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2008 VCE VET Community Services GA 2: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

There was a considerable increase in the number of students who sat for the exam in 2008.

Student responses showed improved understanding of the essential underpinning knowledge and skills from the compulsory units of competence; however, it appeared that some were not able to explore them in a wider context (i.e. they could only apply their knowledge and skills to children's services and not to a broader community situation).

The paper continued the format of previous years and had three sections: Section A contained short answer questions based on core units of competence, Section B consisted of short answer questions that were based on a scenario, and Section C contained questions that were based on the two elective streams – Children's Services and Community Services.

There was an even spread between the Children's Services and Community Services electives in student responses, but again some students chose to write on **both** elective options rather than select **one**, as was required. In this instance, marks for the best answered elective were calculated in the total.

Students are expected to understand, and be able to apply, the basic principles of community services work. It is therefore expected that they would be able to refer to Occupational Health and Safety policies and procedures, legislation, cultural diversity and communication skills, in general, as well as specific, terms.

Careful reading of the scenario in Section B was vital to providing an appropriate response. Key terms appeared to have been overlooked in the creation of answers. This section required student application of knowledge and skills in an unfamiliar context, but dealt with common elements and key learning outcomes from the units of competence.

Knowledge of industry terminology and fundamental concepts are examined in the elective responses. While students continued to display recognition of terms, they were not always able to provide a reasoned or clear explanation.

Use of an industry example is not sufficient in providing an appropriate definition. All students should be able to apply the community services core units of competence across the range of community services areas. Teaching and learning strategies should reflect this.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

For each question, an outline answer (or answers) is provided. In some cases the answer given is not the only answer that could have been awarded marks.

Section A – Short answer questions

This section focuses on key concepts, definitions and the underlying principles of community services, therefore students must be able to produce responses that are relevant and accurate.

Question 1a-b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	13	1	7	79	2.5

1a.

Students were required to name one organisation that provided services to young people. Kids Help Line, Burnleigh Community Centre and Highview after school care were appropriate responses. Responses should have shown a connection between a specific service and the broader community service sector.

1b.

Services could have included:

- counselling
- health education
- housing assistance
- leisure activities
- support and activities.

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Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	12	38	50	**1.4**

Some students assumed that more people were essential for improved client outcomes. Teamwork provides for a broader range of options, including:

- sourcing the best people for the job
- having access to a wider range of services
- utilising a number of network options
- having knowledge and expertise available.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	19	31	50	**1.3**

OH&S is a fundamental principle of this VCE VET program. Students were asked to show an understanding of the difference between health and safety issues.

Appropriate responses included:

- passive smoking in the workplace
- contagious illnesses
- stress
- safe food handling
- toxic fumes.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	6	21	73	**1.7**

A worker's responsibilities to maintain a healthy workplace include:

- reporting hazards and risks
- following correct procedures
- behaving appropriately
- not coming to work when sick
- washing hands.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	Average
%	22	78	**0.8**

Taking all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of clients, colleagues and self.

The key word was 'reasonable'.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	15	42	43	**1.3**

Confidentiality can be maintained in a number of ways, including:

- not talking about clients outside of the work environment
- only discussing clients with those who need the information
- conducting interviews in a private place.

Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	15	41	43	**1.3**

Privacy is about secure record keeping and storage of personal data and only gathering information that is necessary for your job. Answers that dealt with the requirements of privacy laws were acceptable.

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There continued to be confusion about these two fundamentals. Students need to be clear that privacy is about procedure and confidentiality is the practice of it.

Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	25	34	42	**1.2**

Participation is a part of social justice when:

- all people can join in
- all voices can be heard
- the people involved have ownership
- those involved are part of the decision making process.

Question 9

Marks	0	1	Average
%	25	75	**0.8**

Any act of parliament relating to community services work was acceptable. For example, the *Equal Opportunity Act 1995*, the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and the *Privacy Act 1988*.

Question 10

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	1	1	6	9	42	41	**4.1**

- Statement i. Procedure
- Statement ii. Policy
- Statement iii. Policy
- Statement iv. Procedure
- Statement v. Procedure

Question 11

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	7	33	61	**1.6**

Cultural diversity benefits clients in a number of ways. Appropriate responses included:

- staff have a better understanding of client issues
- a variety of language skills is available
- the level of tolerance may be greater
- different perspectives can be provided
- a less alienating environment
- a greater appreciation of diversity.

Question 12

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	20	29	51	**1.3**

Key aspects of empowerment include:

- personal sense of power or control
- helping people to help themselves
- skill development
- supporting client decisions.

Question 13

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	5	14	82	**1.8**

Active listening includes:

- leaning forward
- nodding head
- eye contact
- raising eyebrows

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- acknowledging the speaker in a positive manner.

Section B – Scenario

It was important for students to read the scenario carefully, and to locate and understand the key terms and the context of the questions that followed.

Question 1
Question 1a-b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	33	17	14	12	24	**1.8**

1a.
The appropriate leadership style was democratic or consensus.

1b.
Acceptable answers included:

- hearing all viewpoints
- participation in the process
- giving equal weight to all points of view
- valuing contributions
- aim to reach a mutual decision.

An incorrect response to Question 1a. did not exclude students from receiving marks for appropriate responses in Question 1b. It was important that students were able to show how the style promotes effective communication.

Question 2a-c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	3	7	16	22	24	16	13	**3.6**

There were three parts to this question which asked students to consider the roles and responsibilities of each of the named stakeholders from the scenario. Some students incorrectly considered the roles and responsibilities from a general community services perspective.

2a.
Community worker

- to provide information to the committee
- facilitates meetings
- provides access to resources
- provides guidance/support
- assists in the decision making process
- ensures all members of the community are represented

2b.
Local council

- provides specialist knowledge in planning, permits, engineering or legal aspects
- provides resources or funding
- provides a venue
- pays the community worker
- supports the project

2c.
The local community

- cooperate with each other
- contribute to decision making
- gathers and analyses information
- utilises the facility
- provides information about the community
- identifies and expresses needs

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Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	3	27	69	**1.7**

Reasons why young people should be included on the management committee included:

- to identify specific youth needs
- to ensure their rights are upheld
- because they are part of the community
- to provide a youth perspective
- to ensure they feel ownership of the project.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	10	16	74	**1.7**

Responses about encouraging young people to use the pool could have been general, such as:

- user-friendly opening times
- specific activities or clubs
- appropriate pricing
- giving them input into development of programs/rules for use.

Or specific examples, such as:

- putting on a pool party
- holding a youth only event
- discount youth days.

Question 5a-c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	1	1	4	13	14	16	51	**4.9**

There were three parts to this question. Students were asked to describe why having a community-owned pool might affect three different community issues. Positive or negative outcomes were accepted.

5a.

Levels of vandalism and juvenile offending

- young people have something else to do
- a sense of ownership of the facility may encourage them to look after it
- using energy in pool-based activities rather than vandalism
- another place to 'muck up'
- going there out of hours

5b.

School attendance

- 'no school no pool' policy
- positive peer relationships
- school-based pool activities encourage attendance
- pool use rewards for attendance
- improved self-esteem and sense of achievement
- students might 'wag' school to go to the pool

5c.

Community relationships

- a meeting place for people to go to
- family activity
- all ages and all abilities
- cross-cultural space
- building positive relationships
- inclusive community facility
- volunteering/contributing to the community

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- pride in the facility
- ownership of facility generates shared community spirit
- might be divisive if people think they have to swim to go there
- people might feel excluded if cultural needs are not respected

Question 6
Question 6a-b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	3	11	28	58	**2.4**

6a.
Advantages of having the pool located next to Community Health and Welfare Centre may include:

- easy access to other services
- increased awareness of services
- central access point for transport
- integration of health and leisure activities.

6b.
Disadvantages may include:

- lack of privacy – when you are at the pool you can see who goes into the centre
- crowded parking
- some visitors to the centre may feel intimidated
- people might not go to appointments at the centre and go to the pool instead.

Question 7

Marks	0	1	Average
%	27	73	**0.8**

Appropriate responses reflected an understanding that sport is generally:

- more competitive
- an organised activity
- team-based
- focused on winning/a definitive outcome
- selective
- limiting to participate in
- at set times
- can be done at any time
- more holistic
- can be done regardless of age or ability
- for relaxation
- can be a solo activity.

Students needed to make a clear distinction between sport and leisure.

Question 8
Question 8a-b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	1	0	0	1	2	2	14	15	14	51	**7.8**

8a.
Interest groups could have been:

- school groups
- accident/injury clients
- young mothers and babies
- teenagers
- families
- football clubs
- a diving shop

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- the elderly.

8b.
For each identified group, students had to describe how the pool would be used and for what purpose.

How the pool might be used	Purpose
Swimming lessons	Safety, water confidence, survival skills
Rehabilitation	To strengthen muscles
Water aerobics	Fitness, health, social
Physical education classes	Testing fitness, swimming lessons
Swimming carnivals	Competitions, racing
Cross training	Increasing fitness levels, resting muscles, developing new strengths

Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	5	12	83	**1.8**

This question had a lead in sentence that described a new family visiting the maternal health nurse. Students were asked to name two other services offered at a Community Health and Welfare Centre.

Acceptable answers included:

- dietician
- financial counselling
- playgroup advisor
- health professionals
- visiting specialists
- community nurse
- sport and leisure activities.

Question 10

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	9	19	72	**1.7**

Reasons for a referral to another service could include:

- the nurse does not have the required skills or knowledge
- the family needs a specialist service
- respect for professional boundaries
- the current service does not have the required equipment.

No mark was given for naming another service as this was covered in Question 9.

Question 11

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	20	35	25	20	**1.5**

Three of:

- details of client's situation
- identify key issues
- negotiate a strategy to address issues
- objectives/aims of client
- make necessary referrals.

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Students received no marks for answers such as name, address or family members. Knowledge of the steps in the casework process was required.

SECTION C – Electives

Students were required to do **one** of the electives but marks were not deducted if they did both. The score for the best answered response was included in their total. It is important to note, however, that students have selected a field of specific study in this section of the course and should endeavour to answer the corresponding elective topic.

Elective 1 – Children's Services Stream

Questions 1–2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	1	5	18	21	55	3.2

Question 1

Appropriate responses included:

- cooperative
- parallel
- solitary
- associative
- onlooker.

Answers relating to **types** of play, rather than activities, were required.

Question 2

There are many benefits of play for children. Responses reflected some understanding of this, such as:

- learn about their surroundings
- growth
- development
- socialisation
- exploring their interests
- finding things that they can do.

Questions 3–4

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	11	18	26	45	2.1

Question 3

Features or characteristics that are part of a running record include:

- present tense
- gives date, time and setting
- records everything the child says and does
- it is very detailed
- it is taken over a period of time.

Question 4

Other methods used to observe children's development are:

- an anecdotal record
- work sampling
- checklists
- written reports
- time sampling
- photographs
- recordings.

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Questions 5–6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	0	0	3	6	6	20	65	**5.4**

Question 5
Things a childcare worker may be looking for when observing children could include:

- interests, likes and dislikes of the child
- what the child is able to do
- relationships
- strengths and areas that need developing
- triggers for specific behaviours
- areas which require support.

Question 6a.
There are many routines that children follow in a day, including:

- arrival
- departure
- meals
- sleep times
- transitions.

Question 6b.
The role of the adult involves:

- monitoring
- guiding
- hygiene
- safety
- observation
- assistance.

Questions 7–8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	2	1	3	6	9	14	17	13	17	18	**6.2**

Question 7
Acceptable answers included:

- social
- emotional
- cognitive
- intellectual
- spiritual
- moral.

Developmental stages of children are a key aspect of essential knowledge in this area of study.

Question 8
Students were required to select an age group from the two choices provided and then describe three characteristics of **physical** development. No mark was given for ticking one of the boxes on the examination paper. Responses needed to reflect knowledge of age-appropriate development.

Characteristics of physical development typical of a three-year-old child include:

- stance
- growth
- gross motor skills; clutching, grasping, holding; use of play things
- fine motor development; better balance and coordination.

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Characteristics of physical development typical of an eight-year-old child include:

- increased ability to coordinate muscles, eye-hand tasks
- losing 'baby' teeth
- greater complexity of gross motor skills: kicking, throwing and catching, running and jumping.
- further development of fine motor skills: from using crayons to pencils and pens, development of writing skills, the ability to create and copy clearly.

Questions 9–10

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	0	0	3	6	11	21	60	**5.3**

Question 9

When setting up outdoors, caregivers need to consider:

- the weather
- safety
- the age of the children and their interests
- space
- time
- number of staff
- equipment available
- shade.

Question 10

The question asked students to consider factors other than observation of a child's development.

Appropriate responses included:

- child's interest
- cultural/religious background
- days/time in care
- family situation
- relevant medical/health information
- physical ability.

Elective 2 – Community Services Stream

Questions 1–2

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	3	9	17	72	**2.6**

Question 1

Other community services sectors include:

- aged care
- disability services
- youth
- sport and recreation.

Question 2

This question was about advocacy principles.

Clients may require someone to speak on their behalf for a number of reasons, including:

- language barriers
- cultural differences
- inability to speak for themselves
- unaware of their rights
- lack of confidence
- fear/anxiety.

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Questions 3–4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	4	4	7	10	12	16	16	10	20	**5**

Question 3

Empowering clients to advocate for themselves involves:

- identifying/clarifying issues
- informing of rights
- providing relevant and appropriate information
- assisting them to find appropriate resources
- discussing options
- encouraging and supporting.

Question 4

Appropriate responses acknowledged:

- mediation: an impartial party attempts to resolve conflict or achieve consensus agreement
- negotiation: resolution may involve compromise, compensation and advocacy. Give and take may be needed in order to come to an understanding.

Advocacy

- representing a single side of the issue
- working towards an outcome that satisfies the client and upholds their stance
- can involve others but may be self advocacy

Each of the terms required some knowledge of the processes and how they differ from each other.

Questions 5–6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	8	6	12	12	18	12	14	8	10	**5.4**

Question 5

Students needed to read the lead in sentence and explain approaches other than punishment.
Community development approaches require a response that is community initiated, involves community consultation and ownership. It would generally include:

- diverting energy into other activities
- taking responsibility for behaviour and actions
- providing alternatives for creativity
- using community to suggest ideas for, and implementation of, possible approaches.

Identification and explanation of some of these concepts, with regard to 'the graffiti issue', were required to achieve full marks.

Question 6

The role of a community development worker is to:

- educate
- encourage and support
- empower the community
- provide resources
- advise if needed
- upskill people and groups
- lobby where necessary.

Some recognition of community helping themselves and two explanations of the role were required.

Questions 7–8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
%	2	1	2	9	9	15	16	17	7	22	**6.1**

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Question 7
Gathering information from the community can be done through:

- surveys
- questionnaires
- meetings
- forums
- suggestion box
- online: web forums, blogs, email
- telephone interviews
- submissions.

Question 8
Three of:

- personal opinions
- the way questions are phrased
- intimidation
- language use
- values
- judgements
- prejudice
- body language.

Impact on the interview process required some explanation about the behaviour/conduct of the person conducting the interview (from the bias identified). Examples of how the interviewee may feel because of their language, beliefs, fears/anxiety, background, looks, education, culture, status or ability to verbalise ideas, include:

- they may not be listened to
- taken seriously
- believed
- be able to be honest
- be treated with confidentiality
- be respected
- understand what they are being asked
- they may feel threatened.

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