be careful in their choice of solos and ensure that an obvious dynamic and technical contrast is shown between two styles. For example, if one solo tends towards a commercial dance with a soft, lyrical, jazz dynamic and the second a modern/contemporary with a strong bound percussive dynamic, a clear contrast would still be required between the two dances in style, dynamic and technique.

Many solos that used commercial dance: hip-hop movement vocabulary contained excessive repetition of phrases, with some solos consisting of two or three sixteen-count phrases being repeated. Care must be taken to vary the dynamic and choreographic manipulation of the phrase each time it is presented so that the range of movement is not limited, which would disadvantage the student in meeting the examination criteria.

Dress requirements

Most students presented for the examination wearing attire that was not only style-specific but was close fitting enough to reveal the student's body lines while allowing them to move safely and freely.



Students would benefit from considering how they style their hair as hair over the face can be distracting and inhibit 'spotting action'. In addition, adjusting one's hair during the performance breaks the performance quality and results in a loss of focus.

Students' footwear was generally appropriate for their chosen dance styles; however, some students entered the examination room expecting to dance in their socks. Appropriate dance footwear for the selected style must be worn when performing the solos in accordance with safe dance practice. Socks are not appropriate. Students will not be permitted to dance in socks only.

Some students and music operators still presented for the examination wearing clothes that identified their name, school and cluster group. This is not appropriate. Students should avoid wearing their school uniform into the performance examination space.

Music preparation

Most recordings accompanying the performances were of good quality and were played at a suitable volume, with sufficient 'lead in' time.

Changes relating to the use of MP3 players, as advised by VCAA during 2009, were handled well. When students choose to use an MP3 player for their music source it is recommended that they save each song on a different file in order to avoid automatic skipping to another song at the immediate completion of the dance (often while the student is still holding their finishing pose).

If students are using cassettes, teachers should ensure that they are familiar with their operation. Many students had difficulty using the cassette function and time was wasted as they were unable to cue their tapes after their run-through, requiring assistance from the assessors. When students choose cassette tapes for their music source it is recommended that they record the accompaniment for each dance on separate cassettes to avoid spending time searching for the required track.

Some students still presented for their examination with CDs for their accompaniment. This is not recommended as CDs can skip or miss and not all CDs can be read by the sound system provided by the VCAA. It should be noted that VCAA examination advice states that CDs will not be permitted.

Students should also be encouraged to bring a backup copy of the music for both dances.

When a dance is accompanied by mixed music (a number of music tracks cut together), care needs to be taken to create a smooth transition to ensure the continuity of the music. Otherwise, the student needs to continue moving between the tracks unless a specific 'freeze' is part of the choreography at this time.

It should be noted that there can be some slight variation in playing speeds between various tape players and students should prepare for this during the rehearsal period.

Interpretation of criteria

For the purpose of the VCE VET Dance performance examination, 'skill' encompasses: the level of ability that a student demonstrates in each criterion, the use of a range of skills in each criterion and the degree of difficulty involved in meeting each criterion. The same set of criteria applies for both solos. If a student's dance does not allow them to demonstrate a range of movements in each of these areas, or if the student's technical execution is not proficient in a specific technical area, they will score a lower mark for those criteria. Therefore, the repertoire selected must be challenging for the student but within their technical expertise.

The assessment criteria are designed to assess performance skills and a range of technical dance skills. Each criterion is weighted equally and is marked on an eight-point scale (0–7). The criteria used in assessing both solo performances are the same. The first seven criteria address students' technique, while the next three criteria address interpretation.

The assessment criteria are grouped under two categories, technique and interpretation (see below). They are applied to the execution of aspects of technique and interpretation consistent with each selected dance style.

Technique

- skill in the expressive use of movement dynamics
- skill in using correct posture and body alignment

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- skill in isolating and coordinating the upper and lower body
- skill in the dance principle of balance
- skill in the dance principle of flexibility
- skill in the dance principle of transference of weight and control
- skill in the dance principle of stamina

Interpretation

- skill in the use of individual artistic quality through interpretation and expression
- skill in the use of spatial arrangements
- skill in the interpretation of music and rhythm

Generally there were no major concerns with the way in which the criteria were addressed.