

2021 VCE VET Music Industry: Performance external assessment report

General comments

Despite the difficulties faced by students and teachers due to lengthy periods of remote learning, many students presented well-prepared performances that addressed the criteria convincingly.

In group performances, teachers are advised to ensure the work of all assessed performers is clearly discernible, and that the program provides opportunities for all assessed performers to demonstrate their ability to meet each criterion at the highest level of which they are capable. They should also ensure that the work of non-assessed performers does not detract from or obscure the work of assessed performers.

While some students presented well-conceived Industry Statements, a number of statements contained very little information or lacked relevant information. Students are advised to ensure all three components of the Industry Statement (Area of Specialisation, Market and Stylistic Focus) are addressed. A common error was to only describe instrumental techniques and expressive elements within their program.

Although students are not penalised for poorly written or very brief Industry Statements, a clearly articulated industry context and stylistic focus can assist the students to maximise their marks in some criteria.

Specific information

Criteria 1–7

1. Compliance with the requirements of the examination

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	1	98	10.0

Minimum of three works performed.

At least one work performed from memory.

Performance configurations (solo or group) and use of non-assessed accompanist(s)/group performer(s), when needed, met.

Performance Program Sheet and Industry Statement Form completed and submitted prior to commencement of examination.

Program of works performed in accordance with information contained in the Performance Program Sheet and Industry Statement Form.

Work health and safety (WHS) principles applied appropriately in the performance.

Most students complied in all areas and received full marks in this criterion. A few students presented their Performance Program Sheet and Industry Statement on forms from a different Music Study; schools are advised to ensure they download the correct forms from VASS.

2. Skill in performing with accuracy and control

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	0	0	0.5	3	6	13	18	21	20	12	6	6.9

Accuracy and control of the rhythm, pitch, articulation, timing and phrasing, and tuning, as appropriate to the instrument/technology/voice and area of specialisation.

Students who scored highly in this criterion chose pieces and arrangements that enabled them to demonstrate the extent of their ability to perform with consistent accuracy and control. Care should be taken to choose pieces with an appropriate level of challenge, suitable to the skill level of the student. Students whose performances did not score well attempted challenging pieces with a low or inconsistent degree of success, or presented simple parts with a low degree of difficulty, for example simple parts using basic rhythms.

Vocalists are advised to ensure that selected pieces are in keys that are suitable for their vocal range.

3. Skill in realising the expressiveness and versatility of instrument(s)/technology/voice throughout the program

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	0	0.5	1	3	8	13	21	20	16	9	8	6.7

Use of performance techniques such as phrasing and shaping music, maintaining a strict tempo, and artistic use of accent, crescendo, diminuendo, staccato, silence, legato, tenuto, rubato, ritardando, accelerando, pitch bending and other techniques, as appropriate to the area of specialisation.

Students who scored well in this criterion presented works that maximised opportunities to demonstrate expressive performance techniques by selecting suitable repertoire, personal interpretations and/or arrangements. Students who performed musical items with a good level of variety in musical elements (Criterion 4) typically had more opportunity to present a range of performance techniques. Performances that scored highly also achieved this while maintaining a cohesive set (Criterion 7). Some students demonstrated highly responsive expressive skills through high-level use of dynamic changes, tempo changes, accents and silence through sophisticated band/ensemble or solo/accompanist(s) arrangements. Although the descriptors should not be thought of as a checklist, students are advised to explore the range of expressive techniques that are possible on their instrument(s) and familiarise themselves with the best examples of use in their chosen area of specialisation.

4. Ability to demonstrate variety in musical elements and conventions relevant to the area of specialisation

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	0	0.5	1	3	8	16	21	19	15	8	8	6.6

Skill in using variety of duration (rhythm, meter, pattern) and/or melody and harmony (scales, chords, chord progressions), and music systems relevant to the area of specialisation.

Students who scored highly in this criterion selected a variety of works, approaches to arrangements and interpretations. Students who presented a program with limited variety in musical elements and conventions, such as using only a few approaches to beat subdivision and/or using the same chord inversions for all or most of their pieces, did not score well.

When selecting an area of specialisation, students and teachers are advised to consider the availability of material that provides opportunities to present variety in musical elements and conventions. Sourcing such material can be more challenging in some areas of specialisation than in others. It is also advisable to consider how variety can be achieved while maintaining a cohesive set (Criterion 7).

5. Ability to demonstrate originality and innovative approaches in interpretation within the performance configuration (solo or group)

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	0	0.5	1	5	8	15	19	17	17	10	8	6.6

Skill in creativity and interpretation, and the ability to demonstrate appropriate musical nuance, an individual style of musical expression, and original and innovative approaches to stage performances relevant to the area of specialisation.

Students who scored well in this criterion presented their pieces with a strong sense of an engaging and individual musical voice, especially through the sophisticated and well-developed use of expressive devices. Those who used variation in repeat sections and innovative approaches to arrangement also scored highly.

Some students incorporated improvised solos or solos that appeared improvised or partly improvised into their program. When done skilfully, this can contribute to higher marks in this criterion. However, although improvisation is part of the course work, it is not directly assessed in this exam. Students with low improvisation-skill level are advised not to attempt to improvise to access higher marks in this criterion.

6a. Ability to listen critically to one's own performance and continuously adjust one's own performance to produce the required outcomes relevant to the area of specialisation (Solo performance)

6b. Ability to listen critically to the performance of others and respond, interact and collaborate appropriately, adjusting the performance to achieve required outcomes relevant to the area of specialisation (Group performance)

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	0	0	1	3	5	9	23	18	16	12	13	7.1

A key concept to consider in this criterion is how the role of the instrument can change within pieces and/or from piece to piece. For example, when moving from an accompanying role to a dominant role, such as a solo, or from section work to a solo or accompanying role. Students who performed well in this criterion demonstrated a strong understanding of the role of their instrument, especially where that role changed throughout the program, by adjusting their sound as required for each change in the program while consistently sustaining their musical line or harmony.

Group performances that scored highly featured arrangements that allowed students to demonstrate high-level interaction and collaboration skills such as stops and starts, dynamic changes, tempo changes and tempo rubato. Many group performers and soloists with live accompaniment effectively used eye contact, body language and other musical and non-musical cues to assist with musical adjustment and collaboration.

Soloists who scored highly achieved a good overall balance in sound and dynamics with their accompaniment and selected repertoire and arrangements that allowed them to demonstrate their ability to listen and adjust.

7. Skill in presenting a cohesive program of music

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	0	0.5	0.5	1	4	8	15	22	22	12	16	7.4

Skill in presenting an authentic (in relation to the selected area of specialisation), dynamic and well-constructed program of music with appropriate sequencing of items and appropriate choice of repertoire.

Students who scored highly in this criterion presented a convincing set that flowed well, had a sense of momentum and aligned strongly with the students' Industry Statement.

Students who were well-prepared and organised and had clearly planned how they would transition between pieces, including organising equipment and maintaining a sense of performance between works, also scored highly.

Students who present their works with backing tracks are advised to make the use of the audio player as unobtrusive as possible, for example by creating a backing track that runs continuously, rather than stopping and starting tracks.

Criteria 8–10

These criteria relate specifically to CUAMPF402 Develop and maintain stagecraft skills. The key concepts to consider are performer and audience engagement. Students who scored highly in these criteria presented their work as an 'event' and skilfully crafted the musical experience for their intended audience. Students should be assisted to create a professional performance space that enables them to demonstrate a sense of delivering a performance in a professional environment. To score highly, students should ensure that they are familiar with the relevant performance conventions in their area of specialisation.

8. Ability to observe and maintain protocols appropriate to the area of specialisation

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	0	0	1	2	5	11	16	22	19	11	13	7.2

Skill in communicating effectively through original and innovative approaches to personal stagecraft, expressing appropriate dramatic nuance, while taking venue and style of performance into account.

Dramatic nuance is achieved through engagement with the performance of oneself and others beyond presenting a confident performance (Criterion 9) with a defined image (Criterion 10). Students who scored highly in this criterion demonstrated high levels of engagement through an individual and distinctive approach to reacting and responding to musical and non-musical elements of the performance. They created a convincing sense of occasion that aligned with their Industry Statement and the performance conventions of their chosen area of specialisation.

9. Skill in presenting a confident performance through consistent focus and energy, and with pacing appropriate to the area of specialisation

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	0	0	0.5	1	3	8	12	20	24	14	18	7.6

Skill in applying a range of personal stagecraft skills to engage audiences while performing a suitably paced and focused performance.

Students who scored highly in this criterion appeared at ease on stage, maintained a sustained focus and were highly engaged in their performance. As the coursework requires students to address performance anxiety, it is expected that this will be evidenced in the presentation.

There is a strong connection between musical confidence and the presentation of a confident onstage persona; students who were well-prepared musically typically presented their performance confidently.

10. Ability to demonstrate key stagecraft skills in relation to the selected area of specialisation and market appropriate for the program of music

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	0	0	0.5	1	4	8	13	21	22	14	16	7.5

Skill in applying a range of stagecraft skills to present a coherent and appropriate image that enhances performances.

Effective use of non-musical elements in performance including movement, facial expressions, way of holding instrument(s) or equipment and effective use of the performance space.

Students who scored highly in this criterion presented a convincing and appropriate stage persona that aligned with their Industry Statement and the musical performance presented during the entire performance, including between works.

Although the Industry Statement is not directly assessed, students are advised to prepare a strong statement that clearly articulates the context of the performance. Use of the performance space, interaction with equipment and the student's ability to enhance their performance through any non-musical means are assessed in this criterion.