

CCEA GCE - Performing Arts  
(Summer Series) 2014

## Chief Examiner's and Principal Moderator's Report

performing  
arts



## Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of CCEA's General Certificate of Education (GCE) in Performing Arts for this series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk)



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# GCE PERFORMING ARTS

## Principal Moderator's Report

### Assessment Unit AS 1 Developing Skills and Repertoire

#### General Observations

It was pleasing to see that those centres that had attended the training sessions offered by CCEA followed the guidance given, which was reflected in the layout and structure of the portfolios. A minority of centres did not adhere to the page limits or the presentation of coursework in Arial 12. The work submitted for moderation was well organised. Some centres annotation of the coursework was precise and focused on the assessment objectives, which was most helpful to the moderation process. There was a wide range of disciplines offered and a variety of repertoire used to develop candidates' skills. The majority of centres provided clear recordings of candidates' three stages for both extracts on either DVD or USB. Most candidates were clearly identified at the start of their recordings. Candidates were given the opportunity to show their progress through the recording of the three stages for both extracts.

#### Administration of the Moderation Process

Work was submitted on time and paperwork was generally completed accurately.

- Centres are reminded that TAC2 should be enclosed with the coursework sample, even when there is only one teacher assessor at the centre.
- All Candidate Record Sheets must state the chosen discipline of the candidate.
- All Candidate Record Sheets must be signed by the teacher and candidate.
- The internal standardisation box should be ticked on the Candidate Record Sheet, even when there is only one teacher at the centre.
- The teacher-assessor should to check addition and transfer of marks to the OPTEMS.
- All teacher-assessors should make specific reference to the assessment objective descriptors in their annotation and the completion of the Candidate Record Sheets.
- It would be helpful to the moderation process if candidates identified themselves at the beginning of the final group performances, as camera angles and costume occasionally made identification difficult for the moderators.

#### Portfolios and Application of the Assessment Criteria

##### A01 A summary of research and skills audit (12 marks)

###### Section 1: Style and genre within the chosen discipline

Overall, candidates gave a clear overview of the development of the style and genre over time for their chosen discipline.

However, there was some duplication of material within centres across candidates' work. It is important for centres to note that candidates must have an individual approach to the research and that all sources are clearly identified and acknowledged by quotation marks and referenced in footnotes.

### **Section 2: Skills required within the chosen disciplines**

The majority of candidates successfully identified and defined the skills required for their chosen discipline. The skills outlined in Section 3.1 of the specification should be referenced and used as a starting point for all disciplines. Candidates' responses within Mark Band 4 were underpinned with knowledge and understanding gained from comprehensive research from a variety of sources which was explicitly woven into the body of their response.

### **Section 3: Current professional practice including the use of new technologies**

The responses needed to focus more clearly on the candidates' discipline and, in the main, more in depth research into specific technologies relating to the candidates' discipline should be explored. There was a lot of generalised commentary on the use of apps and social media without any real sense of having explored the context for their use or their practical application with current practitioners with the chosen discipline.

A more balanced approach is needed giving equal consideration to current practice and the use of new technologies. Candidates may benefit from using case studies/interviewing current professionals when approaching this section to give their work relevance and validity.

## **Skills Audit**

The skills audit should be informed and complement the research carried out and demonstrated in the previous three sections. Overall, the majority of candidates referenced their ability in the skills highlighted in Section 2.

The skills audit showed the varying degrees of experience that candidates already had. In some cases, those with less experience showed an ability to draw on relevant skills gained through experience outside the performing arts, emphasising that the qualification is accessible to those new to Performing Arts.

There was a variety of approaches to the layout and placing a of quantitative measure on the skills outlined. Some candidates did this effectively through a traffic light colour coding system, whilst others used a rating key. It is important to note that as this is a 'skills audit', some kind of quantitative measure should be placed on the skills described.

Stronger responses gave detailed examples of skills demonstrated in specific contexts and concluded their audits with a summary of skills to be developed and how they might do this through the rest of the unit.

It is important to note that candidates should complete this prior to embarking on the exploration of repertoire that forms the bulk of the unit; the skills audit is not a retrospective task.

Areas for consideration:

- Evidence of research is a key objective descriptor for AO1, therefore candidates' sources need to be clearly referenced throughout each section.
- Sources should be referenced through footnotes and a summative bibliography.
- The inclusion of downloaded material passed off as the candidate's own is not acceptable.

- Candidates should clearly state their chosen discipline within the title of each section.
- Research should be focused on the discipline not generalised historical research.
- Particular attention should be paid to the learning outcomes outlined for each discipline on in Section 3.1 of the specification and the explicit and implicit skills associated with these.
- Detailed examples from research and candidates' own experiences relevant to the focus of each section should be encouraged.

## **AO2 A record of work (28 marks)**

There was a wide range of extracts from existing repertoire chosen by centres, which in the main offered an appropriate degree of challenge to develop the candidates' skills. It is important to note that all disciplines including dance, should be drawn from existing repertoire and not be devised by candidates.

Overall, the Records of Work were appropriately laid out and, for the most part, adhered to the page limits. However, in general, the content of the evidence of practice lacked depth and detailed evidence of knowledge and understanding of the skills and techniques required for the specific discipline. Therefore, as a result of this, the majority of teacher assessment of this aspect of the portfolio was lenient.

### **Social, Cultural and Historical Research of the extracts**

The majority of candidates considered all three areas, but generally there was an over-reliance on downloaded material. An over-emphasis on previous productions was also evident with little contextualisation. It is important to state explicitly the actual extract being used, not just the work from which it is taken.

The stronger responses were able to apply their research specifically to the chosen extracts and draw conclusions on how the social, cultural and historical context had influenced the writer/performance conditions.

### **Action Plans**

Generally, the Action Plans were presented in an appropriate format with stronger responses detailing the specific actions required to achieve outcomes with clear deadlines.

In some cases, there was a lot of duplication between the Action Plan for Extract 1 and the Action Plan for Extract 2. A key aspect of the learning outcomes for Extract 2 is the working with others and the development of contrasting skills relevant to the discipline - these should be used to differentiate between the Action Plan for Extract 1 and the Action Plan for Extract 2.

All Action Plans must include dates.

### **Evidence of Practice**

The focus of the Evidence of Practice is the use of relevant techniques to develop skills which are then applied to the extract to achieve the desired outcome. Whilst all candidates' evidence of practice showed progression from their baseline through to their final performance/presentation, the majority of candidates described their rehearsals with limited focused reference to specific techniques used to develop their skills. Those in Band 4 were able to give detailed explanations and examples of relevant techniques, showing knowledge and understanding gained from research and practical application to their own work.

There was an over-reliance on YouTube as a ‘technique/method’ to inform own work. Whilst it has a role to play in informing candidates’ work, it should not be seen as a sole source for developing skills or work on an extract.

There was also evidence of an imbalance between extracts, with candidates showing greater engagement with one piece of work over the other.

### **Consideration of own strengths and weaknesses**

Most candidates made clear reference to their strengths and weaknesses during the process, with stronger responses giving clear examples to support the comments and also using their observations to inform future rehearsals.

Areas for consideration:

- The choice of extracts of repertoire should give candidates ample opportunity to demonstrate contrasting skills within their chosen discipline.
- A group approach to the Action Plans is not acceptable.
- In the Evidence of Practice candidates should focus on techniques used and how their skills were developed in relation to the demands of the chosen extract.
- Candidates should avoid narrative accounts/diaries of rehearsals.
- Ensure candidates should have access to a range of resources which will inform the techniques they can utilise to develop their skills.

### **AO3 (i) A risk assessment (4 marks)**

Clear research into industry practice was evident across all responses submitted, but the majority of responses fell within Band 2, due to a lack of specific application to the chosen extract or fully accounting for all aspects of risk across people and the space.

Areas for consideration:

- In order to gain marks within the top bands candidates need to develop their risk assessments to take account of the demands of the specific extracts, the chosen performance space, the risks associated to performers, production crew and the audience.

### **(ii) a recording of performance/presentation (10 marks)**

Most candidates presented extracts which demonstrated contrasting skills. The majority of performance candidates were able to demonstrate their appreciation of technical/aesthetic factors through their use of costume/set/lighting/sound. Similarly, production candidates demonstrated this through their choice of equipment and materials to complement their presentations. It was pleasing to see production candidates practically demonstrating the skills applied in their chosen extract. However, some of the presentations were too short to fully evidence the candidates’ skills development. The appreciation of technical and aesthetic factors was sometimes hindered by the choice of venue for the final performance/presentation.

Areas for consideration:

- The recording should be in the presence of the teacher-assessor, with no interruptions, in a performance space that is conducive to the requirements of the candidate, their chosen discipline and the chosen extract.
- It is important to note that the final presentation should be summative in content in order to ensure candidates meet all the assessment objectives for their chosen discipline as outlined in the assessment criteria in Appendix 2 of the specification.

## **AO4 An evaluation (6 marks)**

In general, the peer assessments were very strong and showed a good appreciation of the aesthetic and technical quality of the work analysed.

Most centres followed the rubric, whereby candidates assessed the same peer across both extracts. There is no requirement for the peer assessment to offer targets for further development, though some candidates did do this.

Stronger responses for both the peer and self-assessment had clear detailed examples to support their views and their analysis of the overall impact on the audience.

There was some imbalance in the responses in that the final section identifying their own targets for the future was underdeveloped. Those candidates gaining full marks reflected on the unit as a whole and used this to analyse their strengths and weakness, making their target setting more meaningful and holistic in its approach.

Areas for consideration:

- Peer and self-analysis should focus on the final performances/presentations, rather than the process.
- Summative detailed target setting for the future should not be limited to the specifics of the extracts performed within the unit, but the development of the performance/production skills of the candidate as a whole.

## **Summary**

Overall the moderation team were pleased with the uptake of various disciplines across both production and performance pathways. The variety of extracts presented reflected the candidates' and teachers' engagement with the demands of the specification. There was ample evidence of a creative approach to the delivery of the specification to the benefit of the candidates.

It is hoped that the guidance within this report will help clarify the depth required for the Portfolio, within the Record of Work in particular, to ensure candidates have access to the full range of marks in the forthcoming series.

## Chief Examiner's Report

### Assessment Unit AS 2 Planning and Realising a Performing Arts Event

#### Supporting Document

##### General Observations

The supporting documents produced a very wide range of responses with some strong work at several centres. The document generally allowed candidates of different abilities to respond positively, with the majority of centres answering all sections and candidates complying with the total word count for each section. Responses mostly fulfilled the requirements for each section with the majority of candidates dividing their word allowance equally between the different assessment objectives, as stipulated.

There was, however, a sense that at some centres there may not have been the necessary time given to the completion of the document. The approaches were sometimes muddled, particularly for section two, resulting in only a satisfactory outcome for a significant number of candidates. Weaker candidates tended to have an uneven approach which lacked any real analysis.

It should be noted that the marks awarded for the overall document are more than those awarded for performance/production. In order to ensure that candidates attain significantly in this document, note should be taken of the exemplar materials which are available from CCEA.

The supporting documents must be completed under controlled conditions which are outlined in Section 3.2 of the specification. All documents must be produced individually and group responses are not acceptable. Sections should be clearly labelled and word counts must be stipulated at the end of each section. Each section should be regarded separately in terms of word count rather than a word count for the overall document.

##### **AO1 Section 1 - A Response to the Pre-Release Stimulus Material (8 marks)**

- This was generally the most successful section of the document.
- The majority of candidates included sufficient research into the social, cultural and historical context.
- The style/genre was considered appropriately by most candidates.
- Attainment for the section was in Mark Band 3 for the majority of candidates.

Areas for consideration:

- Some work was significantly over the word count.
- There was a tendency, in the research, to over emphasise the biography of practitioners.
- In general, not enough reference was made to the pre-release stimulus or to style/genre.
- Constraints should be drawn from the list outlined in Section 3.2 of the specification.

- A balanced approach is needed in terms of constraints; there was not enough information on the artistic aspects.
- All documents must evidence an individual approach.

## **A02 Section 2 - Developing the Performing Arts Event (32 marks)**

- A wide variety of Performing Arts Events were represented in this section.
- The best responses presented two areas of discussion – review then experimentation.
- Stronger responses identified and discussed two discreet events in terms of the skills of their chosen discipline.
- Consideration on the impact of the events for the audience was outlined in the stronger responses.
- The better discussions identified the ideas for experimentation and then expressed creative approaches to the experimentation process.

Areas for consideration:

- The events reviewed for this section, including those which are recorded, must be intended for a live audience.
- Analysis of the events, in terms of the skills of the candidates' chosen discipline, requires further consideration.
- A significant minority discussed the experimentation ideas in terms of “we”; this aspect requires individual consideration.
- Many candidates had not adequately explored and recorded their rehearsal ideas.
- A small number of candidates discussed experimentation ideas which were not related to their chosen discipline.
- A significant number of candidates' did not fully analyse their rehearsal experimentation or offer an explanation of the intended outcome.
- Only a minority of candidates explicitly incorporated their strengths and weaknesses into the summary and for a significant number there was no discussion of strengths and weaknesses at all.
- Weaker candidates presented work which was often unbalanced and short of the word count.

## **A04 Section 3 - A Rationale, an Evaluation and a Summative Statement (8 marks)**

- Stronger responses provided a justified rationale for the choice of the final idea for experimentation and realisation.
- The best candidates offered a clear analysis of their own and others' contributions.
- The summary of the experience was understood and generally handled well by the majority of candidates.
- The best candidates made personal links to future opportunities and employment.

Areas for consideration:

- Analysis of ideas for experimentation and realisation proved the most difficult aspect of this section with accounts being presented in mainly descriptive terms.
- Some candidates did not fully define their final idea for experimentation/realisation and evaluated more in terms of the rehearsal process.
- Less satisfactory responses described how the group worked together rather than an analysis of the ideas which contributed to the final event.
- Weaker candidates were only able to make tenuous links to future employment opportunities.

## Performance/Production

### General Observations

The team of examiners were very pleased with the overall quality of performance and production observed during this first examination series of GCE Performing Arts. The work presented was of a good standard overall, with some excellent work in evidence at some very strong centres.

There was a wide range of disciplines on offer with a great variety of material also presented. In general the choice of material was very suited to the ability of the candidates and was carefully selected to reflect the requirements of the pre-release stimulus material.

Administration was also completed with accuracy and there were no issues identified in relation to communication with centres. All relevant paperwork was completed and submitted for the required deadline.

Centres were very accommodating and welcoming which was greatly appreciated by the examining team. The performances and presentations generally took place in a conducive atmosphere with supportive audiences in attendance. There were, however, a small minority of centres which chose to present their event without an audience and this detracted from the overall atmosphere.

The candidates were mostly well prepared and the events were, in the main, very successful.

### **AO3 Working independently and with others to deliver performance skills/production ideas**

Candidates worked very well both independently and as a group to present very interesting ideas which were derived from live or recorded events. Generally the performances were clearly related to the theme of “Emotions” contained in the pre-release stimulus material. It was apparent that careful consideration had been given to the theme to ensure that the material selected reflected this concept in performance. Some centres offered very challenging material which was commendable, however, material of this calibre may not suit the abilities of all candidates and it may be worth considering a range of materials to ensure access for all.

Performance candidates, in the main, were successful in working together to present their ideas as a cohesive entity. It was clear to the examining team that the final outcomes, at the majority of centres, had the overall feel of a Performing Arts Event.

It was also generally apparent that production candidates had worked effectively with their groups to reflect the production needs of the event in their presentation and production ideas. Nearly all production candidates presented their ideas with clarity and detail, however, there were several very short presentations and some without all the required documentation for the chosen discipline. Further clarification on the exact requirements for each production discipline will be issued for the next examination series to ensure that candidates are fully aware of what should be presented to the examiner.

### **A performance/presentation that conveys the chosen style, form and genre of the event**

Centres are required to identify, on their examination record sheet, the style/genre of their Performing Arts Event. This is an important aspect of the preparation for the examination process as it indicates to the examiner in advance the chosen style/genre of the piece. It is suggested that significant detail should be included in this section of the record sheet in order to assist examiners in marking to this bullet point in the assessment criteria for AO3 (Appendix 3 of the specification).

In most centres there was a general overview given of the chosen style and genre but for a significant minority of centres there was only a brief outline which proved less satisfactory.

Centres took different approaches to the selection of existing material and the choice of style/genre. The approaches taken were all acceptable, however, it is apparent that a clearly defined style/genre gives full access to the second bullet point contained within the assessment criteria. In Mark Band 4, the requirement is a “performance/presentation that fully conveys the chosen style, form and genre of the event and produces fit for purpose outcomes.” It is important, therefore, that this aspect is clearly defined.

The range of style and genre on offer was extensive and proved to be very appropriate and in keeping with the concept of “Emotions”. Some centres really pulled this concept through their performances whilst others had less defined links with the concept. Examiners expect the event to express explicit links to the pre-release stimulus material.

The vast majority of centres chose to present their work with set, costume, lighting and sound which all contributed to the mood of the performances and created the atmosphere of a Performing Arts Event.

### **Communication of ideas to the audience through application of personal technique**

The communication of ideas was very carefully considered in both presentation and performance. Production candidates, for the most part, presented their ideas succinctly and clearly to the examiner, very often in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. This communication medium worked very well and allowed a detailed personal approach to the discipline. Some strong candidates offered a clear insight into their role and outlined effectively the technical processes which led to the final performance. Less successful presentations were not as well organised and tended to be disjointed in format or under time. Some production candidates were much stronger in their presentation ideas than in the realisation of designs or plots whilst others offered presentations which were less detailed but which resulted in more satisfactory outcomes. A balanced approach to the presentation and realisation of production disciplines will best fulfil the requirements of the unit.

The vast majority of performers were well prepared for the event and some performances indicated a very skilled approach to the communication of ideas. Examiners commented particularly on the work of some musicians and the impact of their music in supporting the mood of the performance and providing fluency and cohesion between scenes.

In a few centres some performance candidates were not given enough performance time which resulted in fewer marks being awarded.

Several centres chose to present the event without the presence of an audience; it is to be noted that the specification states clearly that “*Students present their performing arts event to an audience and the external examiner*” (Section 3.2).

## Summary

In general, the examination team were pleased with the standard of performances and productions, some of which were excellent and exceptionally engaging. Candidates and teachers are to be congratulated on the overall standard of this year’s work.

It is hoped that centres take note of the points raised in the report, particularly in relation to the supporting document, in order that their candidates have opportunities to access the full range of marks in the forthcoming series.

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