



GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2011 Dance written examination paper reflected the reaccredited *VCE Dance Study Design*. As in previous years, the examination questions were based on the key knowledge and skills that underpin the outcomes in Units 3 and 4. Students were required to demonstrate their understanding of choreographic principles and the prescribed works studied in both units.

The examination paper consisted of five questions, including a scenario question that required students to apply their knowledge and understanding of alignment principles to the performance of a group dance performance. Questions 3, 4 and 5 related to dance works selected from the prescribed list of dance works published annually in the *VCAA Bulletin VCE, VCAL and VET*. Responses indicated that students had studied appropriate works selected from the current prescribed list. All questions were compulsory.

The marks allocated for each question are indicated on the examination paper at the end of each question. Students should use this information to plan each response. Students undertaking VCE Dance in 2012 may use past written examinations from 2007 onwards and other material, such as Assessment Reports and sample examination material, available on the VCAA website on the Dance study page, to assist in their examination preparation. Students should be advised that this material serves only as a sample and that the number and type of questions for each year may vary.

Students should read each question carefully to ensure they understand what is being asked. They should use their reading time to identify the key terms (for example, 'list', 'describe', 'discuss', 'analyse', etc.) and key concepts being tested. They should also ensure they address all aspects of the question in their response. When proofreading answers, students should be advised not to use 'ticks' on the paper.

Students who gained high marks in all questions presented legible responses that demonstrated consistent use of accurate and appropriate terminology as well as detailed knowledge and understanding of the key knowledge and skills relevant to each question.

Students who did not gain high marks displayed a limited understanding of the key concept(s) involved and/or showed limited knowledge of appropriate dance terminology. The glossary attached to the current study design contains explanations of the terms used in the study. It is essential that students become familiar with these terms early in the year and use them appropriately in all written tasks including the final written examination, especially when asked for a definition of a concept. Diagrams were awarded marks only if they provided information that was additional to written responses.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced herein have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

Question 1

This question tested students' understanding of technical and physical skills and the movement creation processes involved in the Unit 3 technique solo.

Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	2	1	2	0	5	2	7	5	76	7.2

High-scoring responses:

- correctly listed four of the eight technical and physical skills; Coordination, strength, balance, alignment, stamina, control, flexibility and transference of weight are all listed in the study design
- clearly described an appropriate example of movement vocabulary from the student's technique solo, which demonstrated the use of each technical and physical skill listed.

Note:

- one example only was required for each of the four correctly listed skills
- movement examples were to be linked to the correct skill; for example, a movement example illustrating flexibility but linked to stamina did not receive any marks

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- the four examples of movement vocabulary that demonstrated the use of the four correctly listed technical and physical skills needed to be different in order to obtain full marks.

Low-scoring responses generally did not list four correct technical and physical skills and/or did not describe an example that demonstrated an appropriate use of the skill(s) listed. Some students discussed skills involved in dance technique and/or safe dance practice and therefore received a lower mark.

Following is an excerpt of a high-level response to this question.

Strength was seen at the beginning of my technical solo when I performed an elevated side jete. Strength was needed in my quadriceps and gastrocnemius to allow my body to propel off the floor reaching a desired height creating an aesthetically pleasing shape.

Stamina was seen in the staying power and endurance of my muscles, heart and breathing throughout my solo. At the end of my solo I performed a series of turns, followed by a turning jete to a lower plane. Stamina allowed my muscles to push my body off the floor through the endurance of my breathing and heart.

Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	6	2	12	14	21	11	34	4.1

High-scoring responses correctly defined the two movement creation processes of refinement and evaluation, and gave an accurate or plausible explanation of why both processes were important when choreographing a dance work.

Low-scoring responses either did not define the movement creation processes of refinement and evaluation or gave a definition accompanied by an explanation that lacked accuracy or was technically implausible, or no explanation of their importance to the choreography. Where students gave definitions for all of the movement creation processes (improvisation, selection, arrangement, refinement, evaluation), marks were awarded for the information relevant to the question.

Some students gave definitions for choreographic devices or other choreographic principles. They were therefore awarded zero marks.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	19	15	49	4	6	1	6	1.9

This question tested students' understanding of the alignment principles dancers use when performing in a group dance performance.

The scenario question requires students to imagine a given situation within which they are then asked to apply their knowledge in a particular way. The scenario question facilitates the application of generic knowledge to a context (in this case, applying alignment principles to group dance works). This question assessed the capacity to discuss alignment principles in a safe dance context while performing a group dance performance.

High-scoring responses named and defined two different alignment principles that could be used by dancers to enable them to execute movement vocabulary accurately and safely in a group.

An accurate definition of an alignment principle involved information on how to align body parts/joints and/or engage muscles in ways that facilitate ease and freedom of movement, and help prevent injury when the body is either moving or in stillness, in a group performance context.

Generally, students correctly identified two different principles of alignment; however, the appropriate use of alignment principles were either discussed incorrectly or were not discussed at all in the context of a group performance.

Low-scoring responses either lapsed into a discussion of individual alignment principles or discussed aspects of dance technique such as preparations and landings for turns and elevations.

Following is an example of a high-level response to this question.

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One alignment principle is the equal distribution of weight between body parts, making sure that your weight is constant through your entire body. This is important to the dancers as it means they are stable, that the body weight is projected from the core allowing control over the movements. It helps prevent injury as it allows dancers to have control of their body placement ensuring they avoid falling over and hitting other dancers or getting in the way of other dancers in the group.

Another alignment principle is the use of trunk and core stability. Switching on the core stabilisers of the trunk – the abdominal, obliques, pelvic floor muscles and gluteal muscles - helps maintain the dancers in an upright and strong position so they can perform movements such as a slow balances and turns without falling over into the pathway of other dancers.

Knee over foot alignment is required when the dancers perform movements such as lunging or preparation for a turn. If the knee is not positioned directly over the toes (whether it is a turned out position or parallel) the dancers risk injury to their knee joint as well as strains and tears to the muscles of the quadriceps and hamstring group.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	18	4	12	7	11	12	6	6	8	3	13	4.5

Approximately 60% of students selected works from Unit 4 when responding to this question.

This question tested students' understanding of either Outcome 1 of Unit 3 or Outcome 1 of Unit 4 and focused on cultural influences in relation to the choreographer's use of form.

Responses that gained high marks:

- accurately described two known or plausible cultural influences on the choreographer's choice of form in the group work selected
- presented a comprehensive discussion of the effect of each of these correct or plausible cultural influences on the choices made by the choreographer in relation to the form.

Low-scoring responses showed a limited understanding of the cultural influence's effect upon the choreographer's choice of form. Some students accurately identified a plausible cultural influence; however, they did not demonstrate an understanding of the effect this cultural influence had on the choreographer's choice of form.

Very low-scoring responses had a tendency to describe the structure of the dance in too much detail and the cultural influence(s) was either discussed using inaccurate terminology or in a limited way, or not discussed at all. Some students lapsed into a discussion of the choreographer's expressive intention or dance design.

Following is an example of a good response.

Fosse's choice of Form or structure was influenced by the structure found in the musical accompaniment. The music had been developed by composer G. Harrell from another score developed by Varese called 'Ionisation'. Harrell took the original music and structured it into 4 very distinct sections of contrasting music. This structure was reflected in Fosse's choreography. Harrell had stated that Fosse 'kept a black and white notebook (to document the choreography) and divided the piece up by alphabetical letters and then included notes about the choreography and many stick drawings of movement patterns, his own style of labanotation... he would record for example (A) 6 -8's or six counts of eight and so on for each section. He would then call these section letters out to the dance captains and the dancers understood the section he was referring to'. You can see each section established through new movement choice and clearly concludes with the use of a low level kneeling motif to reflect the change of sections within the music.

Question 4

Work chosen	None	1	2	3	4	5	6
%	3	38	10	30	14	0	5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	Average
%	4	1	2	3	2	3	3	3	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	6	7	4	5	3	6	5	2	1	1	6	13.1

This question tested students' understanding of key knowledge from Outcome 1, Unit 3 and invited an essay-style response. Students could have used diagrams and drawings where appropriate to support their analysis. The question required the demonstration of knowledge, understanding and application of the terms 'body actions' and 'expressive intention', and analysis of how the choreographer has manipulated body actions to communicate the expressive intention. The question required the presentation of detailed analysis of all six types of the body actions detailed in the



VCE Dance Study Design – gesture, locomotion, elevation, falling, turning and stillness – via analysis of a range of movement examples from throughout the solo dance work.

A high-quality answer needed to include an excellent description of examples of movement vocabulary from throughout the solo dance work that explained the classification of body action and what was being communicated at that point in the dance.

The wording ‘throughout this solo dance’ indicates that the whole dance needed to be considered.

Marking this question required the use of descriptors typical of those published as a guide to marking school-assessed coursework by the VCAA in the *VCE Assessment Handbook 2007–2011*. There was no particular or singular correct answer for this question and answers were constructed and formatted in many different ways.

The question invited an extended response to which marks were assigned using the bands of descriptors described below.

Marking bands

Band 1: 21–25 marks

- Answers in this range demonstrated a highly skilled knowledge of the prescribed work through a sophisticated and very detailed analysis of the way all body actions were used through detailed examples of movement vocabulary, to communicate the expressive intention throughout the whole dance work.
- Highly skilled use of correct dance terminology.

Band 2: 16– 20 marks

- Answers in this range demonstrated a competent but at times inconsistent knowledge of the prescribed work through a very detailed analysis of the way most body actions were used through detailed examples of movement vocabulary, to communicate the expressive intention throughout the majority of the solo work.
- Competent use of correct dance terminology.

Band 3: 11–15 marks

- Answers in this range demonstrated a sound knowledge of the prescribed work through a fairly detailed discussion of the way some of the body actions were used, through examples of movement vocabulary, to communicate the expressive intention throughout some of the solo work. The analysis may have contained some inconsistencies, i.e. some of the examples of movement vocabulary may have been discussed in less depth.
- Sound use of dance terminology.

Band 4: 6–10 marks

- Answers in this range demonstrated a limited knowledge of the prescribed work and there was a limited understanding of the way some body actions were used, through examples of movement vocabulary, to communicate the expressive intention throughout the some of the solo work.
- Answers were on the whole descriptive rather than analytical, examining the work in little detail with limited use of specific examples to illustrate the answer.
- Answers lacked the use, where appropriate, of dance terminology or dance terms may have been misused.

Band 5: 0–5 marks

- Answers may have shown a minimal knowledge and understanding of the prescribed work, with very minimal or inappropriate understanding of the way a minimal number of body actions were used, through examples of movement vocabulary, to communicate the expressive intention.
- The information may have included some relevant points, but these were random rather than being organised as part of a coherent structure.
- Dance terminology was rarely used and/or, where it was used, may have been misapplied, making the answer difficult to follow.

Responses ranked in Band 1 offered a highly skilled and detailed analysis of the ways in which a range of body actions was used to communicate the expressive intention through the discussion of ‘detailed examples’ of movement vocabulary throughout the selected solo dance work.

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Low-scoring responses often lapsed into a discussion of the expressive intention and offered insufficient detailed references to the use of all six body actions through detailed examples of movement vocabulary to communicate the expressive intention. This significantly affected the marks awarded for this question.

Very low-scoring responses used incorrect terminology when discussing body actions, and/or presented a synopsis of the expressive intention without any discussion of detailed movement examples.

Following is an excerpt of a response typical to Band 1. Only one example of the body action of gesture has been addressed in this excerpt to demonstrate the level of analysis required. The response also included a comprehensive analysis of all other body actions and related the examples to the communication of the expressive intention. The work being analysed is 'Cry' by Alvin Ailey.

Cry is a tribute to African American women and their endurance of slavery until freedom... gesture is used in section one to symbolise routine and chores. We see the dancer crouched down on her knees at a low level scrubbing the floor with her scarf communicating her role as a servant, a role that black women were forced to do. Also in this section the dancer executes an extended arm gesture above her head before contracting. This gesture is repeated a number of times and highlights the repetition of her daily chores and routine.

Question 5

Work chosen	None	1	2	3	4	5
%	1	9	45	9	23	14

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	Average
%	5	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	4	3	2	4	3	5	5	6	7	10	7	7	14	19.1

This question tested students' understanding of key knowledge from Outcome 1 of Unit 4 and focused on the choreographic principle of 'group structures' associated with group prescribed works. The question required the naming and defining of three of the five group structures. Students must be familiar with the group structures identified in the study design. Students did not receive full marks for this part of the question if the definition for each group structure was limited.

The question required students to describe one example for each of the three group structures they had identified. In each example, students were to include:

- a description of the movement vocabulary performed
- the group formation of the dancers
- when in the dance the example occurs.

The question also required students to analyse the choreographer's expressive intention, or aspect of the expressive intention, communicated in each of the three examples described.

The three examples needed to be different from each other in order to gain full marks.

Responses that gained high marks correctly named and appropriately defined three of the five group structures; comprehensively described one example for each of the three group structures named and defined; and linked the described example to a succinct analysis of the choreographer's expressive intention, or aspect of the expressive intention.

Some students chose to include two examples for each correctly named and defined group structure. Only one was required to gain full marks for this question.

Low-scoring responses did not address all parts of the question. For example, many students correctly named and appropriately defined three of the five group structures but did not give a detailed description of the 'examples' for each identified group structure, or vice versa, which lowered their overall score.

Very low-scoring responses provided a general discussion of either the movement vocabulary or expressive intention without naming and defining any of the three group structures or vice versa. Others confused group structures with spatial organisation, which resulted in zero marks being awarded.



Following is an excerpt from a response that achieved high marks. The work being analysed is 'Stamping Ground' by Jiri Kylian.

Contrast is shown when a different set of two or more movements or phrases are performed by different dancers at the same time for example, one dancer might perform a locomotive phrase on a high level while another dancer performs a gestural phrase on a low level at the same time. This would be an example of the movement vocabulary being performed in contrast.

In stamping ground the group structure Contrast is seen in the transitional phrase from the beginning section to the development. At this point we see a group of three female dancers performing a different phrase to the three male dancers as they all travel left across the stage. The women perform a phrase that abstracts the different positions of running. Using a low level crouch they abstract the gesture of 'get ready'; then change to a forward lurching position on a medium level abstracting 'get set'; followed by an abstracted run on a high level. At the same time the small group of male dancers perform a shunting forward phrase on a medium level, using a 'head peck' gesture while locomoting. Each gender group performs this movement in a straight line facing each other creating the formation of two straight lines positioned down the stage. They faced opposite each other and the different movements were performed at the same time. This was to express the difference in the genders of the tribe as well as to reinforce the different hierarchy amongst each gender group.