

**2011
School-assessed
Coursework
Report**



Music Performance (2011–2015): Units 3 and 4

This report is provided for the first year of implementation of this study and is based on the coursework audit and Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) statistical data.

UNIT 3

GENERAL COMMENTS

The two School-assessed Coursework tasks for Music Performance Unit 3 are designed to support students' preparation of their performance program. The Outcome 2 task allows students to develop instrumental skills and performance technique relevant to specific challenges in the works they are preparing for performance. The Outcome 3 task focuses on development of more general musicianship skills that students can apply as they prepare their interpretations of works in the performance program and skills they can use as they perform.

The design and content of most tasks presented for audit reflected a good working knowledge of the revised *VCE Music Study Design*. Teachers used a variety of approaches to the tasks, especially in Outcome 2 where students describe the relationship between technical work and the preparation of works in Outcome 1.

Tasks which most closely referenced the relevant sections of the study design and advice in the assessment handbook for the basis for their design, delivery and assessment were most successful in providing clear guidelines for students about the expected scope and standard of performance. Where teachers tried to either write their own interpretation or to over-paraphrase the study design the required aspects of the tasks were sometimes omitted.

Constant reference to the study design and assessment handbook through planning, task design, teaching and assessment stages of each unit, can act as a very useful 'quality control' measure, for the teacher, in the preparation of assessment tasks.

Information provided to students about the requirements for each School-assessed Task should indicate when and where assessments will occur as well as describing the scope and format of the task and the assessment methodology that will be used.

Schools should note that assessment of Area of Study 1 Outcome 1 does not contribute to School-assessed Coursework.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Unit 3 Coursework

Outcome 2

Demonstrate performance techniques, technical work and exercises, and describe their relevance to the performance of selected group and/or solo works, and present an unprepared performance.

Task type options

A demonstration of performance techniques, technical work and exercises

AND

A description of how selected performance techniques, technical work and exercises support the student's development as an instrumentalist and their preparation of works for Outcome 1. The description may be presented in one or more of the following formats:

- oral
- multimedia
- written.

Most schools submitted tasks that complied with study design requirements for this outcome.

Overall, instructions to students regarding the 'demonstration' section of the task were clear and detailed. Typically, instructions for the task were based on a template that was provided to students at the beginning of the school year. Students used this to identify relevant technical work and exercises and links to works in their performance program. In most cases, at the assessment session students demonstrated selected techniques, technical work and exercises from the set they had identified on the program sheet. Many schools required students to develop a program where techniques, technical work and exercises were referenced against each work in their performance program, sometimes with an additional requirement for performance of a 'study' or 'longer exercise'.

Instructions regarding the section of the task involving 'description' of links between students' technical work and performance programs were often less clear. In some cases the presentation format was not identified and in others no indication of the duration of this part of the assessment task was provided. Formats selected by schools ranged from a 'discussion' as part of the short technical performance, to a separate, formal, written (or digital) presentation. Tasks that were carefully designed to direct and encourage students to offer detailed reflections on the relationship of their chosen technical work and studies to particular and clearly identified sections needing attention in the works being prepared for performance most successfully realised connections between this task and Outcome 1.

In many cases, descriptions of the 'Unprepared performance' component of this task did not indicate the nature the unprepared material students would be required to perform, how the material for unprepared performance would be selected and/or the format of the task, for example 5 minutes preparation time followed by the unprepared performance.

Assessment

Assessment measures were generally appropriate to the requirements of the task. Most schools devised criteria based on the performance descriptors provided in the assessment handbook and used a marking guide similar to the one provided to weight each component of the task.

Generally, this task was assessed in one session although some schools conducted the 'description' component at a different time as they had selected the 'written' format option.

Outcome 3

Identify, recreate, notate and transcribe short excerpts of music and discuss the interpretation of expressive elements of music in pre-recorded works.

Task type options

Outcome 3

Identify, re-create, notate and transcribe short excerpts of music, and discuss the interpretation of expressive elements of music in pre-recorded works.

Task type options

A test that includes aural, written and practical components.

While most tests included aural, written and practical components, a number omitted the practical requirements from the test altogether. It is important that the practical requirements be included as they are clearly outlined in the key skills for Outcome 3 and allow teachers to assess students' musicianship skills independently of their notation skills. Some schools used commercially available tests; however, these tests are not a complete reflection of the key skills in the study design, and need to be augmented with additional (practical) questions to fully comply with the study design.

There were also a surprising number of tests where tasks relating to the key skills of Unit 4 Outcome 3 were included. It is important that teachers familiarise themselves with the differences in the key skills of Units 3 from those in Unit 4. While many of the skills are unchanged, there are at least eleven where changes occur. Students facing more complex tasks than those required for the Unit 3 test can potentially be disadvantaged by being assessed on Unit 4 material.

Most tests reflected Unit 3 Outcome 3 key knowledge and key skills with a balanced and appropriate focus on the notational, aural and analytical aspects of the study. A close and detailed reading of the key skills of Outcome 3 Unit 3 is necessary; however, before setting the tests to ensure that all the areas of assessment are addressed appropriately. Many schools used questions from the sample examination material as the basis of this test.

The key knowledge and key skills provide a guide to the range of question types that should be included in each section of the test. For example, key skills 6–10 are the basis for the practical component of the test. Information about the components of the assessment task provided in the assessment handbook can also be used to plan the test.

Questions requiring students to listen analytically and discuss ways in which expressive elements of music had been interpreted to achieve expressive outcomes and create character in performance were based on excerpts that reflected the diversity of music styles evident in music created by Australians since 1910 and performed by Australians. Often tests included two questions each based on an excerpt from a different music style, for example one excerpt featuring a jazz style and the other featuring a chamber work.

Assessment

Most schools used two assessment sessions to conduct this test. One session included aural, theory and listening/analysis questions and the other included the practical component of the task. In some cases the practical component was conducted on the same day as the unprepared performance component of Outcome 2.

In general, schools assigned marks to each question and then converted student's scores to a score out of 10. Many schools also provided the performance descriptors from the assessment handbook as information for students as a way of describing the attributes and qualities students are expected to demonstrate in their responses.

UNIT 4

GENERAL COMMENTS

Most tasks were set with the appropriate focus on the *VCE Music Study Design* requirements. Teachers generally set tasks commensurate with the instrumental direction of their student cohort, especially in the area of unprepared performance where the options include sight-reading or improvisation. Some schools appear to be unaware that there is now **no** option for imitation, as found in the preceding study design.

A number of schools prepared detailed and structured outlines for students to follow in addressing the requirement to discuss the relevance of performance techniques, and technical work and exercises. This gave the students a tool for producing a more relevant, reflective and insightful analysis of their personal instrumental development, which is of course the aim of the exercise.

Many schools provided very clear and detailed instructions to students regarding this task. Generally schools used the same format for this task as they did for the Unit 3 Outcome 2 task.

Outcome 2

Demonstrate performance techniques, and technical work and exercises, and discuss their relevance to the performance of selected group and/or solo works, and present an unprepared performance.

Task type options:

- a demonstration of performance techniques, technical work and exercises
- **and** discussion of how selected performance techniques, technical work and exercises support the student's development as an instrumentalist and their preparation of works for Outcome 1. The discussion may be presented in one or more of the following formats:
 - oral
 - multimedia
 - written.
- **and** a performance of unprepared material – sight reading or improvisation.

Assessment

Most schools used or adapted a version of the descriptors and marking scheme from the *VCE Music Assessment Handbook 2011–2015*.

Generally, the tasks set by schools were based very closely on information provided in the Study Design and Assessment handbook. In some cases information for the study design and handbook was quoted verbatim, and in other cases the information was slightly reorganised or paraphrased. Both approaches were used successfully to provide students with a clear and concise outline of the task requirements and assessment methodology.

The use of templates for guiding students as they select technical work was evident in many tasks and again, this seems to contribute to a task that is clear and complies with all required aspects of the task.

Teachers are reminded that the instructions to students regarding this task should clearly identify the three components of the task – demonstration, discussion and unprepared performance. Information should be provided about the duration, format and expectations for each part of the task. For example, students might be required to include a particular number or range (5-10) of performance techniques, technical work and exercises relating to their general development as an instrumentalist and at least two works in their Unit 1 program.

Flexibility is encouraged in determining the number of techniques etc. students must include in their program given the range in relative length and degree of difficulty across material that students within a class might be studying. Schools may, but are not required to, expect that a student will include a study or work with a technical focus in this program.

Instructions relating to the discussion component of the task should indicate if students are allowed to refer to notes during the task. Whilst many schools selected the written format for this component of the task as a way of encouraging students to develop skills in using music language and terminology in a written context, other schools very successfully used the oral format as a way of determining students' depth of knowledge and understanding about connections between their work for Outcome 2 and the program they were preparing for Outcome 1. Fewer schools used the multimedia format but it also proved a successful way of identifying the extent and scope of students' knowledge and understanding. Schools made their choices about this format based on a range of considerations including class size, available ICT resources and/or wish to link to the end-of-year aural and written examination.

The task instructions should clearly indicate how material for the unprepared component of this task will be selected, for example, instrumental teachers will be asked to provide 2–3 samples of suitable material in a sealed envelope prior to the assessment session.

For further information about approaches to this task, please see comments in the School-assessed Coursework Report for Unit 3 Outcome 2.