VCE Music Contemporary Performance 2023–2027

Performance examination – End of year

Examination specifications

Overall conditions

The examination will be undertaken at a time and date to be set annually by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). [VCAA examination rules](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/Pages/ExaminationRules.aspx) will apply.

Examination Advice Slips with each student’s examination start time, date and venue will be made available by the VCAA in Term 3 as a VASS download.

Students presenting for assessment must be enrolled in VCE Music Contemporary Performance for the relevant year.

Students may present for assessment only **once**; however, they may perform as a non-assessed accompanist or ensemble performer in other VCE and VCE VET music performance examinations.

Examinations will be conducted in an acoustically suitable space selected by the VCAA. Suitable spaces will be selected for examinations that require large, fixed instruments, such as a pipe organ.

The examination will be assessed by a panel appointed by the VCAA.

The performance examination will contribute 50 per cent to the study score.

Content

The *VCE Music Study Design 2023–2027* (‘Units 3 and 4: Music contemporary performance’) is the document for the development of the examination.

All of the key knowledge and key skills that underpin Outcome 1 in Units 3 and 4, and the definitions in the ‘Cross-study specifications’ found on pages 13–19 of the study design, are examinable.

Format

The examination will take the form of a live performance of a program of music works. Students will be required to submit related examination documentation.

Each student presenting for assessment is required to present a live performance of works that demonstrate an understanding of music style, authentic performance conventions and a range of techniques.

Students presenting for assessment, in consultation with their enrolling education and training provider, are to select the works in the program and the instrument(s) they will use in their performance in accordance with the requirements of the examination.

Students presenting for assessment must arrive at the examination centre 30 minutes before their scheduled examination start time.

Performers will have a maximum of 30 minutes immediately prior to the examination to set up and/or complete any required warm-up activities and/or sound checks in the examination room.

There is no minimum length of performance time for this examination; however, performances must **not** exceed the following maximum lengths of performance time:

* 20 minutes for one assessed performer
* 25 minutes for 2 or 3 assessed performers
* 30 minutes for 4 assessed performers
* 35 minutes for 5 or 6 assessed performers

If the performance is still in progress when the maximum length of time has been reached, the assessors will stop the performance.

Students presenting for assessment may not leave the examination room during the examination.

The performance program

Students may present for assessment primarily as a soloist or primarily as an ensemble musician.

Students presenting for assessment will be required to nominate, in VASS, a principal instrument (for students presenting primarily as a soloist) or their intention to perform primarily as a member of an ensemble. Further details of ensemble groupings and instruments will be collected from schools during
Term 2.

Students presenting for assessment will be assessed on all instruments on which they perform during the examination.

Students presenting for assessment may use forms of notation appropriate to their performance.

The performance program:

* may include original works, for example works composed by the student or ensemble
* must **not** include works presented by the student for assessment in the scored component of any other VCE or VCE VET music examination.

Alternative instruments

If a student presenting for assessment wishes to play a principal instrument that does not have a VASS code, the student must be enrolled as playing an alternative instrument.

Students are not required to obtain approval to perform on an alternative instrument. The VCAA will contact schools to ascertain the details of the instrument before the assessment period begins.

Performance conditions

Students will present a live performance that includes the following:

* at least one work that is a reimagining of an existing work
* at least one ensemble work (with one or more additional live performers)
* at least one original work created by an Australian artist since 1990

It is possible for one work to fulfil more than one of these requirements.

Students presenting for assessment are required to submit to the assessors a completed Performer  [Statement of Expressive Intention](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/past-examinations/Pages/Music-Contemporary-Performance.aspx) that details:

* the program to be performed
* information about the reimagined work and how it has been manipulated.

In addition, supervising teachers will be required to document the development of the required reimagined work by completing a VCE Music Contemporary Performance [Authentication Form](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/past-examinations/Pages/Music-Contemporary-Performance.aspx), which can be found on the VCAA website. This form should be retained by the school but may be requested if the VCAA requires additional evidence to establish authenticity.

**Students presenting for assessment primarily in an ensemble performance** must be part of an ensemble containing between 2 and 8 concurrent performers, where the minimum number of students presenting for assessment is one and the maximum is 6.

**Students presenting for assessment primarily as a solo performer** may perform, for the solo component of the examination, either completely solo and/or accompanying themselves, and/or with a pre-recorded accompaniment, and/or with **one or more** non-assessed accompanists.

Accompaniment

Accompaniment may be provided live by **one or more** instruments, such as piano, another keyboard,
guitar, drum kit or another bass. The work of the student presenting for assessment must be clearly identifiable, particularly if a like instrument is accompanying (e.g. bass accompanying bass). Accompanists may change instruments during the examination.

Apart from the requirement to have at least one work with another live musician, students may use a
pre-recorded accompaniment for other works in the program. The recording may include sounds of one or more instruments. The recording may be purchased as a pre-recorded CD or students may present their own pre-recorded accompaniment. The backing track must not include a recording of the notated parts that are to be performed by the soloist. The content of the accompaniment will not be assessed. All recorded material used in the examination, with the exception of click tracks, must be audible to the assessors.

Non-assessed performers and accompanists

Non-assessed performers and accompanists must **not**:

* play the same instrumental part concurrently with a student presenting for assessment
* play the same unison/melodic line concurrently with a student presenting for assessment
* take a prominent role in a group’s presentation or group interaction
* announce works, count in, conduct, direct or lead the ensemble
* visually or audibly obscure the performance of students presenting for assessment
* improvise or take solos that significantly reduce the time for the students presenting for assessment.

Once the examination commences, non-assessed performers and accompanists:

* must enter the examination room only when they are required to perform
* may remain in the examination room until they have completed their part of the performance
* must leave once they are no longer required as part of the performance.

Audiences

Audiences will not be permitted in the examination room during the examination.

Examination documentation

Upon arrival at the examination centre, each student presenting for assessment must provide a copy of their Examination Advice Slip to verify their enrolment in VCE Music Contemporary Performance and personal identification showing their full name with a clear colour photograph.

All examination documentation will be made available by the VCAA to education and training providers with students enrolled in VCE Music Contemporary Performance for the year in question in Term 3.

Approved resources, materials and equipment

Piano

An acoustic piano will be provided at all venues.

Other instruments and equipment

Students may use any equipment that serves the artistic needs of their program (e.g. singers may choose to use a microphone with amplification suited to the performance space, and students playing stringed instruments may use bows appropriate to the works being performed).

Students presenting for assessment, non-assessed performers and accompanists must bring their own instrument(s) – other than acoustic pianos – for the live performance, including playback equipment for pre-recorded accompaniment, PA systems, amplifiers, leads and music stands.

All electronic instruments and equipment should be pre-set and tested prior to the examination. Batteries should be adequately charged. Provisions should be made for any instrument or equipment failure, including easy access to spare reeds, strings, cables, batteries, etc.

It should be noted that lighting, props or other elaborate staging will not be assessed and will not contribute to the assessment of the performance.

In addition to assessed and non-assessed performers, teachers, trainers and other personnel may provide assistance with unloading, setting up and packing up instruments and/or equipment before and/or after the examination.

Instruments available for students presenting primarily as a solo performer

The following will be made available to students whose enrolment in VASS indicates that they are performing primarily as a soloist. These will not be made available to non-assessed performers who may be performing with the soloist.

* Students presenting for assessment who have selected the **piano as their solo principal instrument** will have, at selected venues\*, the choice of playing a grand piano or an upright piano.
* Some percussion instruments, including a drum kit, will be provided for students who have selected **drum kit or percussion as their solo principal instrument**, at selected venues\*.

\*The list of selected venues will be available in the Music Contemporary Performance and VCE Music Repertoire Performance Examinations – Advice document on the VCAA website.

Overall sound

Electronic mixing or adjusting of the overall sound, including tone, volume and balance, is the responsibility of the student(s) presenting for assessment. Non-assessed accompanists or ensemble group performers may adjust the sound of their own instrument(s), as long as the adjustment does not adjust the sound of the instrument(s) of the student(s) presenting for assessment.

The volume of the performance must be within the limits prescribed by work health and safety (WHS) regulations as ‘safe’. The examination may be stopped if the assessors deem the volume of the performance to be at dangerous levels.

Assessment criteria

Each student presenting for assessment will be assessed on the extent to which their live performance demonstrates accomplishment of the assessment criteria. Criteria will be equally weighted.

All students will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. Compliance with the requirements of the task

The requirements of the program are stipulated in the ‘End-of-year performance examination’ section on page 51 of the *VCE Music Study Design 2023–2027*.

* at least one work that is a reimagining of an existing work
* at least one ensemble work (with one or more additional live performers)
* at least one original work created by an Australian artist since 1990
1. Skill in performing a range of music styles and/or characters through a program of works, as specified in the Performer Statement of Expressive Intention
* each work is performed fluently
* a range of music styles and/or characters is presented
1. Performs a diverse range of techniques to demonstrate control consistency and variation of duration throughout the program
* a diverse range of techniques appropriate to the instrument(s) is performed throughout the program and achieves an expressive outcome
* control of tempo, beat, metre and rhythm to play with appropriate groove and feel, as appropriate to the instrument or program of works
* control is maintained through tempo transitions
1. Performs a diverse range of tone production techniques, including quality, projection and variety of sound (tone production), as appropriate to the instrument throughout the program
* manipulating pitch, dynamics, tone colour and articulation to produce an appropriate sound for the instrument, work and style
* quality, projection and variety of sound (tone production), as appropriate to the instrument, throughout the program
1. Demonstrates ensemble techniques
* the program contains a range of textures and demonstrates a variety of interactions between the parts, including:
* the balance, empathy and synchronisation between instruments or between parts
* responding to real-time musical cues
1. Demonstrates control and variation of interpretation of the chosen program to exhibit an understanding of style, with evidence of personal interpretive ideas
* creation of purposeful interpretation through artistic variation of expressive elements, including tempo, phrasing, articulation, sound and dynamics
* communication beyond the source material (notation and/or reference recording of a work) by using appropriate nuances and performance techniques
1. Reimagining of an existing work, manipulating elements of music and concepts in an informed manner to achieve expressive intentions and personal voice, as described in the Performer Statement of Expressive Intention
* demonstration of performance decisions described in the Performer Statement of Intention, which may include aspects of creativity in interpretation, and manipulation of structure, instrumentation, and/or other elements and concepts
* communication through the performance of the stated expressive intentions
1. Demonstrates appropriate performance decisions relating to the context of the performance, the physical space, and any equipment and technologies used
* use of poise and focus throughout the performance, as appropriate to the musical and physical context
* the ability to adjust to performance conditions
* the structure and continuity of the program as a whole
* the management of any equipment or technologies used

Relevant references

The following resources should be referred to in relation to the VCE Music Contemporary Performance examination:

* *VCE Music Study Design 2023–2027* (‘Units 3 and 4: Music contemporary performance’)
* VCAA Bulletin