

# 2022 VCE Dance written external assessment report

## General comments

The 2022 written examination followed the *VCE Dance Study Design 2019–2024*. The examination questions were based on the key knowledge and key 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 throughout both units.

The examination consisted of seven compulsory questions. Questions 1, 2 and 3 related to students' solo dances and learnt works. Questions 4, 5, 6 and 7 related to dance works selected from the prescribed list published annually in the *VCAA Bulletin*. The list offers two new works every year; therefore, it is important to carefully check the list at the start of each year before deciding on the works to be studied. Responses indicated that students had studied appropriate works from the current prescribed list; however, it is important that responses in the exam focus on the prescribed section of the work and the main dancer/character listed for the work. Some students referred to parts of the dance work that were not prescribed, or to dancers other than those listed on the prescribed list.

High-scoring responses provided comprehensive answers that demonstrated an understanding of the key knowledge and skills relevant to each question, using accurate and appropriate terminology.

Low-scoring responses displayed a limited understanding of the key concept(s) involved and/or showed limited knowledge of appropriate dance terminology. Further revision of VCE Dance terminology leading up to the examination would enable a stronger response in this area.

A focus on general examination technique will also assist students. Students are advised to read each question carefully to ensure they understand what is being asked. They should use their reading time to identify the key terms and concepts the question is focusing on and ensure they address all aspects of the question in their response.

Some students used diagrams as part of their response, which in some cases can enhance the response to a question. However, it is important to note that diagrams were awarded marks only if they provided additional information to the written responses. A few students crossed out information which was correct, rendering it invalid and not able to receive marks.

Other areas for improvement are as follows.

- Students should pay attention to their handwriting as some responses were hard to understand.
- Some students wrote extensive responses for short-answer questions and shorter responses for questions where more was required. It is recommended that students highlight key words in the question to help direct their responses to the knowledge being examined.
- When referring to choreographers, dancers or other professionals involved in prescribed works, students should refer to them by their full name or surname, not just by their first name.
- Students should also be aware that if a question asks for examples 'from throughout the dance', students are required to give examples from different parts of the dance. If no specified number of examples is provided, at least two examples from different parts of the dance will be needed to receive full marks.

Past written examinations and other material, such as examination reports and sample examination material (available on the VCE Dance examination page of the VCAA website), may be useful in assisting with a student's examination preparation. Students are advised that this material serves only as a sample and that the number and type of questions for each year vary.

## Specific information

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

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent.

### Question 1

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	11	9	16	21	43	2.8

This question assessed students' knowledge and understanding of the content in Unit 3, Outcome 2, 'Choreography, performance and analysis of a skills-based solo dance work'. Specifically, it related to the key skill 'Rehearse the solo dance work'.

As outlined in the terminology section of the study design, 'Rehearsal' is a set of practices used by students as choreographer and involves the clarifying of existing movement material through repetition, feedback and skill development to consolidate, refine and evaluate execution of the choreography. Generally, no major changes to choreography occur beyond this point. This is separate from the processes of choreographing, preparing to perform, and performing the solo dance work. To receive marks responses must have referred to one of these activities or other plausible rehearsal process activities.

High-scoring responses identified two plausible rehearsal process activities and linked the use of these activities to the successful realisation of their skills-based solo dance work.

Low-scoring responses:

- incorrectly identified a rehearsal process
- incorrectly referred to choreographic processes instead of rehearsal processes
- gave a definition or description of a correct rehearsal process with no link to the realisation of their solo dance work.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Process 1: During rehearsal I practiced the solo repetitively at full capacity to develop the physical skill of stamina. This allowed me to improve my skill of stamina during rehearsals and allowed me to feel more confident in executing the solo as I knew I could maintain energy throughout.*

*Process 2: Using the mirror to break down the steps. Whilst rehearsing my skills based solo, I rehearsed in front of a mirror to check the alignment and the shape I was creating with my movement phrases. By having the feedback of the mirror, I could adjust and change aspects of my movement that did not appear the way I hoped from an audience perspective.*

## Question 2

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	6	5	12	22	26	14	15	3.6

In the development of your Unit 4 cohesive composition solo, describe how you selected and developed an appropriate formal structure. Describe how your selected formal structure enhanced the communication of your intention.

This question assessed students' knowledge and understanding of the content in Unit 4, Outcome 2, 'Choreography, performance and dance-making analysis'. Specifically, it related to the following dot points:

- key knowledge 'approaches to selecting and developing an intention and to structuring a cohesive solo dance work
- key skill 'select and develop an appropriate formal structure'
- evaluate the ways a solo dance work fits the description of a cohesive composition and communicates the intention.

As outlined in the terminology section of the study design, 'planning and research' involves activities undertaken prior to beginning the active choreographic process. This is separate from the processes of choreographing, rehearsing, and performing the solo dance work.

High-scoring responses correctly identified how they developed their formal structure, including researching an issue, brainstorming, listening to the structure of their music, and other planning and research activities. They then described how that particular formal structure assisted them to communicate their intention. These descriptions usually included reference to the different sections showcasing a different emotion/state/character/element and so on. The responses to the second part of the question were generally stronger than to the first part.

Low-scoring responses:

- described 'why' rather than 'how' they chose their formal structure
- outlined other processes without any links to the development of their formal structure
- focussed on the development of the intention rather than the form
- described what the intention was in great detail without any links to the form or how the form assisted in the communication of the intention.

The following excerpt is from an example of a high-scoring response.

*Within my composition solo, I utilise the form of an ABC structure. I selected a range of phrases for each of the sections that both related to the dance intention of that section and cohesively complimented the music choice of the section. For example, in section one of my solo, I was executing what it felt like to express chaotic thoughts, therefore I developed a section of fast paced, percussive movement with a range of focus and directional changes. Section two featured obsessive thoughts, therefore I created a phrase that utilised repetition to enhance the idea of obsessing. Finally, section three displayed peace, therefore it included a calm and slow paced phrase. I developed the structure to ensure I displayed all aspects of thoughts in the human mind and displayed the manipulation of time, space and energy to display differing qualities of movement. This also allowed me to show differing ideas.*

## Question 3

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	13	5	8	8	17	12	13	11	14	4.4

This question assessed students' knowledge and understanding of the content in Unit 3, Outcome 3, 'Dance technique, performance and analysis of a learnt dance work'. Specifically, it related to the:

- key knowledge 'safe dance practices required to develop and execute of a wide range of physical skills' including concepts and practices relating to alignment (in movement and when holding still), coordination, balance, control, flexibility, strength, stamina and transference of weight
- key knowledge 'physical skills required to execute the phrases and sequences used in the learnt group dance work'
- key skill 'demonstrate safe dance practice', including refinement of physical skills through appropriate exercises repeated and developed over time; learning, rehearsing and performing a learnt dance work
- key skill 'demonstrate the safe and appropriate use of physical skills required to execute the movement vocabulary in the dance work'.

In the terminology section of the study design, physical skills are identified as alignment, coordination, balance, control, flexibility, strength, stamina, and transference of weight. Students were required to describe two different activities undertaken over time as part of their regular dance training that helped them to develop physical skills used in their learnt work. Each activity must have been linked to a different physical skill.

Activities may have included but were not limited to appropriate exercises to warm up the body, incremental developments in strengthening or flexibility exercises, repeat technical exercises to improve balance and control, or activities to improve alignment. Students needed to explain how their dance training activities helped them to improve and refine their physical skills.

High-scoring responses described two different dance training activities in detail. For each activity they described a phrase of movement from their learnt work using the names of physical skills. They then explained how that activity assisted them to refine the physical skills identified in the phrase of movement.

Low-scoring responses:

- identified their solo rather than their learnt work
- did not identify correct physical skills
- described a single movement rather than a phrase of movement
- described activities that were not plausibly part of regular dance training, or activities that would not assist in the development of physical skills
- identified the activities correctly but did not describe them
- described a plausible activity but did not link it to the refinement of physical skills
- described multiple different physical skills in reference to the one activity with little detail.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Activity 1: I constantly executed dynamic stretches before learning, rehearsing or performing the choreography which aided in improving my flexibility. This was needed to execute the splits in the group dance as well as back arches while on my knees and while in a lunge. Over time I increased the intensity of the warm-up stretches to further increase my flexibility. This improved my execution as my split was deeper and I could arch my back further while avoiding strain or over-extension.*

*Activity 2: I executed single leg calf raises three times per week, increasing my number of reps by 5 each week, to improve my strength needed to execute a triple pirouette and fouettés on a high relevé in the group dance. In doing this I increased my strength which allowed me to better execute the turns and*

*execute them safely as I was more supported in my ankle. I could also remain in relevé for longer which meant I could correctly execute a triple pirouette and long fouetté sequence.*

## Question 4a.

Mark	0	1	2	Average
%	5	30	65	1.6

Students were required to describe one influence on the chosen dance work and provide information about that influence. Influences needed to be plausible in order to gain marks.

Low-scoring responses did not identify a plausible influence or provided a scant outline of an influence.

## Question 4b.

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	5	3	10	10	14	11	12	16	19	4.9

Students were required to discuss two different examples of how influence from **part a.** impacted on the production aspects, which can include music/soundscapes, performance space, costume, lighting, sets, props, make-up, hair design and mechanical devices or other production aspects. Students could refer to the one influence on **two different** production aspects, or the one influence on **one** production aspect in **two different ways**. The response needed to clearly indicate how the chosen influence impacted on the chosen production aspect or aspects. As the question asked for examples from throughout the dance work, the examples included in the student responses needed to be from different sections of the dance work to receive full marks.

High-scoring responses chose one plausible influence from **part a.** and clearly identified a link between the influence described and the chosen production aspects. They discussed how the influence impacted on the production aspects used in the dance work and gave at least two different examples from different parts of the dance work. This discussion included details about the production aspect and described how it was used in the dance work.

Low-scoring responses:

- outlined an influence that was not plausible
- identified multiple influences rather than giving detail about one influence
- discussed the impact of the influence on the intention, rather than on the production aspects
- described the intention and/or movement vocabulary
- did not identify a plausible production aspect
- identified a plausible production aspect but did not give any description of it
- did not discuss how the influence impacted on the production aspects
- gave only one example of a production aspect
- gave examples from only one section of the dance work.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Title of solo dance work: Take Me To Church*

*Influence: Jade Hale-Christophi's and performer Sergei Polunin's careers and training in ballet had a strong influence when creating Take Me To Church (TMTC).*

*Example 1: Costuming*

*In TMTC Polunin only wears a pair of form fitting nude lycra shorts that blend in with his skin tone and leave a lot of his skin, body and muscles exposed. The influence of male ballet led to this as the simple exposing silhouette allows all of Polunin's muscles to be seen whilst dancing, that emphasises the strength that Polunin has gained through ballet and its difficulty. The nude [colour] also allows the costume to blend in and be forgotten when watched, which allows the movement to draw the most attention to show the range of male ballet as opposed to the costuming distracting from that.*

*Example 2: Set*

*TMTC was filmed in a wooden house-like structure that has exposed raw wood and windows with no glass that allows natural light to fill the space. The set is also pale brown that also does not draw from the ballet being executed. The natural light ensures movement can be seen clearly, allowing the sheer physicality and beauty of the ballet Polunin executes to be conveyed without obstruction.*

## Question 5

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	8	3	6	7	11	10	10	8	10	10	18	5.6

This question assessed students' knowledge and understanding of the content in Unit 3, Outcome 1, 'Dance perspectives'. Specifically, it related to the:

- key knowledge 'the intention of the selected dance works'
- key knowledge 'choreographic devices that are evident in the selected dance works'
- key skill 'describe and discuss the intention of each selected work'
- key skill 'describe and discuss how the movement vocabulary is used to communicate the intention in the selected dance works'
- key skill 'analyse the form of the selected dance works and the use of choreographic devices evident in the movement vocabulary'.

Students were required to select and identify one solo dance work from the prescribed list which was different to the solo they discussed in Question 4, and then identify one choreographic device evident in the selected dance work. The list of choreographic devices' includes Motif, Augmentation, Abstraction, Repetition, Accumulation, Inversion, Distortion or other plausible choreographic devices.

High-scoring responses identified a plausible choreographic device and clearly analysed and discussed an aspect of the intention of the dance work. They used detailed descriptions of movement vocabulary and correctly described the use of the identified choreographic device in that movement example. They included detailed descriptions of all three parts of the question – movement, choreographic device, and intention – with clear links that analysed how the three parts related to or impacted on each other.

As the question specified that examples must come from 'throughout the dance', high-scoring responses referred to two or more different sections of the dance.

Low-scoring responses:

- did not identify a plausible choreographic device
- did not describe the choreographic device correctly (for example, identifying 'augmentation' but then explaining an example of 'abstraction')
- labelled any gesture or movement as a motif without explaining why it was a motif movement
- discussed the way a motif was changed by other choreographic devices
- identified repetition but went on to describe how the phrase was subsequently done differently, or only discussed one example of the phrase without explaining when it was repeated
- did not link the use of the choreographic device to the intention
- explained the intention without any information about choreographic devices

- had examples of movement vocabulary which were all from the same section of the dance work.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Title of solo dance work: 'Reflect' from Terrain*

*Choreographic device: Transposition*

*Example 1: In Section B, the motif of reaching was introduced as the dancer lent her torso down and reached her arm towards downstage right with her eyeline focused towards the ground. This demonstrates the sky longing to connect with the earth to form the horizon. This is transposed in Section B, as the dancer in a moment of oppositional pull, suspends her head and torso backwards, whilst her left leg reaches forwards and towards the ground. In transposing this reach motif Rings communicates a build and the development of the desire to connect with the earth. By transposing this to the dances leg, it can also be understood that the dancer is being drawn and called to the earth.*

*Example 2: The motif of circling movements first seen in Section A, as the dancer circles her torso whilst lunging, represents the cycle of the sun as well as the cycle of cultural knowledge in Indigenous Australian culture. This is transposed in Section B as the dancer's arm is outstretched ahead of her with her head down, and she circles her wrist and shoulders to create a circular rotation of her hand and arm. This is transposed again in Section C as the dancer drags her hand up her leg in attitude devant, whilst the other is planted, and circles her raised leg initiating from the knee, so just the lower leg and foot create a circle. This communicates the continual cycle of the sun and horizon all over the country and the ongoing cycle of cultural knowledge that is continually passed down.*

## Question 6ai.

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	5	6	13	24	53	3.2

## Question 6aii.

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	4	3	15	17	21	20	21	4

## Question 6bi.

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	6	7	18	25	46	3

## Question 6bii.

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	5	6	15	17	25	16	17	3.7

This question assessed students' knowledge and understanding of the content in Unit 3, Outcome 1, 'Dance perspectives'. Specifically, it related to the:

- key knowledge 'movement vocabulary from each movement category and physical skills required to perform the selected dance works'
- key skill 'describe the physical skills required to perform the movement vocabulary in the selected dance works'.

Students were required to select and identify one solo dance work from the prescribed list, which they had used to answer either Question 4 or Question 5. They then needed to describe two different phrases from the dance work, and describe how two different physical skills were used within each phrase. Two different physical skills must have been identified for each phrase, however the physical skills used in **parts aii.** and **bii.** could be the same as each other (for example, how the skills of strength and flexibility were used could be described in relation to both phrases).

High-scoring responses used detailed descriptions of movement vocabulary to describe two phrases of movement. They identified two correct physical skills that were present in each described phrase, and gave detailed descriptions of how each of the physical skills were executed in the phrase. These responses included multiple examples of movements within the phrase that utilised the chosen physical skills. .

As the question specified that examples must come from 'throughout the phrase', high-scoring responses referred to two or more different movements in the phrase which utilised the physical skills identified.

Low-scoring responses:

- discussed movement categories rather than physical skills
- discussed what a dancer would not be able to do without possessing a physical skill rather than discussing how the physical skills assisted them
- described the intention, which was not required
- gave definitions of the physical skill without linking it to a phrase
- gave only one example of the use of the physical skill
- discussed only one movement rather than a phrase.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Question 6ai.*

*Phrase*

*The dancer performs a manège, jumping phrase in section five that commences from the downstage right corner. The dancer performs for travelling coupe, jumping turns into a large dimension, double leg retiré, and assemblé. This phrase is repeated three times in a circular direction that travels across the front of the stage, and around both corners of stage left until the dancer reaches the centre of the stage, the dancer then performs a small series of chainé turns that travel towards the upstage right corner.*

*Question 6aii.*

*Skill one:*

*Stamina is the physical skill that requires dancer to perform long and strenuous activity without running out of energy or lacking form. This phrase required a strong sense of stamina as it was a large dimension, jumping sequence that was repetitive. This sequence was also placed at the end of the final section of the piece. Therefore, the dancer would already be feeling fatigued from all the activity in the past four sections. The dancer completes this phrase with strong technique, and impressive height in his jumps, therefore, displaying his use of stamina in the phrase being completed.*

*Skill two*

*Strength refers to one's use of muscle tension and contraction to perform physical movements shapes. Strength is required in this phrase, particularly strength through the dancer's, quadriceps, hamstrings, calves and abdominals due to the dancer, performing jumping movements. He had to use the muscle*

*strength in his legs to push off the floor and achieve height. Strength is also required in the abdominals to hold the upper body straight and not allow it to collapse with the movement.*

## Question 7

Mark	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	2	17	36	35	10	2.3

This question assessed students' knowledge and understanding of the content in Unit 4, Outcome 1, 'Dance perspectives'. Specifically, it related to:

key knowledge 'ways that group structures are manipulated to communicate the intention'

key skill 'analyse the ways that group structures, spatial arrangements and the elements of spatial organisation are manipulated to communicate the intention'.

Students were required to identify two group structures by name, one for each part of the question. In the terminology section of the study design, group structures are identified as canon, contrast, unison, asymmetrical, and symmetrical. Students must have used these terms to be awarded marks. They needed to explain the way the group structure helped to communicate the intention. Information about movement vocabulary could be used to help explain the use of the chosen group structure, but did not receive marks independently.

High-scoring responses identified a correct group structure by name for each part of the question. They explained what the group structure was in detail through diagrams and descriptions. Diagrams were used to assist in explanations of the use of symmetrical and asymmetrical groupings to show the placement on the stage and to clarify what the group structure looked like. They were also used to show the position of dancers while they were dancing in canon, contrast or unison, which helped with students' descriptions of the phrase of movement. The diagrams were used well to support and enhance the written responses.

High-scoring responses included detailed examples from two different phrases for each part, with plausible explanations about how the group structure helped to communicate the intention in the chosen phrases. The responses were generally split into two parts for each part of the question – one phrase, the structure in that phrase, and the link to the intention, followed by a second phrase, the same structure in that phrase, and the link to the intention.

As the question required a different group structure to be identified for each part, responses which included only one correct group structure, or which discussed the same group structure for both parts of the question, were only able to earn marks for one part of the question, no matter how much detail they included in the second example. Similarly, as the question required two phrases to be discussed for each part, responses which included only one phrase could not receive full marks, no matter how much detail that one phrase contained.

Low-scoring responses:

- did not identify two of the five correct group structures by name
- did not link a group structure to the intention
- did not identify a phrase, or only identified one phrase instead of two
- discussed the link between movement and intention without explaining the group structure
- gave a description of a group structure that did not match the named group structure
- described a group structure or movement vocabulary that did not occur within the prescribed dance work chosen.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

*Title of group dance work: 'Yorktown (The World's Turned Upside Down)' from Hamilton*

*Group Structure: Symmetry*

*Phrase 1: As the ensemble enter at the beginning, they execute mechanical marches to travel to a symmetrical semi-circle surrounding Hamilton in the centre of the stage. Then in Cannon, they gesture to their chests by lunging forward slightly then cross their arms over the other, and bring their right hand to salute, rising up and down on the spot, maintaining their symmetrical formation. In using symmetry in this moment, the role of the ensemble as soldiers is established through the regimented and orderly formation as well as their rank as they are placed around Hamilton who commands them.*

*Phrase 2: Early in the dance work as Hamilton laments 'Then I remember my Eliza is expecting me', the ensemble are in a symmetrical triangle formation with Hamilton at the point. The ensemble face towards each other, each half mirroring the other as they roll their shoulders back and slowly bend down while concaving their chests, dropping their heads, and pointing with both hands to their foreheads. They then step outwards to face the back, continuing to mirror each other, and reach their hands from the back of their heads outwards, finally closing the outstretched hand to a fist then pointing it down to the ground. The symmetrical formation again shows the order and structure of military, yet in symmetrically reflecting each half's movements, Blankenbuehler communicates the reflective nature of Hamilton's words, enhancing the audiences understanding of the main action.*