

# 2021 VCE Persian oral external assessment report

## General comments

The Persian oral examination assesses students' knowledge and skills in using spoken language. The examination has two sections – a conversation of approximately 7 minutes, during which students converse with the assessors about their personal world, and a discussion of approximately 8 minutes.

It should be noted that during the oral examination:

- students may be asked a variety of questions of varying levels of difficulty. Questions may also be asked in a different order from the one students anticipate
- assessors may interrupt students to ask questions during either section of the examination; this should be regarded as a normal process in a discussion
- assessors may also repeat or rephrase questions
- normal variation in assessor body language is acceptable.

Students are reminded that they must be prepared to use language spontaneously in unrehearsed situations. Students are not expected to be 'experts'; they are expected to have learnt strategies in order to respond to unexpected questions. It would be valuable for students to learn phrases such as, 'I have not studied this aspect of the subtopic, but I think ...', 'I don't know, but I feel ...' and 'I am not sure about this question, but I know ...'

Students will be assessed in both the conversation and the discussion in communication, content and language. The criteria are published on the VCAA website. It is important that all teachers and students be familiar with the criteria and descriptors, and that students use them as part of their examination preparation. This will help students to engage in a lively and interesting exchange with assessors. Although there are similarities between the assessment criteria for the conversation and discussion sections of the examination, the criteria assess two very different aspects of performance. Students who are well prepared are generally able to demonstrate their abilities and proficiency in the language.

## Section 1 – Conversation

Section 1 consists of a general conversation about the student's personal world, for example, school and home life, family and friends, interests and aspirations. It is an organic conversation about the student's personal world. These examples provide students with a basis for preparing a range of interesting and engaging ideas about their personal world, so that they can engage in a spontaneous discussion with the assessors about things that interest them.

All students began the conversation using a culturally appropriate greeting.

Most students demonstrated a very good level of understanding of the subtopics covered and were able to engage with the assessors effectively. Many students carried the conversation forward and elaborated on their ideas and opinions. Responses that scored highly expanded on comments and introduced new, relevant ideas. These students had a very good range of appropriate vocabulary and very good sentence structure.

Responses that did not score well included one-word answers to assessors' questions. Some students struggled to cope with unexpected questions. The most common errors involved the use of English vocabulary.

## Section 2 – Discussion

Following the conversation, the student indicates to the assessors the subtopic chosen for detailed study and, in no more than one minute, briefly introduces the main focus of their subtopic, alerting assessors to any objects brought to support the discussion. Suitable objects include photographs, maps or diagrams, and should include no text or very little text. The support material must have minimal writing, which includes only a heading, name or title.

The one-minute introduction should give assessors an indication of the area of discussion. The purpose is for students to briefly introduce their chosen subtopic; it is not an opportunity for students to list all their information or texts.

The focus of the discussion is to explore aspects of the language and culture of communities in which Persian is spoken, with the student being expected to make reference to the texts studied.

The choice of subtopic for the detailed study is very important. It should be an engaging subtopic that motivates students to become familiar with the content and vocabulary needed, and to elaborate on information, ideas and opinions. It is important that students and teachers select materials for the detailed study carefully so that students are exposed to a variety of views. The type of texts used by students should vary in complexity and be in Persian so that students can become aware of key vocabulary related to their subtopic. Students should be able to draw on the texts they have studied and make links between the texts to support, expand on and explore opinions and ideas on the subtopic and different aspects of the texts. Students should be able to relate this to the Persian-speaking community.

The majority of students demonstrated great skill in using effective communicative strategies for carrying the discussion forward with spontaneity and for maintaining the discussion.

Responses that scored highly showed evidence of preparation for the detailed study. Students were able to discuss their chosen subtopic in depth. They used a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Students who were passionately involved with their subtopic performed outstandingly.

Some students had not completed sufficient research into their subtopic; they struggled to provide responses when detailed and analytical questions were asked, which limited the flow of the discussion.

Many students used a good range of vocabulary and well-structured sentences and expressed themselves in an appropriate way. Some responses demonstrated poor sentence structure, omitted verbs or confused verb tenses (e.g. past and future). The most common grammatical mistake was adding the suffix 'ها' to nouns that are already in the plural form.

Most students responded with appropriate intonation, stress and tempo. Generally, the clarity of expression, the speed of delivery and level of pronunciation were good.

There was a variety of subtopics selected for discussion. The subtopics covered a wide range of areas including, but not limited to, aspects of lives in Iran and Afghanistan, historical places, famous people and the environment.