



**2007** **VCE VET Dance GA 2: Performance examination**

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

**Selection of Solos**

The selection of the two solos is very important and it is recommended that students consider their choices carefully to enable them to demonstrate a range of skills in all criteria. Although interpretation of styles can be broad, in order to ensure that their students are not disadvantaged, teachers should give special consideration to addressing any criteria that are not overtly inherent in the selected style; for example, falling in ballet or tap and locomotion in some genres of jazz.

**Dress requirements**

Students need to ensure that their grooming is appropriate for the context – a performance examination. Hair should be neat and not covering the face. Jewellery, unless part of the conventions of the dance style, is not recommended. Students should wear appropriate clothing that enables their body lines to be clearly seen and allows them to move freely and safely. When presenting their solos, students may wear garments specific to their selected dance style (for example, a ballet tutu); however, marks are not given for costume. Attire such as over-long trousers and full-length, non-transparent skirts are not suitable as they conceal the body lines. As part of safe dance practice, appropriate dance footwear for the selected style must be worn when performing the solos; socks are not appropriate. Tap plates need to be secured to ensure clarity of beats and to ensure the floor is not damaged. A number of students presented in 2007 with inappropriate footwear for their nominated style. Bare feet are not appropriate for ballet. Some students presented for the examination wearing class uniforms with descriptive information such as their name and school. This is not appropriate.

**Music Preparation**

The recording(s) accompanying the performance must be of a good quality, enabling both the students and assessors to hear without distortion. It is recommended that students record their music at the beginning of a new audio cassette tape with sufficient 'lead in' time. Students should also bring a spare cassette tape that has a second recording of the music. It is important that students have their music cued when assessors enter the assessment room in order to avoid unnecessary delay. Students should use the 'mark through' time prior to the assessment to cue their music and check volume levels as well as orientate themselves in the performance area. 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.

All recorded music accompanying the student's performance should be provided on cassette tape. There are still some students who use CDs, which are not acceptable as they may 'jump' or not play at all. This requirement is included in the information which accompanies the Student Advice Slips sent to schools in Term 3.

**Safe Dance**

Teachers should ensure that the dances they select are within the students' physical capabilities and can be safely executed. The knowledge, understanding and application of safe dance principles should be given due consideration during the process and in technique classes. This is of particular importance with some genres of jazz that contain repertoire requiring students to balance on their shoulders and head.

**Other Advice**

The dance solos must be presented as an uninterrupted performance. Students should be sufficiently familiar with their solos to ensure that they can complete them without any memory lapses. Teachers can assist in this matter by ensuring that students' planning allows sufficient time for both learning and rehearsing the solos so that technical proficiency is addressed. If the performance is interrupted for any reason, the student should continue performing as soon as possible. The music should not be turned off unless the student clearly indicates to the assessors that he/she does not wish to continue with his/her performance. Students playing the music must not interfere or interact in any way with the student being assessed.

Students must bring to the examination their signed Performance Program Sheet. This form should be signed by the teacher – it is not appropriate for students or parents to sign it.

Spatial orientation was generally good, with students presenting their solos at a reasonable distance from the assessors.



### The Task

The task is designed to assess students' technical ability and interpretive skills in performance. The two dances must not be in the same style and each should be presented as a single, uninterrupted performance. Solo repertoires that involve considerable time spent holding a pose or waiting for a music change are not appropriate. In some ballet variations students spent the first quarter of their two-minute solo on an entrance consisting solely of a pose arabesque, grand promenade and static position. This would seem disproportionate as the task is designed to assess the student's **technical ability and interpretive skills in performance**. Although the solos can be between two and seven minutes in duration, those over three and a half minutes can sometimes compromise student performance in the criteria that assesses stamina.

Excessive repetition of movement phrases within the structure of the selected solo repertoire pieces may limit students' ability to show a range of movements, as required by criteria 1–7.

Students who presented accomplished solos demonstrated a high level of technical skill in their selected dance styles. Their solo repertoire pieces allowed them to demonstrate a range of movements in each of the criteria and excellent performance presentation.

Low-scoring performances lacked technical application. The range of movements was often limited or the movements selected were not stylistically consistent with the stated dance style. These students generally lacked presentation skills and some were unable to complete their solo as an uninterrupted performance. These students often lacked the physical strength to execute the falls and elevations in the selected choreography.

### The Solos

Each student is assessed on two solos learnt from the dance repertoire of a choreographer/teacher. The dances should be between two and seven minutes in duration and in two distinct styles selected from ballet, jazz, contemporary, social, tap, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander styles, or any other nominated culturally specific style. The selected styles should have been nominated previously and should be stated on the student's examination advice slip. The dances selected should allow students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge developed in the following modules from the Certificate II in Dance:

- VBJ677 Dance Technique – Elevation
- VBJ678 Dance Technique – Turning
- VBJ679 Dance Technique – Falling
- VBJ680 Dance Technique – Locomotion
- VBJ682 Dance Repertoire – Solo.

### Interpretation of Criteria

In order to distinguish between levels of performance in the demonstration of various skills, a common understanding of the term 'skill' must be reached. 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.

The dances selected must include movements in each of the technique areas: elevation, turning, falling and locomotion. This is taken into account when allocating scores. A good guide would be approximately three different types of movement for each of the criteria. If a student's dance does not include a range of movements in each of these areas they will score a lower mark in the relevant criterion. Similarly, if the student's execution of the movements is not proficient in one or more of the technical areas they will score a lower mark. Therefore, the works selected must be technically challenging for the student but within their technical expertise. A number of the dances presented consisted of only a few phrases that were repeated to meet the two-minute time requirement. Although this can be a legitimate choreographic device, care needs to be taken to ensure that a range of movements for each criterion are demonstrated. This was not always the case.

## SPECIFIC INFORMATION

### Assessment Criteria

The criteria for the award of grades are designed to assess performance skills and a range of technical movement skills and are used for direct assessment. Each criterion is weighted equally and is marked on an eight-point scale (0–7).



Listed below are the assessment criteria that are used in assessing both solo performances. Also given are aspects of technique consistent with each selected dance style. The first seven criteria address students' technique, while next five criteria address interpretation.

## Technique

### 1. Posture and alignment

This includes correct posture, such as the appropriate use of muscle tone and the safe placement and alignment of the spine, shoulder girdle, hip, knee and ankle joints. The focus is on the head and body. In general, posture was satisfactory and appropriate to the selected style.

### 2. Bodyline

This includes demonstrated skill in creating appropriate bodylines and shapes using both upper and lower body parts. It is important that both upper and lower body shapes are equally considered. In some cases one area was weaker than the other; for example, the student showed neat footwork but their arm lines lacked definition, or they had well placed arms but untidy footwork.

### 3. Elevation

This includes demonstrated skill in the safe use of elevation techniques involving a range of different elevations with safe take off and landing techniques.

Teachers are reminded that the selected dance should allow the student to demonstrate a range of elevations in their solo. While this may be more overt in some styles than others, it is suggested that each solo allow the student to show a minimum of three different types of elevation; for example, from two feet to two feet, from one foot to two feet and from one foot to one foot. Aspects of safe dance, including maintaining body alignment and the correct techniques in propelling the body into the air and landing softly through the hips, knees, ankles and feet, should be addressed in the rehearsal period and reinforced in technique classes.

### 4. Turning

This includes demonstrated skill in the safe use of a range of turning movements whilst maintaining balance, flexibility, transference of weight, coordination and control and articulation of individual body parts in an integrated manner. The selected dance must allow the student to demonstrate their ability to turn in a number of ways. A dance lacking in this aspect limits the student's opportunity to fully address this criterion.

### 5. Falling

The selected dance should allow the student to safely demonstrate a number of ways of falling. It is appreciated that some styles (for example, ballet) will not have a broad range of falling actions as part of the repertoire, but changes of level both upwards and downwards are possible. The execution of falls should involve balance, flexibility, transference of weight, coordination and control and articulation of body parts in a safe integrated manner.

### 6. Locomotor

Students need to demonstrate a range of locomotor skills involving balance, flexibility, transference of weight and coordination. For example, a dance that does not travel will not allow the student to score as highly as a dance that demonstrates a variety of pathways and patterns. Some of the lower-scoring performances were too static, with few movement pathways evident in the execution of the choreography.

### 7. Spatial arrangement

This criterion involves aerial and floor pathways. The dances selected must use a range of movement pathways; for example, forwards, backwards, sideways, diagonal and circular.

## Interpretation

### 1. Movement dynamics

This criterion involves the demonstration of a range of dynamic qualities as appropriate to the stylistic interpretation of the selected solo. Some modern and ballet solos lacked a range of movement dynamics. This can be addressed by carefully selecting pieces to ensure that a range of movement dynamics are inherent in the piece. Teachers should draw students' attention to the execution of their movement dynamics during rehearsals. Some of the lower-scoring performances demonstrated a limited range of movement dynamics. For such students, the teacher should ensure that a range of dynamic qualities are clearly evident in the choreography and not rely on subtle nuance and interpretation by the student.



## **2. Stamina**

This criterion relates solely to the student's ability to sustain their energy levels throughout their solo and maintain an appropriate level of physical stamina. Teachers should allow students sufficient time to rehearse their solos in order to build up their stamina prior to the examination.

## **3. Movement transitions**

This criterion refers to the way the student moves from one movement to another. Transitions need to be maintained throughout the dance. Movement transitions should be consistent with the selected dance style. Some movement transitions were unsafe, particularly when recovering from falls and landing from elevations.

A number of students experienced difficulties in this area and it is recommended that this aspect should be addressed in the rehearsal period.

## **4. Movement and music**

In general, students' interaction with the accompanying music was satisfactory. However, a few students did have difficulty in maintaining timing and tempo.

## **5. Performance presentation**

Students should present a solo that demonstrates projection through appropriate eye focus and the use of appropriate facial expressions. A number of students were not able to demonstrate their understanding and application of this criterion. Teachers should remind students that this is a performance examination and this criterion is not to be considered lightly. Performance skills should be developed during the rehearsal period and students should be given ample opportunity to perform their solos under performance conditions prior to the examination.