



2006 VCE VET Dance GA 2: Performance examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

This report addresses a range of issues to be considered when preparing for the performance examination.

The selection of the two solos is of paramount importance and it is recommended that teachers and students consider their choices carefully to enable students to demonstrate their skills in all criteria. Although interpretation of styles can be broad, in order to ensure that their students are not disadvantaged teachers should give special consideration to addressing any criteria that are not overtly inherent in the selected style; for example, falling in ballet or tap and locomotion in some genres of jazz.

Students need to ensure that their grooming is appropriate for the context, a performance examination. Hair should be neat and not covering the face. Jewellery, unless a part of the conventions of the dance style, is not required. Students should wear appropriate clothing that enables their body lines to be clearly seen and allows them to move freely and safely. When presenting their solos, students may wear garments specific to their selected dance style (for example, a ballet tutu); however, marks are not given for costume. Attire that includes over-long trousers or full-length, non-transparent skirts is not suitable. As part of safe dance practice, appropriate dance footwear for the selected style must be worn when performing the solos; socks are not appropriate. Tap plates need to be secured to ensure clarity of beats and to ensure the floor is not damaged. A number of students presented in 2006 with inappropriate footwear for their nominated style.

The solos must be presented as an uninterrupted performance. Students should be sufficiently familiar with their solos to ensure that they can complete them without any memory lapses. Teachers can assist in this matter by ensuring the timelines for learning and rehearsing the solos are sufficient. If the performance is interrupted for any reason, the student should continue performing as soon as possible and teachers should reinforce this during the rehearsal of the solos. The music should not be turned off unless the student clearly indicates to the assessors that he/she does not wish to continue with his/her performance.

Students should consider appropriate spatial orientation when presenting their solos; this includes performing at a reasonable distance from the assessors. The distance should enable the three assessors to clearly see all aspects of the student's performance throughout the entire solo. This can be addressed if students use their pre-performance time in the examination room to mark out their dances spatially.

It is important that the recording(s) accompanying the performance are of a good quality, enabling both the students and assessors to hear without distortion. It is recommended that students record their music at the beginning of a new audio cassette tape with sufficient 'lead in' time. Students should also bring a spare cassette tape that has a second recording of the music. It is important that students have their music cued when assessors enter the assessment room in order to avoid unnecessary waiting. Students should use the 'mark through' time prior to the assessment to check their music for accuracy and volume as well as orientate themselves in the performance area. Teachers are reminded that all recorded music accompanying the student's performance should be provided on cassette tape and not CD. This requirement is included in the information which accompanies the Student Advice Slips sent to schools in Term 3.

Students should be advised of appropriate performance etiquette.

The Task

The task is designed to assess the student's ability and interpretive skills in performance. The two dances must not be in the same style and each should be presented as a single uninterrupted performance. Solo repertoires that involve considerable time in holding a pose or waiting for music change are not appropriate.

The Solos

Each student is assessed on two solos learnt from the dance repertoire of a choreographer/teacher. The dances should be of between two and seven minutes long and in two distinct styles selected from ballet, jazz, contemporary, social, tap, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander styles, or any other nominated culturally specific style. The selected styles should have been nominated previously and should be stated on the student's examination advice slip. The dances selected should allow students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge developed in the following modules from the Certificate II in Dance:

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- VBJ677 Dance Technique – Elevation
- VBJ678 Dance Technique – Turning
- VBJ679 Dance Technique – Falling
- VBJ680 Dance Technique – Locomotion
- VBJ682 Dance Repertoire – Solo.

Interpretation of Criteria

In order to distinguish between levels of performance in the demonstration of various skills, a common understanding of the term 'skill' must be reached. For the purpose of the VCE VET Dance performance examination, skill encompasses: the level of ability that a student demonstrates in each criterion, the use of a range of skills in each criterion and the degree of difficulty involved in meeting each criterion. The same set of criteria applies for both solos.

The dances selected must include movements in each of the technique areas: elevation, turning, falling and locomotion. This is taken into account when allocating scores. A good guide would be approximately three different types of movement for each of the criteria. If a student's dance does not include a range of movements in each of these areas they will score a lower mark in the relevant criteria. Similarly, if the student's execution of the movements is not proficient in one or more of the technical areas they will score a lower mark. Therefore teachers must select works that are technically challenging for the student but are within their technical expertise. A number of the dances presented consisted of only a few phrases that were repeated to meet the two minute time requirement. Although this can be a legitimate choreographic device, care needs to be taken to ensure a range of movements for each criterion are demonstrated. This was not always the case.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Assessment Criteria

The criteria for the award of grades are designed to assess performance skills and a range of movement skills and are used for direct assessment. Each criterion is weighted equally and is marked on an eight-point scale (0–7).

Listed below are the assessment criteria that are used in assessing both solo performances. Also given are aspects of technique consistent with each selected dance style.

1. Posture and alignment

This includes correct posture, such as the appropriate use of muscle tone and the safe placement and alignment of the spine, shoulder girdle, hip, knee and ankle joints. The focus is on the head and body. In general, posture was satisfactory and appropriate to the selected style.

2. Bodyline

This includes demonstrated skill in creating appropriate bodylines and shapes using both upper and lower body parts. It is important that both upper and lower body shapes are equally considered. In some cases one area was weaker than the other (for example, the student showed neat footwork but their arm lines lacked definition, or they had well placed arms but untidy footwork).

3. Elevation

This includes demonstrated skill in the safe use of elevation techniques involving a range of different elevations with safe take off and landing techniques.

Teachers are reminded that the selected dance should allow the student to demonstrate a range of elevations in their solo. While this may be more overt in some styles than others, it is suggested that each solo allow the student to show a minimum of three different types of elevation; for example, from two feet to two feet, from one foot to two feet and from one foot to one foot.

4. Turning

This includes demonstrated skill in the safe use of a range of turning movements whilst maintaining balance, flexibility, transference of weight, coordination and control and articulation of individual body parts in an integrated manner. The selected dance must allow the student to demonstrate their ability to turn in a number of ways. A dance lacking in this aspect limits the student's opportunity to fully address this criterion.



5. Falling

The selected dance should allow the student to safely demonstrate a number of ways of falling. It is appreciated that some styles (for example, ballet) will not have a broad range of falling actions as part of the repertoire, but changes of level both upwards and downwards are possible. The execution of falls should involve balance, flexibility, transference of weight, coordination and control and articulation of body parts in a safe integrated manner.

6. Locomotor

Students need to demonstrate a range of locomotor skills involving balance, flexibility, transference of weight and coordination. For example, a dance that does not travel will not allow the student to score as highly as a dance that demonstrates a variety of pathways and patterns.

7. Spatial arrangement

This criterion involves aerial and floor pathways. Teachers need to ensure that the dances selected use a range of movement pathways; for example, forwards, backwards, sideways, diagonal and circular.

8. Movement dynamics

This criterion involves the demonstration of a range of dynamic qualities as appropriate to the stylistic interpretation of the selected solo. Some modern and ballet solos lacked a range of movement dynamics. This can be addressed by carefully selecting pieces to ensure that a range of movement dynamics are inherent in the piece. Teachers should draw students' attention to the execution of their movement dynamics during rehearsals.

9. Energy

This criterion solely relates to the student's ability to sustain their energy levels throughout their solo and maintain an appropriate level of physical stamina. Some students who performed longer solos were unable to sustain their performance consistently throughout the dance. Teachers should allow students sufficient time to rehearse their solos in order to build up their stamina prior to the examination.

10. Movement transitions

This criterion refers to the way the student moves from one movement to another. Transitions need to be maintained throughout the dance. Movement transitions should be consistent with the selected dance style.

A number of students experienced difficulties in this area and it is recommended that this aspect should be addressed in the rehearsal period.

11. Movement and music

In general, students' interaction with the accompanying music was satisfactory. However, a few students did have difficulty in maintaining timing and tempo.

12. Performance presentation

Students should present a solo that demonstrates projection through appropriate eye focus and the use of appropriate facial expressions. Teachers should remind students that this is a performance examination and this criterion is not to be considered lightly. A number of students were not able to demonstrate their understanding and application of this criterion. Performance skills should be developed during the rehearsal period.