

# 2019 VCE Dance performance examination report

## General comments

In 2019, the Dance Solo performance examination comprised two components designed to allow students to demonstrate a range of technical and choreographic skills. Component 1 consisted of a skills-based solo and component 2, a cohesive composition.

A number of students presented solos that were shorter than the prescribed minimum time limit of 2.5 minutes, which affected the student's ability to fully develop the work and meet the assessment criteria at the highest possible level.

Overall, students were well-groomed and prepared for examination conditions.

## Specific information

### Unit 3 – Skills-based solo

In terms of intention, the majority of students based their solo on the criteria. Where a secondary intention was chosen, students often allowed the exploration of the intent to become the focus of the choreography, which impeded the range of movement categories and physical skills presented.

**Criteria 1 to 4** required students to demonstrate control and/or maintenance of all physical skills within a range of movement categories.

It is important to note that the choreography should allow the opportunity to demonstrate a range of skills that includes floor, aerial, travelling and axial through a range of movement choices. Students who spent the majority of the time on the floor, with much less time on higher levels or vice versa, limited their ability to demonstrate a range of skills in terms of strength, coordination and flexibility. Also, students who consistently presented the same type of elevation or turn did not show a 'range' of ways to present that movement category, which impacted on the overall mark awarded.

In lower-scoring performances students demonstrated less ability to control alignment while executing a range of skills. At times, in an effort to attempt more complex movement categories, students pushed beyond their anatomical limitations or lost control of the torso, leading to an inconsistent alignment throughout the body.

Generally, students demonstrated safe dance practice and safe execution of movement. Inclusion of less risky movement was evident.

**Criteria 5 to 7** required students to demonstrate skill in the manipulation of each element of movement – time, space (shape) and energy – throughout the phrases and sections of the solo.

Quality work was defined by a skilled arrangement of the movement phrases through the manipulation of time, shape and energy to structure the sections. The dynamic range of the music often dictated or influenced the student's selection. In some cases, students were heavily

influenced by the speed and rhythm of the music, which limited the range of time combinations they presented. Incorporating a range of energy qualities generally enabled students to present a greater range of energy.

Generally the use of shape was explored to a greater extent than time or energy.

**Criterion 8** required students to demonstrate skill in the projection of the whole body to demonstrate artistry and communicate to the audience.

Students who confidently presented their work included fluid transitions between the phrases and sections, and used their eye-line to effectively communicate an artistic and expressive performance.

## Unit 4 – Cohesive composition solo

### Statement of Intention

As in previous years, students were asked to record the intention communicated throughout the different sections of the dance, identify the formal structure, and briefly comment on the main choreographic devices or motif used to structure the solo. The Statement of Intention is available as a VASS download and cannot be accessed on VCAA's website.

As the intention is the cornerstone of the composition, it's important that students clearly state the intention on the statement so assessors can identify and see it 'realised' throughout the performance.

At times, the written Statement of Intention affected the assessor's ability to understand what the dance was communicating throughout each section. Some students wrote a detailed overview that was difficult to follow; others provided a verbose backstory that was not necessary. The assessors were able to assess the student's solo against the written statement more effectively when the intention of each section of the dance was succinctly outlined within the set limit of 80–100 words.

Some students selected intentions that were too complex to be shown within the time frame. Further consideration needs to be given to the selection of an intention that can be realised within 2.5 to 5 minutes.

Students need to take care to identify a known choreographic formal structure such as binary, ternary, narrative, etc. When stating the formal structure students should accompany this with the number of sections they intend to present. No other information is required.

Students should be reminded to include a brief comment about how selected choreographic device(s) were used to structure and progress the intention. This information is useful in order to assess the degree to which students integrate and develop various devices throughout the work. This section of the statement must be completed.

**Criteria 1 to 3** required students to select and arrange movement vocabulary to create an appropriate formal structure and demonstrate skill in the manipulation of various choreographic devices to help structure the sections and communicate the intention.

While there were some outstanding choices made where student's intentions and movement selections were clear and sophisticated, some students did not present an intention that matched their movement selections and/or arrangement. Many students relied too heavily on the use of technical movements and/or the use of literal and gestural movements to communicate their intention.

At times, an over-reliance on the interaction with props or costume to arrange of movement vocabulary into a formal structure was evident. Some students created a clear first section; however, they neglected to develop the movement vocabulary to progress the intention and reflect

the stated formal structure. When the relationship between the movement sections and the choreographic structure was not evident, the potential to score highly in criterion 2 was diminished.

Students also didn't make clear links between the intention and the selection and arrangement of the choreographic devices. The devices needed to be integrated into each section and/or across the different sections to help effectively structure the composition and communicate the intention. Higher-scoring compositions demonstrated a consistency in terms of the way the devices were integrated and developed to support the formal structure and develop and resolve the intention.

**Criteria 4 to 7** required students to demonstrate skill in the manipulation of spatial organisation (level, direction, eye/body focus and dimension) to communicate the intention.

Often students did not score highly across these four criteria as the selections were not purposeful and the arrangement did not consistently support the intention. Some students seemed unaware that the use of space constituted half the marks awarded for this solo, and either used spatial organisation in irrelevant ways or overlooked manipulating one or more of the elements.

Generally, students demonstrated eye/body focus in more relevant ways in relation to the intention.

**Criterion 8** required students to demonstrate skill in the use of performance practices and artistry to communicate the intention to the audience.

Students often successfully projected their ideas. There was purpose and commitment in the communication of the intention, and they were able to deliver an artistic interpretation of their ideas.