

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2014 Dance written examination reflected the revised *VCE Dance Study Design 2014–2018*. As in previous years, the examination questions were based on the key knowledge and key skills that underpin the outcomes in Units 3 and 4. Students were required to demonstrate their understanding of choreographic principles and the prescribed works studied throughout both units.

The examination consisted of six questions comprising short-answer questions, a scenario, several structured questions and extended-response questions. Questions 4, 5 and 6 related to dance works selected from the prescribed list of dance works published annually in the *VCAA Bulletin*. Teachers are reminded that the list contains changes each year; therefore, it is important to carefully check the list at the start of each year before deciding on the final selection of works. Responses indicated that some students had not studied appropriate works selected from the current prescribed list. All questions were compulsory.

Students who gained high marks in all questions presented comprehensive responses that demonstrated consistent use of accurate and appropriate terminology, as well as detailed knowledge and understanding of the key knowledge and skills relevant to each question.

Students who gained fewer marks displayed a limited understanding of the key concept(s) involved and/or showed limited knowledge of appropriate dance terminology. The study design contains information concerning the concepts and associated terms used in the study. It is essential that students become familiar with using the appropriate terminology in all written tasks, including the final written examination. Diagrams were awarded marks only if they provided information that was in addition to written responses.

Students are advised to read each question carefully to ensure they understand what is being asked. They should use their reading time to identify the key terms (for example, ‘list’, ‘describe’, ‘discuss’, ‘analyse’, etc.) and key concepts being assessed. They should also ensure that they address all aspects of the question in their response.

Teachers should remind students to practise effective time management when completing the examination. It appeared that time management presented a problem for some students, who presented lengthy responses for Questions 1, 2 and/or 3, and neglected to answer the remaining questions in full. Further practice at writing to a set time would assist students in preparing for examination conditions and improving their overall examination technique.

Past written examinations and other material, such as examination reports and sample examination material (available on the VCE Dance examination page of the VCAA website), may be useful in assisting with a student’s examination preparation. Students are advised that this material serves only as a sample and that the number and type of questions for each year may vary. Questions from examinations prior to 2014 may require adaptation for use in practice examinations to reflect study design changes.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding errors resulting in a total less than 100 per cent.

Question 1

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Average |
|-------|----|---|----|----|----|------------|
| % | 11 | 4 | 14 | 31 | 41 | 2.9 |

This question assessed students’ knowledge and understanding of the elements of spatial organisation. It also assessed their capacity to explain the use of one element of spatial organisation when manipulating movement choreographically.

To gain full marks for this question, students were required to identify one of the elements of spatial organisation (either direction, level, focus or dimension) and explain how the use of the identified element choreographically manipulated movement vocabulary in a solo dance work.

A range of approaches were used when answering this question. Responses generally explained how movement vocabulary changed when the chosen element was manipulated, what processes could be used to successfully manipulate movement or included the purpose(s) of manipulating the selected element.

High-scoring responses:

- correctly identified one of the following elements of spatial organisation included in the *VCE Dance Study Design*: eye/body focus, dimension, direction, level
- presented a clear explanation of how the identified spatial organisation element could be used when manipulating movement vocabulary.

Low-scoring responses:

- did not identify a correct element of spatial organisation
- presented a simplistic or brief explanation or outline that demonstrated a basic understanding of how the identified spatial organisation element is used when manipulating movement choreographically
- identified a definition and/or presented an explanation without any relation to how the movement vocabulary was manipulated choreographically.

The higher-scoring responses generally gave a definition, then clearly but succinctly explained the manipulation of the movement using correct references back to the concept.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Dimension.

Dimension can be manipulated choreographically to effectively communicate the expressive intention by altering the size of the body's shape from small to medium to large. For example, if the choreographer is portraying the idea of 'sadness' compact and small dimensions of the shapes may be utilised. If the choreographer is communicating 'strength' the body shape may be extended through the space to occupy a large dimension.

Question 2

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Average |
|-------|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|----|----|---------|
| % | 9 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 14 | 9 | 13 | 10 | 31 | 5.3 |

This scenario question required students to imagine a given situation within which they were then asked to apply their knowledge in a particular way. The question facilitated the application of generic knowledge to a context.

In this case, the scenario question assessed students' understanding of two pre-performance practices that a dancer could use to prepare to communicate the expressive intention in the context of a solo dance work.

When answering the question it wasn't necessary for students to refer to their particular or personal experiences of a specific solo dance work.

High-scoring responses described in detail two appropriate practices used to prepare to communicate the expressive intention in a solo dance work performance.

Examples of appropriate pre-performance practices used when preparing to communicate the expressive intention in a solo dance work include:

- listening to music and visualising the intention
- marking through the dance to ensure the accurate communication of the expressive intention
- recalling the characterisation from the rehearsal stage to ensure clarity when communicating the expressive intention
- others such as an aspect of warm-up (cardio and stretching).

Low-scoring responses:

- confused pre-performance skills with movement creation processes or rehearsal practices
- did not connect the stated process or practice to the communication of the expressive intention
- cited two processes that were not different and/or contained similar information
- lacked adequate detail about the identified practice.

2014 Examination Report

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

A pre performance practice a dancer can use to prepare to communicate the expressive intention is visualisation. The process of visualisation involves the dancer imagining themselves performing the solo on stage prior to the actual performance. A dancer could imagine themselves performing the dance using expression and eye body focus to communicate the desired intention. Engaging in this process would enhance the dancer's ability to make an emotional connection to the intention and promote an awareness of their projection during the actual performance.

The dancer could also mark through the dance in the space prior to the actual performance. When running through the dance the dancer should make sure they understand the dimensions of the space and map out the important points in the space as well as the various pathways which may be crucial to communicating the expressive intention to the audience. The mark through will allow the dancer to clarify the spatial design in order to promote an awareness of the projection of the expressive intention.

Question 3a.

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | Average |
|-------|---|----|----|----|---------|
| % | 3 | 10 | 28 | 59 | 2.4 |

This question required a discussion of why the accurate execution of group formations is important in a learnt group dance work.

High-scoring responses presented a clear and logical discussion of one, or a small number of, reasons for the importance of executing accurate group formations in a learnt group dance work.

Possible reasons may have included:

- injury prevention
- the increased chance of each dancer being able to commit to the timing and energy qualities and shapes of the body as set by the choreographer
- the adherence of dancers to the aesthetic and artistry of the dance style
- facilitation of the clear communication of the expressive intention, as the spatial relationships and distances between dancers are a part of creating meaning
- the dancers will remain focused on the communication of the expressive intention, rather than on avoiding each other's pathway.

Low-scoring responses:

- referenced the use of movement vocabulary rather than group formations
- repeated information
- wrote 'off-task', i.e. made reference to group structures
- didn't relate reasons to the accurate use of the group formation.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

In a group dance work dancers should execute accurate group formations for the safety of themselves and other dancers. For example, if a dancer does not maintain their assigned group formation this may interfere and disturb another dancer's execution of the choreography and hence the dancers may collide resulting in injury. Accurate group formations are also important for the clear communication of the expressive intention and provide an aesthetic appeal for the audience observing the dance.

Question 3b.

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Average |
|-------|---|---|----|----|----|---------|
| % | 4 | 6 | 19 | 17 | 55 | 3.1 |

This question required the description of two ways that dancers in a learnt group dance work can rehearse to improve and maintain the accurate execution of dance formations.

High-scoring students presented a comprehensive description of two appropriate and relevant rehearsal practices that enabled dancers in a group dance work to execute group formations accurately.

This question assessed generic knowledge of rehearsal practices that are applicable in any group dance context. Information about a specific dance may have enhanced the capacity to describe rehearsal practices but did not receive additional marks.

Examples of appropriate practices include:

- use of a mirror to improve accuracy of group formations
- awareness of others in the dance space to maintain group formations
- following the front person to orient correctly in the group formation
- slow marking through the movement vocabulary to execute the group formations accurately.

Low-scoring responses:

- lacked adequate detail
- gave detailed information for one process only
- referenced irrelevant practices that were not linked back to improving or maintaining the group dance work
- didn't relate the response to group formations.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

One way that dancers in a learnt group dance can improve their execution of group formations is through the rehearsal practice of refining the problem areas. Repeating the transitions in and out of the choreographed group formation allows the dancers to memorise their placement and develop accuracy. Another process would be to film the rehearsal. The dancers can view the work and self - evaluate any errors they see in the placement of the group. These can be corrected in subsequent rehearsals.

Question 4

| Work chosen | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|-------------|---|----|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| % | 0 | 62 | 1 | 24 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 4 |

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | Average |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|---|----|----|----|---------|
| % | 3 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 14 | 9 | 14 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 12 | 7.1 |

The question required students to describe two different influences on the choreographer's choice of movement vocabulary in one prescribed work studied in Unit 3.

High-scoring responses accurately described two different influences on the choreographer's choice of movement vocabulary in the solo work selected. Each influence was plausible and discussed in some detail to give a clear understanding of the influence. The impact of each of these influences on choices made by the choreographer was discussed comprehensively with clear links to the movement vocabulary of the selected work. For each identified influence, one detailed movement example was given to demonstrate the influence.

Low-scoring responses showed a limited understanding of the impact each identified influence had on the choreographer's selection of movement vocabulary. Some students accurately identified a plausible influence; however, they were not able to score full marks because they did not make clear the impact the influence had on the choreographer's choice.

Very-low-scoring responses:

- did not clearly discuss how a plausible influence could impact upon the choices made by the choreographer and/or chose to repeat the same influence
- gave a limited description of the influence or had a tendency to describe the influence in too much detail without addressing the impact
- gave more than one example of movement vocabulary, which limited the discussion of the influence and the impact.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response. The work being analysed is *Cry* by Alvin Ailey. In this excerpt, only one influence has been presented. Another influence was also discussed in a similarly detailed manner.

One influence on the selection of movement vocabulary in Cry is the technique of Lester Horton. Ailey took his first classes with Horton at the age of 18 at the American university UCLA. Horton developed and taught a style of movement which was based on contemporary dance and used long stretches out body lines, and diagonal tensions and balances which made the torso the centre of all movements. The technique aimed to challenge each dancer's physical limitations.

2014 Examination Report

The impact of the Horton technique on Ailey's selection of movement vocabulary is evident in movements which require the engagement of abdominal muscles and the elongation of the spine which require flexibility in the hamstrings and back. The Horton technique includes such positions as flat backs, lateral stretches, stag position and the T position. This can be seen in the movement vocabulary of CRY as many elongated lines such as lunges and reaches are used, as well as a ponche arabesque in which the dancer's arms are stretched out in front of her body.

A phrase which illustrates this influence is seen in section B of Cry and consists of stillness and transference of weight, when the dancer performs a series of lateral stretches beginning in standing position with both arms fully stretched combined with a slight angular tilt of the torso before transitioning into another characteristic Horton pose of an angular body shape with the torso fully bent over the legs and twisted, with one arm reaching to the opposite foot.

Question 5

| Work selected | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---------------|---|----|---|----|---|---|----|---|----|---|----|
| % | 0 | 25 | 5 | 42 | 5 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 1 |

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | Average |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------|
| % | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 26 | 18.2 |

This question required students to address a different prescribed work from the one analysed in Question 4, and they were required to present their answer in table format. Within the table, students needed to correctly list six pairs of one type of body action and one physical skill, and to describe in detail the movement vocabulary that illustrated the stated combination.

All six body actions of gesture, locomotion, elevation, falling, turning or rotating, and stillness needed to be included and combined with any six of the eight physical skills of alignment, coordination, balance, control, flexibility, strength, stamina and transference of weight.

High-scoring responses correctly listed six plausible combinations of a single body action and resulting physical skill, and comprehensively described the movement vocabulary that was an example of the adjacent pair in the table.

Low-scoring responses:

- used inconsistent or incorrect terminology when listing the body action and/or physical skill
- discussed either the body action or physical skill in detail, but not in combination when describing the movement vocabulary
- discussed the movement vocabulary using a basic description that did not 'unpack' or illustrate the use of the action and skill in the movement vocabulary example.

Very-low-scoring responses:

- gave incorrect, repeated or inaccurate combinations of body action and physical skill
- did not describe in sufficient detail the movement vocabulary example and often made reference to the communication of the expressive intention
- discussed more than one movement example
- made unnecessary reference to the arrangement of the phrase in terms of the elements of movement.

The following is an excerpt from a high-scoring response. The work being analysed is 'Ruby Tuesday' from *Rooster* by Christopher Bruce. Only two examples have been addressed in this answer.

| Body action | Physical skill | Movement vocabulary example |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>Locomotion</i> | <i>Transference of weight</i> | <i>The dancer begins with the body action of <u>locomotion</u> as she travels in the space, slowly stepping forward towards the audience, hands clasped behind her back and eyes cast down. The action requires a shift of the centre of gravity as she steps from the right to the left side, engaging her core stabilisers to control the <u>transference of weight</u> as she locomotes.</i> |
| <i>Stillness</i> | <i>Alignment</i> | <i>In section A the dancer performs an action of hair twirling before pausing for a moment in complete <u>stillness</u>, eye focus direct and towards the audience. She remains in this position for a few seconds,</i> |

2014 Examination Report

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | <i>demonstrating correct <u>alignment</u> of the plumb line as she stands with the core stabilisers switched on, a straight spine which is in line with the pelvis; knees, ankles and feet.</i> |
|--|--|---|

Question 6

| Work chosen | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|-------------|---|---|----|---|----|---|---|----|----|---|----|----|----|
| % | 0 | 5 | 14 | 2 | 10 | 3 | 0 | 20 | 19 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 16 |

| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | Average |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------|
| % | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 9 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 17 | 15.7 |

This question required students to demonstrate an understanding of the term ‘group structures’ and to present an analysis that showed how the choreographer(s) of a prescribed group dance work choreographically manipulated all five types of group structures to communicate the expressive intention from throughout the dance work.

Analysis of examples of all different types of group structures, from **throughout** the work, were required to answer this question.

Only the five types of group structures outlined in the study design – unison, canon, contrast, symmetrical and asymmetrical – were accepted.

A high-scoring response included:

- sophisticated and comprehensive knowledge of the choreographic manipulation of all five types of group structures throughout the complete group dance work in relation to the communication of the expressive intention
- detailed descriptions of the movement vocabulary performed in relation to the manipulation of all five types of group structures
- structures and the communication of the expressive intention from throughout the ‘complete’ group dance work
- clear reasoning involving all of the above.

Assessment of Question 6 was based on the following bands of descriptors. Marks were assigned according to the quality, depth, detail and comprehensiveness of the answer.

| DESCRIPTORS | Band of marks |
|---|---------------|
| The response demonstrates with respect to the group dance work selected | |
| A comprehensive understanding of all five types of group structures: canon, unison, contrast, symmetrical and asymmetrical. Sophisticated and very detailed analysis of how all five of the types of group structures have been manipulated by the choreographer to communicate the overall expressive intention, and where relevant, aspects of the expressive intention. Perceptive, well-substantiated opinion of what the expressive intention is. Thorough analysis and description of the placement and arrangement of dancers in group formations and the movement vocabulary performed in unison, canon and contrast in these formations. Thorough analysis that clearly describes detailed examples of all five types of group structures. Analysis of group structures supported by highly relevant examples from throughout the work. Accurate and appropriate use of terminology. | 25–21 |
| A competent understanding of four or five types of group structures: canon, unison, contrast, symmetrical and asymmetrical. Reasonably thorough analysis of how four or five group structures have been manipulated by the choreographer to communicate the overall expressive intention of the majority of or, where relevant, aspects of the work. Well-argued and substantiated opinion of what the expressive intention is for the majority of the work. Detailed analysis and description of the placement and arrangement of dancers in group formations and the movement vocabulary performed in unison, canon and contrast in these formations. Clear analysis that accurately describes detailed examples of four or five group structures, using relevant examples from the | 20–16 |

2014 Examination Report

| | |
|---|-------|
| <p>majority of the work.</p> <p>Accurate and appropriate use of terminology.</p> | |
| <p>A satisfactory understanding of three or four (or adequate understanding of four or five) group structures: canon, unison, contrast, symmetrical and asymmetrical. Satisfactory analysis of how three or four group structures (or barely satisfactory discussion of five) communicate the expressive intention of about half of the work. Adequately argued opinion of what the expressive intention is in a minimum of half the work. A small amount of detailed analysis, or an adequate amount of description, of relevant examples of the placement and arrangement of dancers in group formations and movement vocabulary performed in unison, canon and contrast. Reasonable description of examples of three or four group structures providing relevant examples for at least half of the work.</p> <p>Appropriate use of terminology.</p> | 15–11 |
| <p>An adequate discussion of two (or inadequate discussion of three to five) group structures: canon, unison, contrast, symmetrical and asymmetrical. General explanations with little detail or discussion of how two, or inadequate and incomplete outlining of how three to five, group structures have been manipulated by the choreographer to communicate the expressive intention in less than half of the work. An insubstantial or poorly expressed opinion of how the expressive intention, or aspects of the expressive intention, is communicated in less than half the work. Brief outline, using a small number of poorly chosen examples, of the placement and arrangement of dancers in group formations, and/or movement vocabulary that is in unison, canon and contrast. Limited understanding of how the choreographer manipulated examples to communicate the expressive intention, or aspects of the expressive intention.</p> <p>Some inaccurate use of terminology.</p> | 10–6 |
| <p>A limited description of only one or two (or inadequate outline or list of three to five) group structures. Poor explanations or description of how one or two (or inadequate outline of three to five) group structures have been manipulated by the choreographer to communicate the expressive intention. A lack of, or weak, argument resulting in an unclear and unsubstantiated opinion of the expressive intention of the work overall. Only a few brief references to examples of placement and arrangement of dancers in group formations and/or movement vocabulary that is in unison, canon and contrast. Very limited and sometimes inaccurate movement description of group structures, demonstrating minimal understanding. Inconsistent or superficial understanding of how the choreographer manipulated examples to communicate the expressive intention.</p> <p>Limited and often inaccurate use of terminology.</p> | 5–1 |