

GCE



Chief Examiner's Report Performing Arts

Summer Series 2017



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.

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GCE PERFORMING ARTS

Principal Moderator's Report

Assessment Unit AS 1 Developing Skills and Repertoire (AA1P1/SPA1)

General Observations

Most centres had utilised the support materials and information provided at the agreement trial appropriately to assist with the completion of the unit, which was reflected in the layout and structure of most of the portfolios. However, centres are reminded of the need to adhere to the page limits and the presentation of coursework in Arial 12. The organisation of the written component varied across centres. It would be helpful to the moderation process if the specific titles from the Specification along with candidate's name and centre number were included at the top of each piece of work. Centres are reminded that work should be submitted in rank order and that top and bottom candidates must be included in the sample. Some centres used the Suggested Annotation Code, distributed at the agreement trial, which is now uploaded onto the Performing Arts microsite. Whilst this is a guide, it is important that teacher-assessors demonstrate through annotation where and why marks have been awarded. The Annotation Code is to reduce the administrative burden on teacher assessors. Pieces of work, without any form of annotation or evidence of marking can make it extremely difficult for the moderation team to find the justification for marks awarded.

There were less production disciplines offered than in previous years, with Drama, Dance and Music continuing to be the most popular. A variety of repertoire was used to develop candidates' skills, most of which allowed the candidates to showcase their developing skills appropriately. The majority of centres submitted appropriate recorded evidence of the performance/presentation on either DVD or USB, with candidates clearly identified at the start of their recordings. However, some centres submitted one long recording, which made it difficult to identify the candidates and the distinct extracts, and was time consuming for the moderation team. It is good practice to organise the recordings per candidate. The centres are also reminded to identify the candidates at the start of the final recording, especially for the group pieces, when costume can make identification difficult.

There were some technical difficulties with recordings and the centres are reminded that work should be packaged appropriately to prevent damaged in transit and that the centres should ensure all recordings are included and that they are in working order.

Administration of the Moderation Process

E-moderation processes were followed effectively. Most 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 teacher-assessors should make specific reference to the assessment objective descriptors in their annotation and make use of the Suggested Annotation Code.
- Bibliographies must be submitted as part of the assessment evidence and each source should be connected to specific sections of the portfolio through footnotes.
- Centres are reminded that the cover sheet available on the home page for e-moderation should be attached to each sample, stating the candidate's name and overall mark in the boxes provided.

- Centres are reminded that the sample should be submitted in rank order and include the top and bottom candidates.
- Each portfolio should be organised by section in the order outlined in the specification.
- Recordings should be on USB or DVD and organised by candidate name and number with each stage clearly labelled.

Portfolios and Application of the Assessment Criteria

AO1: A summary of research and skills audit (12 marks)

Section 1: Style and genre within the chosen discipline

There were some excellent examples of thorough research of styles and genre that looked at a wide range of source material, which was effectively cited and footnoted in the document. When a range of styles and genres, including international ones, were included this made for interesting reading and showed 'thorough research'. Those using reference books, in addition to websites, for research showed precise and detailed understanding. The most effective responses were able to link the explicitly the genre to the style of performance relevant to the discipline. However, some responses showed limited evidence of research and therefore could not gain access to the higher mark bands. Centres are reminded that explicit 'evidence of research' is a key feature of the assessment criteria. In some centres there was an over-reliance on teacher-led learning, which led to limited differentiation between candidates' submission. Overall candidates were using footnotes to accurately reference their work. Centres are reminded that foot notes and bibliographies can be submitted as separate pages and do not count in the overall page total for each section.

Section 2: Skills required within the chosen disciplines

Most candidates identified and defined the skills required for their chosen discipline, as listed on pages 8-10 of the specification. Whilst other skills may be relevant the candidates should include all the skills listed, both in this section and the Skills Audit.

For production candidates, centres are advised to include the tasks listed on pages 8-10, and then draw out the skills required to complete these tasks.

Candidates tended to give a definition of the skills, followed by a short example based on pupils existing understanding and not based on detailed research. Some cited examples from their own performance work; centres are reminded that the supporting examples should come from professional work. Top candidates related the skills explored to professional contexts, styles and genres or use by modern practitioners.

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

This section continued to be the weakest section in The Summary of Research. In some centres there is too much of an overlap with Section 1 of the A2 Written Report. The emphasis here is on researching current professionals and their practice including the use of new technology. The strongest responses used current practitioners to support key points relating to how they prepare, perform, progress and promote themselves utilising current technology. Some centres took a case study approach, focusing on a one or more practitioner, which proved effective. In most cases, the technologies cited related explicitly to the chosen discipline, although some were a little generic in scope and did not focus on the impact of the technology on the performer/production worker.

Skills Audit

The Skills Audit was generally the most well developed aspect of the ‘Summary of Research’, with a wider range of approaches evident this year in terms of how this was presented. Some of the strongest candidates used an introductory paragraph summarising their range of current experiences, followed by a table detailing their skills level and experience in the skills listed on pages 8-10 of the specification, concluding with a paragraph summarising the areas they wanted to focus on developing. Other candidates gave a narrative account of their experience which was less effective as the response often lacked focus on all of the skills required and assessment of their current skill level. Centres should guide candidates as to what is the most relevant and current relevant experience to include, so that this is a precise and focused document.

Areas for consideration:

- Candidates should clearly state their chosen discipline within the title of each section.
- Candidates’ sources need to be clearly referenced throughout each section in order to meet the assessment criteria. Sources should be referenced through footnotes and a summative bibliography.
- The inclusion of downloaded material passed off as the candidates own is not acceptable and carries penalties. Please see the JCQ guidelines on plagiarism and malpractice. Over reliance of Wikipedia should be discouraged.
- The use of case studies/interviews with current professionals from the chosen discipline should be encouraged to give more depth and focus, especially in Sections 2 and 3 of the Summary of Research.

AO2: A record of work (28 marks)

A range of repertoire was chosen for exploration with works from a range of playwrights, composers and some choreographers, which was taken from a broad spectrum of styles and genres. Well known works were prominent such as *‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’*, *‘Blood Brothers’*, *‘Wicked’*, *‘Daisy Pulls it Off’* as well as lesser known works. Overall the candidates were given an opportunity to develop skills appropriately with a degree of stretch and challenge evident.

Social, Cultural and Historical Research of the extracts

There was less reliance on downloaded material this year, but where it was used, most teacher-assessors made reference to this and excluded it from their assessment. Centres are reminded that the focus for the research should be the extract being performed and not the text, dance or musical piece in its entirety. With dance repertoire candidates should be guided to research the choreographer of the chosen piece as it is common practice to research the playwright with drama extracts and composer with music extracts. For Production candidates a focus on designers/directors of previous productions should underpin their research in this section.

Top candidates were able to link their research securely with their chosen extract. Most candidates made reference to their extract at the start or the end of their response, but were unable to make links throughout. Candidates should ensure that the style and genre of the chosen extract is a key aspect of their research, and connect this to how it will influence their performance style or production decisions. Overall, this section should provide candidates with a clear context for developing their Action Plan and subsequent Evidence of Practice.

Action Plans

Generally, centres followed the templates from samples given, and there was clear evidence of specific actions to be taken within a given timeframe. The most effective Action Plans started with an overall desired outcome and connected to very specific tasks that would ensure successful outcomes. However, some Action Plans were written in prose form, with the outcomes written as an evaluation style comment on progress that was more appropriate to the Evidence of Practice rather than the Action Plan.

There was sometimes too much of an overlap between Action Plans for Extracts 1 and 2, with limited reference to working with others, which should be clearly and explicitly drawn out by the candidates.

Evidence of Practice

Generally, these were well developed, with the majority of candidates giving a clear insight into the process of developing the extract for performance. Most candidates focused on the process of developing the chosen extract, whereas some candidates began by focusing on the selection and rejection of extracts, which is unnecessary.

There was more focus on techniques used, but a greater connection between the skills developed and how these explicitly related to the extract needs to be addressed by the candidates in their account of their work. This is particularly the case when the centre has used a workshop based approach. Whilst this can be effective at developing the candidates' skill level, they need to then be able to apply the learning directly to their extract. In some centres there was a lack of structure to the rehearsal process, with an over-reliance on watching other performers as a rehearsal technique, which limited the candidates opportunity to discuss their progress related to specific skills development and analysis of the techniques used, so their response became very repetitive. Most candidates focused on evaluating the performances after the baseline and second recording. Although this showed good evaluative skills, more detail on impact of the techniques on their skill level would have been beneficial.

Evaluating their strengths and weaknesses is one of the assessment criteria and candidates should be encouraged to set further actions based on these. Top candidates showed excellent progression and used a range of advanced techniques. The style and genre of the chosen repertoire should be evident within the Evidence of Practice with techniques chosen to support the development of the style of the final product.

Those taking a production role should focus on their skills and techniques used to produce the materials required to develop the skills/tasks as per pages 8-10 of the specification. They may make some reference to the development of their presentation, but the focus should largely be on the development of the final product. As in previous years, there is evidently greater engagement with one extract over the other and candidates should be encouraged to take a more balanced approach.

Areas for consideration:

- Social, Cultural and Historical Research should be explicitly linked to the extract and how it will inform the candidates' interpretation of their performance/production role.
- All source material must be clearly referenced in footnotes and bibliography.
- Action Plans should include specific techniques to be used to develop the extract. Self management and work with others should be explicitly evident in their action steps. Dates must be included. There should be a clear distinction between Extracts 1 and 2 and the title of the extract should be included at the top of the Action Plan.
- The Evidence of Practice should reference the contrasting demands of Extracts 1 and 2 by making explicit reference to the skills required and working with others.
- A wider range of techniques, beyond those explored at GCSE, should be utilised in the Evidence of Practice.
- Use of headings within the Evidence of Practice focusing on skills to be developed, techniques used and progress made, provided a clear focus for candidates and helped them access all of the assessment criteria. This would also help candidates move away from narrative accounts/diaries of rehearsals.

- In the Evidence of Practice candidates should clearly explain through practical examples from their own work and work with others how the techniques used enabled them to make progress on the extract.
- 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)

There was a pleasing standard of risk assessments submitted this year, with greater evidence of considering the risks associated with space, performers and audience. Risk assessments tended to be secure, with most achieving Mark Band 3. Candidates in the lower mark bands did not differentiate the risks between Extracts 1 and 2, and submitted the same risk assessment for both extracts, therefore only gained half the marks available. Clear research into industry practice was evident across most responses in terms of layout and structure. The strongest responses showed clear and precise evidence of research into risk reduction appropriate to professional practice in the Performing Arts industry, often citing the appropriate Health and Safety Act.

Areas for consideration:

- Candidates should include details of the extract and the venue in their risk assessment.
- They should consider the layout to maximise the use of the page.
- Centres are reminded that work should be submitted on an A4 page as per the rubric of the specification.

(ii): A recording of performance/presentation (10 marks)

The majority of performance work was strong. There was some excellent choreographed and skillfully executed musical theatre pieces and a real sense of theatre evident in the performances in some centres, which is to be commended. Candidates performance skills, on the whole, were well developed. On occasions it would be useful for candidates to ensure the contrasting pieces demonstrate a range of skills. Centres are reminded that candidates should play roles suited to their own gender, unless the text specifically calls for a cross-gender role. When selecting the second extract, it would be beneficial to the candidates that they have equal performance time, as some candidates were disadvantaged by having a very small role. Centres are reminded that the final performance should consider the aesthetic needs of the performance (costume, set, technical) and be 'off book'.

The production candidates' final presentations were largely delivered effectively with a clear focus on the final product. The final presentation took account of the various stages of the process and most showed evidence of all the assessment outcomes as outlined on pages 8-10 of the specification. Centres should consider carefully where the camera is placed and the lighting to ensure all materials presented are seen. It is acceptable to zoom in on aspects of the presentation to ensure they are clearly viewed.

When a production candidate is working with performance candidates in extract two, it would be standard practice to see evidence of their final product in the performance.

Areas for consideration:

- For Extract 2 candidates should be grouped in such a way to ensure they are able to demonstrate their skills fully and appropriately, enabling them to access the full range of mark bands.
- 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.

- Aesthetic needs of the final product should be considered and evident in the final stage recording.
- 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 on page 54 of the specification.
- It is advised that all candidates identify themselves at the start of their final recording to aid identification during the moderation performance.
- The guidance for length of recording should be followed as outlined on page 12 of the specification.
- Centres should check all DVDs/USBs carefully to ensure that the assessment evidence has been recorded/downloaded successfully prior to submission.

AO4: An evaluation (6 marks)

This was one of the strongest sections of the unit, with evaluations showing a secure focus on the skills evident in the final performance and the impact on audience. Top candidates were able to support their views with insightful practical examples. However, candidates need to be encouraged to evaluate the aesthetic features of the performances in more detail as this is part of the assessment criteria for both their self and peer assessments. Some candidates referred to 'the camera' instead of 'the audience' which should be discouraged.

For those following a production pathway there was a tendency to evaluate the presentation skills rather than the final product presented. Production candidates and peers evaluating production candidates should focus on how the final product meets the demands of the extract, whether it is fit for purpose aesthetically and technically rather than evaluating their presentation methods.

Centres need to ensure candidates include target setting for future development is given equal weighting as the other aspects of their evaluation, as sometimes this was not explicitly referenced.

Areas for consideration:

- Peer and self assessment of production candidates should focus on the final product rather than the style and quality of the presentation.
- The aesthetics of the final product should be included in the peer and self assessment.
- 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

There was some excellent performance work presented this year, which was really engaging to watch. It was pleasing to see new centres come on board and that more experienced centres have consolidated their approach to the unit effectively.

The agreement trial will offer further guidance on application of the assessment criteria. Centres are reminded that resources and sample materials are available online and that there is a Portfolio Clinic available. Whilst a pleasing number of centres availed of the Portfolio Clinic, not all of these centres followed up on the advice given which was detrimental to the candidates.

Chief Examiner's Report

Assessment Unit AS 1 Developing Skills and Repertoire (AA1P1/SPA1)

General Observations

Once again the team of examiners were very pleased with the overall quality of performance and production observed during the fourth 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.

The most popular discipline remained as Drama, although there was a welcome increase in the number of production candidates. In general, the choice of material was very suited to the candidates and was carefully selected to reflect the requirements of the pre-release stimulus material.

In general the paperwork was carefully dealt with. Centres should be reminded that they are to identify, on the examination record, the specific style/genre of their Performing Arts Event. This, along with a detailed description, enables the examiner to mark the bullet point in the assessment criteria for AO3 (Section 3.1 of the specification). Centres are required to post a filmed version of the examination to CCEA within 5 days. This is outlined in Section 3.2 of the specification and is a requirement. A specific addressed, padded envelope is provided to centres for return of the work.

The examining team were warmly welcomed at all centres and the hospitality shown was very much appreciated. The majority of centres used a conducive environment, with an audience, to ensure the atmosphere of a performance event was created. It would be appreciated if centres remembered that examiners will need to make notes, so a desk and light is necessary. The candidates were mostly well prepared and the events were, in the main, very successful. Centres are to be reminded that the examiners are looking for professional practice, so everything that contributes towards that is welcomed.

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

- The majority of work showed the candidates had worked independently and as a group to present very interesting and entertaining work.
- Ensemble work was again popular, which allows for the full range of marks and in some cases really supported weaker candidates.
- The pre-release stimulus of 'Relationships' was clearly considered by all centres.
- The final outcomes, at the majority of centres, had the feel of a Performing Arts Event; with examiners commending the professionalism and talent of some outstanding candidates.
- Generally the production candidates had worked effectively with their groups to reflect the production needs of the event in their presentation and production ideas.

Areas for consideration:

- The specification states performances should be between 10-40 minutes, there was a significant number of centres not adhering to this time frame. Please be aware that examiners stop marking after the time allowance has been met. Candidates cannot access the higher mark bands if they do not have enough exposure; equally, overlong performances can disadvantage performers, as there are challenges in sustaining focus over a longer period of time.

- Drama candidates playing several different roles tended to be disadvantaged as they couldn't show full development of the role.
- Production candidates should take note of Section 3.1 of the specification, where it outlines the evidence required for the examiner. There should be a range of evidence produced which is available for the examiner to peruse during the presentation.
- It is advised that presentations take place in a separate space, this is purely as production candidates tend to gain higher marks in this environment. It also allows perusal of the evidence by the examiner, as mentioned in the previous point.

AO3: A performance/presentation that conveys the chosen style, form and genre of the event

- The majority of centres outlined a specific style and genre and recorded this on the examination record sheet.
- It was clear where candidates had undertaken research and practical development in a specific style or genre and these candidates tended to gain higher marks. The work had clarity and the skills range was wider.
- Performance candidates produced good quality work, using a range of influential practitioners to shape their work.
- Some, production candidates carefully considered the style, form/genre and reflected this in their work.
- The vast majority of centres chose to present their work with set, costume, lighting and sound, which contributed to creating the atmosphere of a Performing Arts Event.

Areas for consideration:

- Some centres did not specify the form, style/genre of the event. Candidates are greatly disadvantaged where this was the case. Mark Band 4 states, "performance/presentation that fully conveys the chosen style, form and genre of the event and produces fit for purpose outcomes."
- Some material presented was overly adapted to fit the pre-release stimulus.
- Production candidates should explicitly refer to the chosen style, form/genre in their presentation to the examiner.
- The rubric was violated in some centres by presenting material that wasn't repertoire.

AO3: Communication of ideas to the audience through application of personal technique

- Well directed performances advantaged the candidates and created impact for the audience.
- The vast majority of performers were fully committed, well prepared and showed a real understanding of their chosen discipline.
- Some production candidates presented succinct, detailed and interesting presentations to the examiner, clearly outlining their role and often using PowerPoint, well prepared notes and visual aids to communicate their ideas.

Areas for consideration:

- Every performance should have a director, either a fellow candidate as their discipline or the teacher. The candidates are not expected to direct themselves. Candidates must present a range of skills in their chosen discipline in order to reflect skills development from Unit 1 and Unit 2. The examiner is expecting to see a wide range of these skills.
- Production candidates must rehearse their presentation and receive guidance on this process, as the performance candidates do.
- Please consider how the examiner will identify the candidates. In ensemble work especially, some thought is needed into using colours/costumes/props etc. so that each candidate is discernible from another.

Assessment Unit AS 2 Planning and Realising a Performing Arts Event (AA1P2/SPA2)

Supporting Document

General Observations

The supporting documents showed a wide range of responses, with some very strong centres addressing the document with the time and detail needed for higher band work. All sections were answered by centres.

There was a big discrepancy in the way word counts were addressed, a large number of centres did not state the word count, please note this is a requirement at the end of each section. Please refer to Section 3.2 of the specification, where the word counts for each section are outlined.

Section 2, where 32 marks are available, once again provided the most varied approach. Almost all candidates viewed two appropriate live or recorded events, which was an improvement on last year. It should be noted that the requirement is to review *“from the perspective of the student’s chosen discipline”*, these are clearly outlined in Section 3.1 and the skills should be reviewed explicitly, to meet the requirements of the higher mark band.

The majority of centres had ensured that candidates had undertaken individual approaches to experimentation, this was a marked improvement on last year and allowed many more candidates to achieve better marks.

Strengths and weaknesses were rarely explicitly addressed, meaning the candidate had not addressed all the bullet points in Section 2: AO2.

Candidates who achieved top marks had clearly approached each section of the document separately, placed a word count at the end of each section and included footnotes, references or a bibliography.

Overall it is still felt that not enough time is dedicated to the Supporting Document, bearing in mind that is worth more marks than the production/performance element of the examination.

It is a requirement of CCEA that Supporting Documents are received separately from the Unit 1 Portfolio, on a specific date. There was a large number of centres who either sent the supporting document along with the Unit 1 sample for moderation or did not provide supporting documents on the deadline date. This causes huge problems for the marking and moderating teams. Centres are reminded of this requirement and asked to ensure they meet the CCEA deadlines.

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

- This was generally a successful section of the document, where Mark Band 3 was regularly awarded.
- The majority of candidates included some research into the social, cultural and historical context of the chosen material.
- The pre-release stimulus was considered by the vast majority of candidates.
- Some candidates offered a clear style or genre for their piece, showing detailed knowledge of this and how it linked to the development of their performance.
- A significant number of candidates had considered both the artistic and practical constraints in a very thorough way and allowed them to avail of the top marks for the bullet point.

Areas for consideration:

- Research into the style and genre needs to be given the same attention as that of the material itself.
- Centres must ensure that research work is the candidate's own and not simply downloaded, without references, from the internet. Quotations must be properly referenced in order to avoid plagiarism.
- Candidates should give equal attention to both artistic and practical constraints of their performance.
- Word count must be stated and adhered to.

AO2 Section 2: Developing the Performing Arts Event (32 marks)

- A wide and interesting range of live and recorded events were reviewed in this section.
- A large number of candidates gave specific and detailed examples of moments in the performance and how skills had been used, this was very effective.
- The strongest responses dealt with the section in five discreet paragraphs; Review 1, Review 2, Experiment 1, Experiment 2 and Strengths and Weaknesses.
- Consideration of the impact of the events for the audience made responses stronger.
- There were some highly creative experiments, showing the calibre of the candidates' knowledge, understanding and personal research into practitioners and styles.
- The best answers had specific reference to the candidate's strengths and weaknesses and weaved the way the work was shaped into the body of the answer.

Areas for consideration:

- Candidates should refer to the skills list in Unit 1 to guide them in what to look for during the performance.
- A description or narrative of the plot is not necessary and in light of the word count, should be avoided.
- There should be a tangible link between a skill reviewed for the first bullet point and how this idea will be explored further as an experiment.
- A small number of candidates undertook experiments not related to their discipline.
- Some centres took a group approach to experimentation, this did not allow candidates to access the higher mark bands as it was not "creative".

- Many candidates did not state the word count.
- Many candidates did not mention strengths and weaknesses.

AO4 Section 3: A Rationale, an Evaluation and a Summative Statement (8 marks)

- This section was generally answered well, with the majority of marks in Mark Bands 2 and 3.
- The strongest responses took one idea from Section 2 and gave a full and justified explanation of why it was relevant for the realisation of the performance.
- Strong candidates analysed how their experimentation idea and the experimentation ideas of other group members, had contributed to the event.
- The summary of the experience was handled well by a large proportion of the candidates.
- The majority of centres addressed the link to employment and future opportunities with some clarity.

Areas for consideration:

- Some candidates provided justification for using both experimentation ideas in performance.
- On occasion the idea that was selected for Section 3 was a completely unrelated idea, which hadn't come from Section 2, this led to an underdeveloped response.
- Reference should be made to the other people in the group and how their experimentation ideas contributed to the final event.
- Weaker responses made a perfunctory statement about employment opportunities, without links to the experience of the Performing Arts course.

Principal Moderator's Report

Assessment Unit A2 1 Planning for Employment

General Observations

It is pleasing to see the level of engagement personally and professionally both by candidates and the centres for this Unit. The work was generally well organised and set at an appropriate level to allow the candidates to access the range of mark bands. It was evident from the work submitted that the Unit provides a solid base for those wishing to pursue a career in Performing Arts, whilst also providing a wealth of transferable skills for those who choose a different career path. There is a decrease in the amount of production candidates, with the most popular disciplines being, Drama, Dance and Music.

Overall the administration was carried out satisfactorily. Centres are reminded to use the downloadable cover sheet and attach to each sample. There was generally effective use of materials and guidance given at the agreement trial. Most candidates kept to the page limits and used the correct font. It was most helpful when the candidate had included their discipline in the title or opening of their work.

The level of detail of teachers' annotations varied, with several using the suggested annotation codes, referencing the assessment objectives, as well as making their own detailed comments on the eCRS which was aided the moderation process. Some centres simply ticked the candidates' work and quoted the assessment criteria on the eCRS which was less supportive. Most centres used the phrases from the assessment objectives to support their marking and this made it easy

to see why marks had been awarded. Some centres submitted one continuous recording of all the work which made it difficult to pick out individual candidates and hindered the moderation process. The recording of auditions/presentations and interview should be submitted on USB/DVD and each candidates' work organised into a separate folder so it is easy to access by the moderation team.

Administration of the Moderation Process

The majority of 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.
- Bibliographies must be submitted as part of the assessment evidence and each source should be connected to specific sections of the portfolio through footnotes, where appropriate.
- Centres are reminded that the cover sheet available on the home page for e-moderation should be attached to each sample, stating the candidate's name and overall mark in the boxes provided.
- Centres are reminded that the sample should be submitted in rank order and include the top and bottom candidate.
- It would be helpful if candidates included name, candidate number, discipline and the title of the section at the top of each piece of work.
- The recordings of the audition/presentation and interview and show reels/demo CDs should be in an accessible format and included with the sample. Centres should check everything is in working order prior to submission.
- All sections of work should be annotated to reflect the teacher-assessors application of the assessment criteria.

AO1: A Written Report (12 marks)

There was evidence of a more consistent and consolidated approach to the Written Report, with most centres approaching this as a holistic document, which made the top mark bands much more accessible for the stronger candidates.

The majority of candidates used a separate page for their footnotes and bibliography which is to be commended. Some candidates used the footnote numbering system, but with the references appearing in the bibliography and not at the end of each section. Some candidates used brackets to indicate the source. Fewer candidates showed little evidence of research or failed to reference research.

Section 1: Skills and Training

Most candidates discussed their previous experiences and skills in their introduction, which often became a very lengthy evaluation of AS. This then impacted on the amount of space left to discuss the three training routes in detail. Candidates in the top mark band were able to discuss their previous work succinctly and continue to link the three training routes to their required skills development. Some candidates also outlined the entry requirements and fees in great detail, with less focus on what skills the course actually developed and how this would make them more employable in the industry. Centres should encourage candidates to securely link the training routes and skills to employment opportunities.

Overall, there was a greater focus on the development of skills through the courses selected, but the experience based pathways need to be explored in greater detail.

Section 2: How to Gain Employment

There was a much more detailed approach taken to Section 2 this year, with less evidence of downloaded material and more application to the candidates own discipline and circumstances. Some candidates referenced professional practitioners in this section which gave detailed insight into the pros and cons of the agents, unions and organisations explored. The strongest candidates linked their research to their own requirements and employment opportunities. Not all candidates addressed the role of self – promotion.

Section 3: Employment Plan

Employment Plans on the whole were much more focused and allowed candidates to give a detailed outline of the jobs explored. Nearly all candidates found an advertised job to discuss for each of their three plans, with most linking these to their different training routes identified in Section 1. The strongest responses were those where the employment opportunities discovered linked closely to their chosen discipline, and connected all of the aspects listed in page 23 of the specification to their discipline, skills and progression opportunities.

Areas for consideration:

- The research should be put into a personal context relating to the candidates discipline and skills with a focus on how to gain employment within the industry.
- All sources should be acknowledged through the use of footnotes and a bibliography.
- Section 2 should apply directly to their discipline and make use of specific examples of agencies within the NI and wider UK context.
- Candidates should include at least one job relating to performing if they are following the performance pathway.
- Section 3 must draw on existing job opportunities that are relevant to the candidates chosen discipline rather than generic job descriptions and should cover all the learning outcomes listed for this section on page 23 of the specification.

AO2: A Promotional Portfolio (12 marks)

There was some excellent work produced by candidates, which reflected the acquisition of skills and reflected professional practice. However, some candidates were disadvantaged by rubric errors such as: style and layout of headshots; incomplete or excessively long showreels; style and layout of CV; or failure to submit all 3 components as outlined on page 23 of the specification. This has been clearly stated at agreement trials and in feedback through Portfolio Clinics. In some centres, professional photographers were used and whilst this produced excellent quality of headshots the did not always conform to the requirements of the Performing Arts Industry in terms of style and layout.

Centres should ensure that candidates have an opportunity to research the requirements for the portfolio and then apply their knowledge in the completion of the required components.

Areas for consideration:

- All aspects of the portfolio should reflect professional practice and therefore need to be underpinned by focused relevant research into current industry standards.
- The headshot should conform to those used by the Performing Arts industry rather than modelling agencies.
- Opportunities for feedback on draft promotional materials would help inform the candidates' evaluation.
- Demo CDs should include a track list.

AO3: An Audition and Interview or Presentation and Interview (24 marks)

The auditions and interviews showed a selection of materials from a wide range of styles. It was pleasing to see more classical pieces being showcased by musicians. This shows that the qualification is suitable for all styles of performance as these candidates were able to access the top mark bands.

Auditions were most enjoyable and candidates had clearly been prepared well for the assessment. There was a range of repertoire used, with *'A Streetcar Named Desire'*, *'The Crucible'*, *'Tomorrow's Wish'* and various Shakespeare pieces remaining popular choices. Dance pieces were often very lengthy and did not always conform to professional practice. Some candidates did not display all the skills required for their discipline as outlined in the specification during their audition, which hindered them significantly. Overall, questions for the interview were appropriate and allowed for candidates to display their understanding.

Audition/Presentation

The majority of candidates followed the Drama discipline. Contrasting pieces were chosen and fitted with industry practice and were of an appropriate length. Centres are reminded that it is expected that a classic monologue should be performed in the appropriate accent. If an accent is changed with a contemporary piece centres should draw out the rationale behind the candidates' interpretation during the interview process. Candidates should play their own gender, unless the text demands otherwise. One off monologues written for examination purposes, or sourced from the internet rarely allow candidates the scope for character development and research that monologues extracted from full published texts allow. This then impacts on their ability to answer interview questions in depth.

Overall, production candidates complemented their presentations with a range of industry relevant documents and PowerPoint presentations, drawn from the skills list on pages 8-10 of the specification.

The specification requires that all candidates present two extracts, it is to the candidates detriment to present more or less than this for assessment and dilutes the focus and their ability to display their skills effectively.

Interview

The interviews were conducted professionally by the teacher-assessors, giving the candidates a realistic formal experience. The range of questions were generally effective and again utilised the list on the CCEA website. The candidates were given the opportunity to explain their interpretations of their chosen material with reference to research. In order to make the question on research more meaningful, and to avoid straightforward repetition of facts, centres should focus on how research influenced the development of their ideas and how they applied the research to their final product.

Areas for consideration:

- Note the requirement to present **two** contrasting extracts.
- Extracts should be contrasting and give candidates the opportunity to display all the skills required for the chosen discipline as outlined on page 8-10 of the specification.
- Questions should reflect the rigour of A2 study and allow candidates to access the assessment criteria by addressing the use of research to inform the final outcome and the application of skills and knowledge that reflect professional practice.

AO4: An Evaluation (12 marks)

Evaluations showed secure analysis of their audition pieces, however, candidates need to be encouraged to evaluate the quality of their promotional portfolio and interview technique in equal detail. In the majority of cases, production candidates continue to evaluate their presentation rather than their final product.

Overall, candidates referenced all aspects of the promotional portfolio in their evaluation with varying degrees of analysis. Candidates should be encouraged to focus on evaluating the **quality** of their promotional portfolio in order to move away from a descriptive appraisal of each aspect. It is essential that candidates reference **feedback** in a meaningful way in order to gain access to the top mark bands.

When evaluating the audition/presentation and interview the focus is not on the process or preparation, but the final product. Stronger candidates used feedback throughout the evaluation and made their future targets clear at the end of the evaluation or at the end of each section. Candidates who made limited references to feedback and target setting found it difficult to access the top mark bands.

Areas for consideration:

- Greater opportunities for feedback and reviewing the recording of the audition/presentation and interview should be embedded into the delivery of this unit.
- Explicit reference to feedback and target setting are required to access the top mark bands.
- Equal weighting should be given to each aspect of the evaluation.

Summary

Overall, there was a pleasing development of centres understanding and application of the assessment criteria. Further guidance on the application of the assessment criteria will be exemplified at the agreement trial. Centres are encouraged to make use of the resources available on the CCEA microsite, and utilise and take note of feedback given through the Portfolio Clinics.

Chief Examiner's Report

Assessment Unit A2 2 Performing to a Commission Brief

Record of Work

General Observations

In general candidates performed well in the Record of Work for A22 this year although it was noted that there were fewer candidates achieving the very top range of marks for this series. The pre-release stimulus material presented a range of ideas for exploration with the two most popular briefs being Commission Brief 1 "Tell me a Story" aimed at a local audience and Commission Brief 3 taking the work of "Seamus Heaney" as a starting point. Both proved to be quite challenging in terms of outcomes for Section (a) and Section (d).

There were a number of administrative points which were apparent the year particularly in relation to the collation of work in the correct order. A few centres again encouraged the use of cover sheets for each section which proved to be good practice as it ensured each section was discrete and addressed by the candidate. This practice also allowed the examiner to easily define the different elements presented.

Too many candidates did not include final word counts at the end of each section which was, at times, due to overly long work. Centres should ensure candidates adhere to the designated word limit and advise candidates to clearly display the count at the end of each section. **Work which is over the acceptable word limit will not be considered for assessment.**

There is still an overall feeling that not enough time is being given to this part of A22 with elements feeling undernourished and lacking in the professional detail that can give candidates access to the excellent mark band range. Centres should be reminded that this work is marked out of a total of 48 and carries a significant weighting for the end result of the unit. It was, however, encouraging to note that the “Summary of Findings”, Section (b) was completed more successfully than in the last two series. The findings are now being more definitely linked to the candidate’s administration role and to the related tasks. The tasks themselves need to be presented to a professional finish and for a considerable number of candidates, this is not the case.

Centres need to be aware that the work of candidates should be individualised and that there should be no group approaches or overuse of online resources or exemplar materials particularly for work presented for the second part of Section (a). The best centres offered a range of professional contexts for this section which allowed for more diverse outcomes and this was the case for a pleasing number of centres this year.

Section (a): Research Report-part 1 (4 marks)

- Research was generally well completed in terms of the social, cultural and historical context of the chosen Commission Brief.
- The majority of candidates expressed links from their research to their intended outcomes for the Commission Brief.
- There was less of a group approach to this section than for work presented in the last series.

Areas for consideration:

- For a small minority of candidates, links from research to the final ideas for performance/production of the Commission Brief were not still explicitly expressed.
- Research was somewhat diluted if candidates looked superficially at stimulus, material, style and genre. A focus on two areas would result in a stronger, more detailed outcome.
- This section was often over word count.

Section (a): Research Report-part 2 (4 marks)

- Research of the financial and marketing practices at two venues was generally well approached with sound detail included in the summary.
- Candidates who had made personal contact with venues seemed to gain a great deal from the experience and this was evident in the standard of outcome.
- Screen shots were again used to exemplify ideas on marketing and the better candidates made secure references to the screen shots through effective annotation.
- Work was more individualised for this series and there were a broader range of contexts offered for the research of practice.

Areas for consideration:

- Information which is accessed from websites, including screen shots, should be referenced in the appropriate way. Footnotes at the end of the section work best.
- More emphasis should be placed on specific information regarding financial practices including detail on income and expenditure.

- Some candidates did not analyse both financing and marketing practices which meant they could not access the full mark range.
- Some candidates offered an imbalanced response through lack of full consideration of each venue or professional practice.

Section (b): Summary of Findings (16 marks)

- Strong candidates reviewed practice for their administration role at two venues with a balanced approach to the summary of practice at each venue.
- Candidates who had made personal contact with venues gained a great deal from the experience and this was evident in the work presented.
- The better candidates made links from their findings to all three administrative tasks.
- More candidates considered the overall administration role than was evidenced last year and the work was more focused on the intended outcomes/tasks.

Areas for consideration:

- Some candidates relied solely on internet research which was acceptable but this may have impacted on the quality of their understanding of the administration role.
- Some candidates still received assessment outcomes in Mark Band 1 as a result of not connecting the research with carrying out their administration role, even though the research was sound.
- Some candidates concentrated solely on the three tasks of the administration role rather than considering findings on the role itself.
- Some candidates did not consider all three tasks in the light of findings which resulted in less marks being awarded.
- Some candidates used inappropriate venues where their administration role was not discreetly represented. It was therefore difficult to discuss findings in the required detail.

Section (c): Evidence of Tasks (16 marks)

- There was generally a sound approach to the generation of tasks with some professional and creative work in evidence.
- Most of the work presented was in Mark Band 3 and nearly all candidates presented tasks of a similar standard within their record of work.
- The research work at venues had clearly influenced the outcome of tasks and the better candidates were able to use ideas to influence their own approach.
- Those candidates who had clearly undertaken the administration role were more successful than candidates who merely completed tasks.
- Once again the examiners really enjoyed marking this section and appreciated the amount of work which some candidates had undertaken in the completion of their tasks.

Areas for consideration:

- There are still some issues about the over use of exemplar materials, particularly for Front of House and the Health and Safety Officer. The replication of exemplar materials resulted in a loss of marks.
- Some candidates failed to present material at a professional level; more connection with professional industry is necessary in order to achieve quality outcomes.
- Some materials lacked reflection of professional practice because of simple errors

contained in the task. Small errors in SPG, layout and font size hampered candidates and showed the need for proof reading.

- Some candidates presented incomplete work with only two of the three tasks being presented. This resulted in a Mark Band 1 outcome despite the quality of submitted items.
- A list of support materials for the Education Officer role was the task which was again most often omitted. The task should be clearly linked to the practical workshops and/or the material used for the performance of the Commission Brief.
- The Staff Briefing that should accompany the Front of House “Projected Staffing List” was also omitted for several candidates.
- A significant number of candidates did not utilise the full page count. It is advised that candidates use all six A4 pages allocated to the completion of tasks in order to access the top mark bands.
- Some candidates used pre-existing tables or diagrams. All work should be of an original nature or customised to an original outcome.

Section (d): Evaluation (8 marks)

- This section was completed to a generally satisfactory standard but the outcomes tended to present a broad sweep rather than specific detail.
- Some of the better evaluations were able to present the required detail within word count.
- The best responses used the pointers from the assessment criteria as paragraph headings. This practice ensured the work was focused on what was required of each point.
- The analysis of their administration role tended to be the most successful aspect of the evaluation with some good ideas presented on what went well and what could have been improved.

Areas for consideration:

- This section again proved to be the most challenging of the sections as there was generally a descriptive approach rather than an evaluation/analysis of the process.
- Candidates must present a precise evaluation, within word count, with all points covered if they are to access Mark Band 4.
- More attention still needs to be given to the evaluation of group negotiation, decision making and problem solving.
- The meeting of deadlines and consideration of production costs is still somewhat overlooked and at times were again not included in the overall evaluation.

Performance/Production

The Pre-Release Stimulus Material presented interesting alternatives this year which in the main resulted in some very thought provoking outcomes at centres. The most popular choices were Commission Brief 1 “*Tell me a Story*” aimed at a local audience and Commission Brief 3 the use of the poetry of “*Seamus Heaney*” as a starting point. Examiners reported that the candidates embraced the challenges very well, however, there were issues with interpretation and connection to the chosen briefs as well as work that did not always create meaning for the examiner and audience.

Commission Brief 1 was interpreted in a number of ways and most successfully when linked to a story around the local community. However, the aspect of the brief which addressed the target local audience could have been further developed for some centres. Some of the “stories” had relevance for the students themselves but maybe not so much for a local audience. In total 20

groups performed Commission Brief 1.

Commission Brief 3 proved quite challenging although this was also popular with 11 groups choosing to perform this brief. Within the brief centres selected poems as starting points for the work and a number also chose to embed the words of Heaney into the dialogue/script of the devised work. The centres with a more concrete connection seemed to fare better overall as the work was more fully connected to the brief throughout. Nonetheless, there were interesting interpretations using poem titles or lines from the poetry as starting points which led groups into original and imaginative territory. Only 2 groups chose to perform work related to Commission Brief 2, based on the work of Matthew Bourne and the singer Adele.

Overall the choice of a distinct style of performance was more in evidence this year than in any of the previous series. There were a range of approaches including influence from the practitioners, Brecht, Stanislavski and Artaud. There was also evidence of a TIE approach which worked well for the attending audiences.

The work presented was predominantly at the top end of Mark Band 3 and the lower to mid-range of Mark Band 4 with evidence of original work from some really impressive candidates. The standard of the work overall seemed to have been largely maintained from last year and there were some very credible presentations from new centres. It was noted that there was less production work on offer for this series.

It was clear that the more authentic the approach taken to the event, the better the quality of outcome. Audiences added a great deal to the atmosphere and gave a real sense of occasion. It was again good to see some of the administration tasks in evidence at the performances; this created the sense of a holistic approach to the carrying out of the requirements of the overall unit. Centres should note that the provision of a Programme can assist the audience with understanding the context of the performance.

There were less issues with performances which were under the time limit, however, work which is overlong was often self-penalising.

Engagement with the Commission Brief

- The options within the Pre-Release Stimulus Material allowed candidates to devise a variety of interpretations which gave them the opportunity to perform or produce to their particular strengths.
- The majority of the candidates chose to explore Commission Brief 1 *“Tell me a Story”* aimed at a local audience or Commission Brief 3 using the poetry of *“Seamus Heaney”* as a starting point.
- Some work was very meaningful and truly conveyed the spirit of this final unit to the audience.
- There was clear evidence of a professional quality of devised material coming from a few of the top achieving candidates.
- Local stories were used very effectively to connect with Commission Brief 1.
- It was inspirational to hear some of the words of Seamus Heaney creatively interspersed through original drama based on Commission Brief 3.

Areas for consideration:

- Care should be given to the completion of the Examination Record Sheet prior to the event to ensure that the style/genre is clearly identified accompanied by a clear description of the performance with reference to the chosen brief. This form assists the examiner in the marking of work.
- At times engagement with the brief was not fully evident and not developed enough

to enable the candidates to reach the highest mark range for their interpretation of the Commission Brief.

- Centres should be reminded to realise the brief for a specific target audience, this ensures that the work is focused and achieves the desired impact. Music and dance candidates who performed as individuals within groups were not always integrated into the performance. This made it difficult for them to fully engage with the brief and to access the upper mark range as work was often disjointed.

Level of Skills Development

- Candidates generally rose to the challenge and demonstrated their skills with personal style and meaning to great effect.
- Scripts were often original, effective and cleverly written with some very contemporary and relevant issues explored.
- The production candidates showed a competent ability for the most part, indicating insight into their chosen production field.
- There were some very strong drama performances with a clear sense of characterisation evident and moments of great impact for the audience.
- Some very effective choral and ensemble work was in evidence at a range of centres.
- There were some very strong performances this year from individual singers, musicians and dancers in work that allowed for their full integration.

Areas for consideration:

- At times the performers demonstrated a good level of skill development but did not have the level of content to access the highest mark range.
- Character portrayal did not always suit the style or content of the piece which meant that the meaning and mood was not conveyed as strongly as it could have been.
- At times performers presented an over dramatic interpretation which lacked the necessary variation and range of skills.
- Not all production candidates had produced evidence of all the required documents for their chosen discipline. Consideration must be given to the list of requirements outlined for this unit in the specification.
- Musicians need to focus their performance on one instrument and this should be the instrument demonstrated in performance at AS and at audition in A2.

Quality of Final Performance

- Appropriate performance spaces at nearly all centres helped set the tone and mood of the event giving a very professional overall impression.
- For the most part, the themes and plots that candidates developed for performances were original, engaging and entertaining.
- Production candidates, in the main, enhanced the work of performers.
- Creative use of sound, set props, light and digital technology was employed to enhance meaning and captivate the audience.
- There were clear influences from professional practitioners including the work of Brecht, Stanislavski and Artaud. This resulted in performances which had depth of meaning and which were varied and textured.
- Performances were often topical, contemporary and relevant for the attending audiences.

Areas for consideration:

- Examiners reported some very episodic work which lacked the required impact through a loss of momentum.
- A clearer focus on intent and communication of meaning would sharpen the work at some centres. At times the intended meaning did not correlate with the outcome.
- Musicians and dancers cannot be assessed for their acting skills within this unit as candidates can only be assessed on the skills outlined for their chosen discipline (refer to page 26-27 of the specification).
- In a few of the performances, work was clichéd and there was a lack of personal style, originality and flair.

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