**VCE Music Investigation 2017–2022**

School-based assessment report

This report is provided for the first year of implementation of this study and is based on the School-based Assessment Audit and VCAA statistical data.

All official communications regarding the *Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Music Investigation Study Design* are provided in the *VCAA Bulletin*. It is recommended that teachers subscribe to the VCAA Bulletin to receive updated information regarding the study. Schools are required to alert teachers to information in VCAA Bulletins, especially concerning assessment schedules. Important Administrative Dates and assessment schedules are published on the School administration page of the VCAA website.

Unit 3

GENERAL COMMENTS

Responses to the Unit 3 School-based Assessment Audit for VCE Music Investigation indicate that many teachers are successfully making the transition from the previous study to the reaccredited *VCE Music Investigation Study Design 2017–2022*.

At first glance, it appears that the tasks for Unit 3 School-assessed Coursework are very similar to the Unit 3 tasks from previous years; however a review of tasks set by schools indicates that for many teachers the most challenging aspect has been to grasp the concept that there is no longer a direct connection between a single task and a single outcome. The chart on page 51 of the study design outlines the required tasks and indicates how each task relates to specific outcomes.

Almost all tasks submitted for the School-based Assessment Audit reflected the correct content and included requirements for students to compose/improvise or arrange original music exercises. At the time of audit, details about the way the tasks were to be assessed and weighted were not clear in the materials submitted by some schools. The *Advice for Teachers* illustrates ways in which tasks can be designed and assessed. The Investigation Topic is central to each task as it connects aspects of the study relating to understanding and listening, composing and performance and reflects the nature of Music Investigation, as a ‘portfolio’ study. The objective of the Unit 3 tasks is to ‘assess the depth and breadth of students’ understanding of the performance practices, stylistic characteristics and contextual issues’ relevant to their chosen Investigation Topic.

Students undertake three School-assessed Coursework tasks for Unit 3 Music Investigation. Teachers need to ensure that instructions to students for the gathering of materials, composition/improvisation/arrangement of exercises, and planning of a performance program and associate technical work includes a broad outline of the way the three different outcomes are assessed across the three tasks.

For all tasks, teachers must inform students not only of the format and structure of the task, but also about how it will be assessed (for example by providing a rubric that outlines the assessment criteria and weighting of each aspect of the task). The task description from the study design should be included in the instructions developed by the school. Information about how student work will be authenticated should also be provided in the task instructions.

The material submitted revealed teachers’ care in designing and writing tasks to suit the needs of students in their classes, and to cater for the potentially very varied Investigation Topics that can be found in the one class of students.

When completing the audit questionnaire, teachers are advised to prepare their responses using the question summary before they begin. Some questions may require consultation with colleagues, for example, locating the school provider number or details of the school redemption policy.

Authentication

Teachers need to be aware of the authentication requirements set out in the *VCE Administrative Handbook*. Authentication is not usually an issue in those parts of the tasks where students are performing or answering viva voce questions, however any notes used should be authenticated before the assessment takes place. Some schools have been setting the research undertaken over a long period for Outcome 1 as the assessment task, resulting in a situation that could lead to authentication concerns. Research can be gathered, and then used as the basis to complete an assessed report, answering questions not provided in advance of the assessment, thereby minimising any authentication issues. Some schools have set the composition, improvisation or arrangement of original music exercises as work to be completed outside the classroom, sometimes in consultation with instrumental teachers. Frequent questioning of the student, and submission of drafts along the way, where teachers can see gradual development of the exercises assists with authenticating the work.

Specific information

Unit 3 coursework

Task 1

The first task, a report that includes written, audio and visual components, is based on work developed over an extended period of investigation and research.

This task draws on Outcome 1: Develop understanding of practices and issues that inform performance of works that are representative of a selected music style, tradition and/or genre relevant to the Investigation Topic).

Task type options

This task contributes 40 out of 100 marks allocated to School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3.

Once students have established their Investigation Topics, most schools allow them a long period in which to gather information, find representative works, experiment with performance techniques, research recordings and video of performances, interview musicians, and find out as much as they can to inform their performance of works. Some schools have used this as the task, which is both difficult to authenticate, and involves assessment of a larger body of work than the ‘snapshot’ of a student’s understanding described in the task outline. A task of this size creates undue workload issue for students and teachers.

This investigation phase needs to take place during the teaching and learning program and students will use findings from the research to respond to the assessment tasks. Students include conclusions from their research in addition to examples they have provided in their report. Some schools are successfully setting an assessment task to take place across a couple of double periods, with questions provided on the day, and access to notes and recordings to assemble a ‘multimedia report’. Detailed information about the task design can be found on page 56 of the *Advice for Teachers*.

Assessment

As the *Advice for Teachers* for this study was not available at the start of the school year, most schools adapted their assessment criteria and performance descriptors from the previous assessment handbook. Helpful performance descriptors for the 2017-21 study can be found on page 62 of the *Advice for Teachers*. The key to the marking scale is found on page 64.

Task 2

A presentation that includes:

* Performance of exercises created by the student for Outcome 2
* Demonstration of material from a technical work program developed for Outcome 3
* Commentary that describes relevance to the investigation Topic of the exercises created for Outcome 2 and the material from the Outcome 3 technical program.

This task draws on Outcome 2: *Compose, improvise and/or arrange original music exercises and document and discuss music characteristics and performance practices relevant to the Investigation Topic*, and Outcome 3: *Present a performance of music works and communicate knowledge and understanding of a specific music style, tradition and/or genre relevant to the Investigation Topic*.

This outcome contributes 40 out of 100 marks allocated to School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3.

Most schools had taken note of the new requirement to include some exercises composed/improvised/arranged by the student in this assessment task. One school specifically asked that students more closely relate all exercises to works chosen in their performance program, and to include exercises devised by themselves (not published) to help master identified difficult passages in these works. This helped to streamline the task to be of the most relevance and benefit to the student.

Assessment

A few schools included opportunities for students to perform the works being studied for the end of year Performance Assessment in with this task. Please note that while performance of the end of year program is excellent experience, it should be made very clear to students that this is not part of the school-assessed performance task.

The descriptors on pages 62–63 and summary of marks on page 64 of the *Advice for Teachers* are a useful guide to understanding how assessment of the two outcomes can occur in the one task.

Task 3

Responses to questions about material presented in the report and the presentation.

This task draws on Outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

Questions posed at this stage should clarify and extend material in the report and the presentation, affording each student the opportunity to express their knowledge and understanding as it relates to their Investigation Topic from the perspective of a performer.

Some schools have split this task, so that the questions about the report occur at around the same time as the report, and the questions about the presentation occur at the presentation. Others have taken this questioning as a separate final task.

Assessment

Whichever way the school decides to set the task, it is important that the overall weighting of the marks is compliant with the schedule on page 64 of the *Advice for Teachers*, and enables teachers to give the total marks for Task 1 out of 40, Task 2 out of 40 and Task 3 out of 20 when required to do so.

It is also important that students are made clear of the structure of the assessment tasks, the contributing elements of Outcomes 1, 2 and 3, and the performance descriptors.

Unit 4

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Unit 4 School-based Assessment Audit questionnaire responses for VCE Music Investigation indicate that teachers have transitioned to the revised study design very efficiently. Most teachers have embraced the composition/arrangement/improvisation outcome as a real opportunity for students to further develop their understanding of their own Investigation Topic in the scored work required for Outcome 2. In Unit 4 students are also engaged in preparing for their performance program (Outcome 3), and in preparing a Performer’s Statement (Outcome 1).

Each outcome has been designed to allow the student to continue this exploration of their Investigation Topic, and some schools have documented creative ways of gradually reaching the Unit 4 End of Year Recital (the culmination of Outcomes 1 and 3) in their coursework outlines. This has been achieved mostly through considered use of the wording directly sourced from the study design.

The foundation of the Music Investigation Study is found in Unit 3, where students have already had the opportunity to select an Investigation Topic, and to research their area, present a technical program highlighting challenges relating to their Topic, and respond to questions about their report and presentation for the 3 school-assessed tasks (based on Outcomes 1, 2 and 3).

Unit 4 builds on this foundation, and in terms of School-assessed Coursework the task relates to Outcome 2. It is however also important that schools support students by providing suitable opportunities for students to develop their performance program, and Performer’s Statement. In many schools the student is most closely supported in this work by their instrumental teacher.

Teachers are reminded that they must inform students of the form and structure of the assessment task, and how it will be assessed.

Authentication

Teachers need to be aware of the authentication requirements set out in the *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*. Authentication is not usually an issue in those parts of the tasks where students are performing or answering viva voce questions, however any notes used should be authenticated before the assessment takes place. The Unit 4 School-assessed work should take place over an extended period, so where composition/arrangement/improvisation is being developed beyond the classroom, teachers should be seeing drafts of the developing work, questioning students and seeing work in progress throughout that period. Students from several schools are documenting their work via a composer’s journal (real or virtual), in which their process and progress is visible.

Specific information

Unit 4 coursework

In Unit 4, students prepare a Performer’s Statement to accompany the end-of-year performance program (Outcome 1), they compose/improvise/arrange and perform an original music work and explain how it is characteristic of a music style, tradition and/or genre relevant to the Investigation Topic (Outcome 2), and they rehearse and perform works relating to the Investigation Topic for inclusion in their performance program (Outcome 3).

Outcome 2 is the basis of the School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4, and is worth 100 marks, contributing 20% of the study score for Music Investigation. It entails two tasks to be assessed separately:

Task 1: composition, improvisation or arrangement AND performance of a work (80 marks).

Task 2: an explanation of how the work is representative of a music style or genre relevant to the Investigation Topic (20 marks).

The composition/improvisation/arrangement process should take place over an extended period, and some teachers have developed lessons and timelines that help to scaffold the process for students. Note that it is important that all students are given the opportunity to develop works that are suitably complementary to their own instrument and Investigation Topic.

It is important that the work developed should also be rehearsed and performed, and that the ‘explanation’ component is given due consideration. Many schools have built the performance of the composition/improvisation/arrangement into a ‘practice recital’ of all the works being prepared for the end of year performance. The explanation of the work which has been developed for Outcome 2 is then given as a prepared statement to the audience at the recital. It is important to make sure that students understand which parts of such a recital are being assessed formally for their Unit 4 coursework. It is also important that each student presents their work under the same conditions.

Other examples of ways that teachers are assessing this are in class performances of the rehearsed works, with the teacher asking everyone a series of questions which they respond to orally or in writing, or preparing a statement to introduce their performance after receiving a series of questions from the teacher in a prior class. Again, it is important that each student in the class is given the same opportunities to respond.

The *Advice for Teachers*, pages 59 and 60, offers ideas for planning and structuring the task.

Assessment

Pages 65 and 66 of the *Advice for Teachers* offers performance descriptors for this task, and the Marking Scale, which is based on the Outcome contributing 80 + 20 = 100 marks.

A specific number of marks should be assigned to each component of a task. Most schools have used criteria for marking:

Task 1 (Total 80 marks):

* Composition/Improvisation/Arrangement
* Documentation
* Rehearsal Processes
* Performance.

Task 2 (Total 20 marks)

* Explanation.

The weighting of each criterion should be indicated on the information provided to students. Each criterion in Task 1 can be weighted differently, for example, criteria relating to the actual work and the performance might be weighted more heavily than the criteria relating to documentation and rehearsal.