



2007 VCE VET Community Services: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2007, 271 students sat the Community Services written examination paper; this was down from the previous year's 383.

The paper had three sections: Section A contained short answer questions based on the compulsory units of competence; Section B consisted of short answer questions that were based on a scenario; and Section C contained questions that were based on the two elective streams – Children's Services and Community Services.

The examination items focused on the underpinning knowledge and skills from the relevant units of competence. Students selected the appropriate stream for the elective section of the paper. Although it is stressed that students select **one** elective, there was still a number who completed both. In this situation, the marks for the better answered elective were used in the calculation of the total.

The paper examined the basic principles of community service work, and students were expected to be familiar with relevant legislation, OH&S policies and procedures, and effective communication skills. Students also need to be able to define important community services terms.

The multipurpose recreational centre scenario in Section B enabled students to apply their knowledge of key concepts in a practical manner. Students needed to read the lead-in information at the beginning of each question to be able to respond appropriately. Without this knowledge it was possible for students to respond out of context. In this and other sections, students must be careful to read the questions and provided material carefully before responding.

Responses to the elective questions should reflect sound knowledge of the fundamentals of that particular stream and incorporate use of correct industry terminology. A number of students clearly recognised the key terms and concepts; however, using terms and phrases from the question indicated that, although students could cite terms, they may not have been able to explain what they meant. Considered responses required both interpretation and application. It is essential for students to be able to show what they know and understand through the selection of appropriate community services industry language.

Also of some concern was the way students answered questions which required an exploration of principles and theories (for example, Questions 7b. and 9b. in Section A). These areas should have been dealt with in some detail during class work and the tasks related to a variety of work areas within the industry. It is imperative that the teaching and learning strategies reflect the broad framework of the core units of competence, not just one specific area of focus.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

For each question, an outline answer (or answers) is provided. In some cases the answer given is not the only answer that could have been awarded marks.

Section A – Short answer questions

This section focuses on key concepts, definitions and the underlying principles of Community Services, therefore students must be able to produce responses that are relevant and accurate.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	Average
%	3	97	1.0

Occupational Health and Safety

The majority of students correctly stated this definition.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	4	18	78	1.8

Students were able to give a variety of examples which related to the individual's role in:

- reading and understanding policy

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- reporting risks and hazards
- following procedures
- working safely.

Students managed this question quite well and were able to show they understood a worker's responsibilities in relation to OH&S. However, there appeared to be some confusion between OH&S and duty of care responsibilities. Although there are some similarities, this question required specific knowledge of the role of OH&S in the workplace. Some students selected answers from Question 3 for their response, but these were not appropriate in this instance.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	0	18	82	1.8

The three possible answers to this question were:

- A. taking all reasonable measures to ensure safety of clients and others
- C. doing no harm
- D. doing good when you know what to do.

Most students chose two appropriate answers from the list above. The other two options did not reflect an understanding of duty of care.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	4	3	35	8	50	3.0

Example	Principle
a legal obligation	privacy
not talking about clients outside work	confidentiality
only collecting relevant personal information	privacy
an ethical issue	confidentiality

The principles of privacy and confidentiality continued to cause confusion.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	26	53	22	1.0

5a.

Having equal rights and opportunities regardless of race, religion, ability or sexuality.

Although it is assumed that students understand the principles of social justice, many struggled to clearly describe 'equity'.

5b.

Appropriate legislation included:

- *Equal Opportunity Act 1995*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*

Although students are not expected to know every law relating to community services, they should be familiar with some as they relate to the compulsory units of competence.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	Average
%	38	62	0.6

The **best** description of what community services work involves is C. supporting vulnerable people.

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Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	14	26	31	29	1.8

7a.

A workplace procedure explains how a policy is to be carried out.

7b.

Appropriate examples included:

- language used
- culturally appropriate resources
- observances and practices of religion.

This part of the question was not well done.

Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	0	1	5	29	64	3.6

8a.

Appropriate responses included:

- young people like to get information but be anonymous
- they need to speak to people who also understands them and shows empathy towards their issues
- they require counselling, advice and information specific to young people
- they may have been abused, in danger or need to talk to someone immediately.

Students only needed to give one reason for accessing Kids Helpline.

8b.

Appropriate examples included:

- young people's needs are quite different to others
- detailed, appropriate and specific knowledge of their issues, culture and language is essential
- the methods and style of communication is different for youth
- they want empathy and understanding.

8c.

Any one of:

- provides anonymity
- a 24-hour service
- free
- accessible
- private.

Responses to this question reflected a good understanding of the issues relating to young people and why their needs may differ from other groups in society.

Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	12	12	17	23	35	2.6

9a.

People have to be provided with resources and strategies to assist themselves rather than having things done for them.

This results in:

- increasing personal sense of control
- having some power in a situation
- helping people to help themselves
- building independence.

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9b.

Caseworkers can empower clients by:

- providing information
- being non-judgemental
- informing clients of rights
- listening actively
- supporting client decisions

Students should be able to show a clear understanding of empowerment, which is another key term in this industry. There was some confusion about **doing** things for the client, rather than providing opportunities for the client to take control for themselves.

Question 10

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	1	1	6	7	19	66	4.4

10a.

Appropriate answers included:

- facial expressions
- hand gestures
- head movements
- assisting people.

Despite **nonverbal** being bolded in the question, some students gave examples of verbal communication.

10b.

Appropriate headings included:

- urgency
- name of message taker
- time
- date
- content of message.

The headings given needed to be different to those already given in the question.

Section B – Scenario

As in previous years, a scenario was given at the beginning of this section. It was obvious in some papers that students had simply responded to the question without applying the context of the given scenario. Some application of concepts is required to indicate the student's ability to apply theory to a particular situation. Identifying key terms and concepts from each part of the scenario seemed to assist students in their focus for answers. The first four questions were managed reasonably well.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	2	4	26	68	2.6

Appropriate reasons included:

- changes to opening times
- access to the facility
- appropriateness of equipment and activities
- economic considerations
- the condition of the centre.

An understanding of leisure theory would have assisted students to respond appropriately.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	10	13	28	50	2.2

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Appropriate answers included:

- bias
- voluntary nature of the survey
- limited participation
- select group of respondents
- requires a level of literacy to complete
- does not provide necessary information for considered decision making.

Knowing who the survey was for (from the scenario) set the parameter for appropriate answers.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	8	26	66	1.6

Appropriate answers included:

- interactive website
- community meetings
- select group meetings
- telephone questions
- interviews.

Students were asked to give data gathering examples that did **not** include a survey.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	4	6	17	21	52	3.1

4a.

Relevant personal information included:

- age
- ability/disability
- access to transport
- affordability.

Students were required to apply their knowledge of privacy and to show an understanding of the difference between personal details and personal information.

4b.

Personal information that was not relevant included:

- name
- address
- sexuality
- telephone number
- employment status.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	19	14	27	23	17	2.1

Appropriate answers included:

- changes to family structure and dynamics
- many more activities to choose from
- stresses in modern life
- desire for holistic approaches
- health and wellbeing
- fashion/trends
- work times.

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The key phrase in this question was 'how each reflects changes'. Some students did not appreciate or address this requirement. The best responses reflected recognition of the changes in society and included aspects such as those above.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	6	22	72	1.7

Because the definition given is not the only definition of 'family', students were able to define 'family' in different ways.

Most students were able to explain why the example given was unfair/discriminatory.

Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	22	27	27	24	1.5

A closed committee restricts participation, limits access, discriminates against some sections of the community and infringes rights. Some discussion of these points was expected.

This question dealt with the committee of management. Some students gave responses which recognised and discussed the principles of social justice but did not relate to the context. Such responses could not be awarded full marks.

Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	7	7	17	26	43	2.9

8a.

Areas of conflict which may arise include:

- creating a new group
- managing diverse expectations
- resistance to change and new ideas
- dealing with the stages of change
- managing conflict generated by opposing groups or differences in attitude.

8b.

Appropriate answers could have included:

- have an agenda
- have an appropriate meeting procedure
- have an elected chairperson
- place some limits on discussions.

This question required students to show some understanding of groups and meeting procedure. Most students were able to give reasons for conflict but suggesting strategies to reduce it seemed to cause difficulty. Suggestions along the lines of specific meeting procedures and conflict resolution processes were appropriate.

Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	21	18	30	31	1.7

A democratic group:

- has elected office bearers
- allows for dissent
- entitles everyone to a say/views carry equal weight/no one person has all the say
- allows for fair decision making processes/group decides on this in formative stages
- allows the group to make decisions for themselves
- is composed of people representing the various stakeholders

Acceptable answers related to the composition and/or operation of a democratic group. However, exactly what makes a group democratic was not clear to many students.

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Question 10

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	18	33	49	1.3

Students needed to show how the inclusion of a particular group would improve the decision making. For example, in relation to cultural background, people from different cultures would be able to educate their colleagues as to needs, practices and expectations of their group, allowing members to make decisions regarding opening times and offering closed sessions.

No marks were allocated for the selection of the criteria.

Question 11

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	10	12	18	32	28	2.6

11a.

Appropriate answers included:

- being listened to
- being able to be heard and make contributions
- feeling of self-worth at making positive steps
- skill development.

Specific reference to the 'young people on the committee' was necessary to indicate how they would be empowered by the process.

11b.

Appropriate answers included:

- modelling behaviour
- mentoring
- ownership
- representation
- appropriate activities.

This follow up required a broader consideration of the impact for young people beyond the committee.

Question 12

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	15	17	21	19	14	8	6	2.5

12a.

Better responses displayed the capacity to link the principle to why people would make more use of the centre. For example, 'People like to be able to choose where and when they are involved in recreation because of longer working hours and shared parenting responsibilities; extended opening hours can allow this to happen.'

The three outcomes identified were 'user-friendly opening times', 'affordable prices' and 'responsive centre management'. It was not sufficient to list as a response the principles of access, equity, participation and rights.

12b.

Students needed to mention things such as person-oriented, the opportunity for individual and group participation, enhancing health and wellbeing, access for all abilities, flexible hours and delivery and a diverse range of activities.

Leisure theory is a key concept studied and students were required to show their understanding of the theory by engaging in an appropriate discussion of it.

Section C – Electives

Students are expected to use correct terminology and be able to describe key concepts.

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Elective 1 – Children’s Services Stream

Questions 1–2

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	4	25	38	33	2.0

Question 1

Acceptable answers included:

- play dough
- sandpit/water experiences
- singing
- dancing
- clapping
- tactile/hands on experiences.

Sensory play is something which involves sight, touch, hearing, seeing or tasting. It was not sufficient to say touching ‘something’; a specific example was needed.

Question 2

Other types of children’s services included:

- Family Day Care
- YMCA holiday programs
- after school care.

Names of specific organisations were accepted as long as the full title of the service was given; for example, ‘St Martin’s Toy Library’ or ‘Kent Street Playgroup’. It was insufficient to simply write ‘St Johns’ and assume that the assessors were familiar with the local organisation.

Questions 3–4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
%	5	5	7	14	12	12	23	21	4.5

Question 3

Appropriate examples that could have been given included:

- dietary differences
- religious practices and beliefs
- traditions
- languages
- cultural taboos
- festivals and celebrations.

Although specific examples were accepted, there was an expectation that students would be familiar with this concept and relate the idea of recognising and catering for expressions of diversity to answers such as those above. ‘Having a culture day’ or ‘let them do what they like’ does not really reflect an understanding of the issue.

Question 4

- solitary play – plays alone
- parallel play – plays alongside others but does not engage
- associative play – plays with others
- cooperative play – sharing, observing roles and rules, working together to do a task

This related to stages of play and clearly required some definition of terms. Some students favoured their own interpretations while others confused the stages.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	3	0	3	7	7	16	19	21	24	5.9

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5a.

Appropriate methods included:

- running record
- anecdotal record
- work sampling documentation
- portfolios/files
- checklists.

'Watching them', 'write stuff down' and 'ask questions' were common responses that required more explanation to show their relevance as methods of observation.

This question was generally well answered

5b.

Appropriate examples included:

- to detect irregularities
- to chart progress
- to identify likes and dislikes
- to develop strengths and weaknesses
- to recognise areas of interest.

From the answers given it was evident that students knew **why** observations needed to be recorded.

5c.

Appropriate methods included:

- face to face (in formal and informal settings)
- via a communication book
- in written reports
- phone calls
- meetings.

This question was well answered.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	28	8	11	22	30	2.2

6a.

Developmental domains include:

- social
- emotional
- physical
- cognitive.

If this part was not answered correctly then the student was unable to obtain marks for part b.

6b.

Students were required to explain an age appropriate activity to develop a child within the chosen domain. No marks were given for selecting the age or domain.

Better answers gave a specific activity such as 'bobs and statues' and explained how it assisted coordination, balance, reaction time and agility in the developmental domain.

Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	9	10	18	22	20	21	3.0

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7a.

In initiating play, a child is able to:

- choose objects to play with
- choose their play space
- determine the way they make use of objects
- choose to play together or alone.

7b.

The role of the adult is to plan, provide, organise, engage or assist in any number of ways. Some appropriate suggestions included:

- have things they enjoy doing available for them to use
- use encouraging words in discussing their play
- play with the child and suggest alternatives and new ideas.

Elective 2 – Community Services Stream

The first set of questions dealt specifically with the principles of advocacy.

Questions 1–2

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	17	24	31	29	1.7

Question 1

Students needed to name an organisation that has an obvious link to advocacy. Grampians Disability and Advocacy Service was more appropriate than an example such as St Ethel's. Even though St Ethel's may well offer the service, it would probably have a longer title (for example, St Ethel's Family Services). Students need to be aware that assessors will not know vague references to local organisations, and therefore must be explicit in their responses.

Question 2

Do not speak for someone:

- if you aren't asked to
- when they can do it themselves
- if there is a conflict of interest.

This question was about recognising disempowering behaviour. Answers such as those above were accepted.

Questions 3–4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	16	17	21	21	24	2.2

Question 3

The types of responses expected included:

- to assist the client in resourcing
- to provide advice
- to identify and clarify issues
- to inform the client of rights.

'Empowerment' was the key aspect of this question.

Question 4

Advocacy is trying to get the person's rights upheld and mediation is working towards getting an outcome that satisfies both parties.

Responses needed to make some distinctions between the processes of advocacy and mediation. Two separate aspects were necessary for two marks.

Questions 5–6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	16	17	27	21	18	2.1

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Question 5

Appropriate answers identified a group affected by unfair decisions or rules; for example, class action against James Hardie Industries, special needs clients in a similar situation, or a delegation from user groups of a community facility who share a common issue.

Many students did not manage this question well and referred to 'sporting groups' or 'groups of people'.

Question 6

Appropriate suggestions included:

- provide information
- explain rights
- assist with networking to other services
- provide moral support
- clarify rights
- assist with access to resources.

Students should have considered the list of roles and responsibilities of an advocate in their study.

Answers to the next set of questions about the concept of community development indicated a lack of application of the associated concepts

Questions 7–8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	20	17	30	21	11	1.9

Question 7

Characteristics included:

- upskilling
- education to help themselves
- focusing on the community
- empowering through action.

A community development approach is one of the models considered in CHCCD12D competency.

Question 8

Casework is personal, the relationships are more defined and are designed for short term application; community development is longer-term, has a community focus and considers change for the benefit of the greater good.

Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	21	53	26	1.1

The role of a community is ownership, taking responsibility, engaging with people and to involve without exclusion.

Students should consider how community issues are dealt with.

Question 10

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	3	2	6	20	30	39	3.9

10a.

Students had to name three specific organisations and numerous examples were given and accepted; for example, 'the Uniting Church Tennis Club' and 'the Ringwood Lion's Club'.

As 'friends and family' was part of the question, this was not accepted.

10b.

Characteristics which define a community include:

- common goals
- common beliefs

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- dress/appearance
- common gathering place.

This question required students to elaborate on the community identified in part a.

Question 11

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	11	18	22	21	17	10	2.5

11a.

Answers needed to reflect the enhancement of awareness about social justice principles; for example, strengthening people to speak for themselves, providing them with skills, giving them strategies to assist themselves.

11b.

Ways of assessing a project include:

- get feedback
- identify skill improvement
- whether there are increased opportunities
- whether the community is able to manage on its own.

Students seemed to be unsure of this process, indicating uncertainty about both community development and advocacy, hence limited examples were provided and measures of success not clear.