

GCE



Principal Moderator's Report Performing Arts

Summer Series 2018



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

General Observations

Drama or Music (singing) remain the most popular disciplines. There were less production candidates this year. The administration was well managed by most centres. Most samples were organised into rank order. Centres are reminded to include the cover sheet for each candidate that can be downloaded from the E-Moderation homepage. Additionally, whilst not required, some centres printed off a hard copy of e-Candidate Record Sheet (eCRS), which was helpful to the moderation process. TAC1 and TAC2 were not included by all centres.

Overall, the comments on the e-Candidate Record Sheet were clear, detailed and supported the marks awarded.

In most centres the teacher's annotation, both in the main body of candidates' work and in summative comments was criterion based and helpful to the moderation process. Pleasingly, there was an increase in the use of the Suggested Annotation Code, provided by CCEA. In some cases, there was no annotation to support the awarding of marks by the teacher.

The DVD/USB recordings were well organised, although a few centres submitted the whole centre's work on one DVD which was time consuming for the moderators. USB is the preferred means of submitting recordings if possible. It is perfectly acceptable to submit all the candidates' work on one USB for the centre, providing it is clearly organised into different folders for each candidate.

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 TAC1 should be enclosed with the coursework sample, and TAC2 should be submitted even when there is only one teacher assessor at the centre.
- 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 and securely attached to the cover sheet to prevent pages coming loose or being mislaid within the sample.
- All work should be Arial 12 and adhere to the page limits as prescribed in the specification
- 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.
- Recordings should be on USB or DVD and organised by candidate name and number with each stage clearly labelled.

- Centres are reminded to check all recordings are accessible before submission for moderation.

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

Overall, the standard of response was pleasing with the majority of candidates crediting their sources within the body of their work.

The majority of candidates linked their research to the chosen discipline and showed evidence of research. In a few cases some candidates did not focus predominantly on their discipline, for example, drama candidates discussing lighting and design elements, which disadvantages the candidates. **The recommended approach is to focus on a range of genres within the chosen discipline and examine how this then impacts on the style of performance/production within that discipline.**

Section 2: Skills required within the chosen disciplines

Centres are reminded that candidates should follow the skills list in the specification in Section 3.1 and exemplify these with examples from professional practice. Dance candidates in particular need to pay closer attention to all the skills listed in the specification for their discipline. For production candidates they should focus on the tasks listed as their starting point and draw out the skills needed to be able to complete these tasks. In some centres, candidates supported the definition of skills with examples from their own experience rather than professional practice, which then overlapped with their Skills Audit.

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

Whilst some centres are following the advice given at the Agreement Trials, most centres continue to give more focus on professional pathways into the chosen discipline, which makes the piece of work uneven and disadvantages the candidates.

A few centres followed a case study model, and whilst again this can help give the candidates' response a focus, they often lack detail into how the chosen practitioners use new technology within their work.

Centres should direct candidates to integrate their understanding of current technologies throughout the piece as this holistic approach facilitates the evidencing of an in depth knowledge and understanding of current professional practice. Some candidates would benefit from considering a wider range of new technologies in relation to their discipline as most focused on internet based technology. Centres would better facilitate candidates in reaching the higher mark bands by discussing a wider variety of theatre based technology and highlighting examples of technology being used in performance/production for candidates to further research.

Candidates should then summarise their research by focusing on how current professionals use new technologies to prepare for their role, perform their role and promote themselves within the industry.

Skills Audit

The skills audit demonstrated an indication of the candidates' current skill level and referred to the relevant skills for the candidate's discipline as outlined in Section 3.1 of the specification. Centres should be reminded that references to examples from professional practice is not credited in this section and candidates should focus **entirely** on their own experience. Centres should also direct candidates to give themselves a score or rating in each skill area to clearly evidence realistic and/or perceptive ideas on their current skill level.

In one or two cases candidates referenced the development of Extract 1 and 2. Centres are reminded that the Skills Audit should be completed before they begin to develop the pieces of repertoire, as the purpose of the Skills Audit is to guide them into choosing extracts that will enable them to develop the gaps in their skills, which have been identified in the Skills Audit.

Areas for consideration:

- Title each section with the candidate's name, chosen discipline and title of each section.
- Clearly reference sources 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 is encouraged to give more depth to responses, especially in Section 2 and 3 of the Summary of Research, but should retain the focus of the section.
- Sections 1–3 should focus on professional practice whilst the Skills Audit should focus on their own experience.

A02: A record of work (28 marks)

Action Plans

Generally, Action Plans met the assessment criteria and were fit for purpose. However, there was some overlap between Extract 1 and Extract 2 and centres are reminded that Action Plans for the second piece of repertoire need to more focused on working with others.

Social, Cultural and Historical Research

There was an improvement in the quality of Social, Cultural and Historical Research with more direct links made to the extract and to the impact on the candidate. However, centres are reminded to ensure a balance is achieved and that the candidates do not begin to focus too heavily on how they would perform/produce the extract as this then overlaps with the Evidence of Practice.

Evidence of Practice

There was a pleasing development in the standard of work submitted within The Evidence of Practice with much more focus on techniques and how these were used to develop skills. However, further application of both techniques and skills to the extract is required. There is still an over-reliance on You Tube. Greater study of a wider range of rehearsal techniques beyond GSCE and consideration of practitioners needs to be encouraged. Some centres took a workshop-based approach, which again worked well for those that then applied the skills developed in their own extract.

Areas for consideration:

- Greater differentiation between Action Plans for each extract and focus on Work with Others explicitly in Extract 2.
- Clear and focused connection made to the chosen extracts of repertoire in all sections of Record of Work.

- Wider range of techniques researched and applied to the development of skills in Evidence of Practice.

A03:

(i): A risk assessment (4 marks)

These were accurately assessed and showed a greater understanding of the demands of this section. Centres are reminded that Risk Assessments need to account for risks to audience, performers and the space. Not all were connected to the demands of the extracts. In some cases the use of a more professional register would have pushed candidates into the top band.

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

A wide range of interesting repertoire was presented. Dance candidates are beginning to use a more varied range of repertoire and dance styles, although Hip Hop and commercial are still most prevalent. Centres should seek out further opportunities to widen their dance candidates' experience of a greater range of dance forms, especially Contemporary.

Some centres chose to do full scale productions for Extract 2, which disadvantaged the candidates and did not follow the rubric of the specification. The total time allowed for each candidate is 20 minutes recording in total, which must include the baseline, mid-stage and final stage for both extracts.

Areas for consideration:

- The use of professional terminology within Risk Assessments provides evidence of research.
- The length and choice of Extract 2 to enable candidates to showcase their skills development within the time constraints of the specification.

A04: An evaluation (6 marks)

Evaluations were one of the stronger sections for most candidates. Centres are reminded that candidates should focus on evaluating the final product /performance and not the process. With production candidates the focus should be on the final outcome of their design/production materials for the extract and not their presentation and its delivery. This also applies when evaluating their peer. Centres are reminded that candidates should evaluate the same peer across both extracts of repertoire. Part of the assessment criteria is identification of ideas for further development and target setting for the future, which can take account of the process as well as the final product. Most candidates addressed this as a separate section in their evaluation which was effective.

Areas for consideration:

- Focus on the final product in all aspects of the evaluation.
- Assess the same peer for both extracts.
- Include a summative evaluation of ideas for further development in AS Unit 2 and at A2.

Assessment Unit AS 2 Planning and Realising a Performing Arts Event - Visiting Examination

General Observations

Overall, the work presented was of a good standard 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. The choice of material remains critical to the success of the examination and should be given the upmost attention to ensure each candidate has access to Mark Band 4.

In general, the paperwork was carefully dealt with. Centres should be reminded that they are to identify, on the examination record sheet, the specific style/genre of their Performing Arts Event. It is also advised that the source of any dance or music work is also referenced by stating the choreographer or composer. This, along with the detailed description, enables the examiner to mark the bullet point in the assessment criteria for AO3 (Section 3.1 of the specification). A completed Candidate Assessment Form should be completed for every student and handed to the Visiting Examiner. 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. Please ensure that examination conditions are adhered to and whilst an audience is encouraged, they must be aware it is an examination and act accordingly. 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.
- Some very challenging pieces were presented, allowing the full range of marks to be awarded to some performance candidates.
- The pre-release stimulus of 'Coming and Going' 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 could not 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.

A03: 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.
- 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 was not repertoire.

A03: 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 - 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.

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, in the most part these helped the candidates with the review section. 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.

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.

A01 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:

- Candidates are not expected to provide a plot synopsis of the chosen work.
- 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.

- Group skills are often ignored, candidates are losing marks by focusing purely on the practical constraints.
- The word count must be stated and adhered to.

A02 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 or sub headed sections; Review 1, Review 2, Experiment 1, Experiment 2 and Strengths and Weaknesses.
- There were some highly creative experiments, showing the calibre of the candidates' knowledge, understanding and personal research into practitioners and styles. These were approached from an individual perspective.
- 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 significant range of skills must be explicit in order to show a 'thorough appreciation' and therefore access Mark Band 4.
- A description or narrative of the plot is not necessary and in light of the word count, should be avoided. It is also unnecessary for candidates to justify why they saw a particular production.
- 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".
- A description of the work undertaken in a lesson or rehearsal where the candidate was being directed, does not access the range of marks.
- Candidates should state and adhere to the word count.
- Candidates are encouraged to discuss their strengths and weaknesses as outlined in the specification.

A04 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 had not 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.
- Candidates should link the experience of the course to the current Performing Arts industry and how the course has increased knowledge/understanding and practical opportunities.

Assessment Unit A2 1 Planning For Employment

Administration of the Moderation Process

Drama continues to be the most popular discipline. While some centres are using the required cover sheet for samples this practice is inconsistently applied. The majority of centres submitted work in rank order, which was helpful to the moderation process. While the comments on the e-Candidate Record Sheet were clear and detailed they did not always support the marks awarded. Overall, the annotation on the work was sound, and the annotation codes provided at agreement trial were used by the majority of centres. However, some centres simply ticked the candidates work and quoted the Assessment Criteria on the e-CRS which made moderation more difficult.

Most candidates kept to the page limits and used Arial 12. Centres are reminded to use a separate page for footnotes, and a separate bibliography. It was most helpful when the candidate had included their name and discipline in the title on each section of their work.

Areas for consideration:

- Include TAC1 and TAC2 with the sample.
- Use the cover sheet available on the home page for e-Moderation and attach to each sample, stating the Candidate's name and overall mark in the boxes provided.
- Submit the sample in rank order and include the top and bottom candidates.
- Organise and securely collate the portfolio in order outlined in the specification.
- All work should be Arial 12 and adhere to the page limits as prescribed in the specification.
- 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.
- Recordings should be on USB or DVD and be in working order prior to submission.
- Use the correct envelop provided by CCEA to submit the sample for moderation.

AO1: A Written Report (12 marks)

Section 1: Skills and Training

The focus of this section is for the candidate to identify three different training routes that would develop their skills within in their chosen discipline and enable them to gain employment professionally. There is still an overemphasis on evaluating the skills gained at AS, with some candidates using half the page allowance to give examples from their previous experience. Candidates should be directed to focus on how each of the chosen routes would build on their prior experience and develop their skills to make them employable in the Performing Arts industry. The university and vocational routes are clearly researched, but the experience route tended to be under-developed across most centres. The more detailed responses looked at a wider range of ways to gain experience from extra work, to signing up with creative skills apprenticeships to short courses, rather than focusing on just one example. Some candidates explained in detail the entry requirements and fees for a range of different courses, but failed to explore what skills the course developed and how this would make them more employable.

Section 2: How to Gain Employment

There was an improvement within this section this year, with more examples of local agencies and greater application of the research to the individual rather than just generic research from web sites. The top candidates referenced local agents and had a really comprehensive understanding of the processes which would support work in the industry. Work in the lower bands used examples which were not UK based and were very generic in nature and sometimes not even relevant to their discipline. Top candidates, gave greater consideration to other publications and the importance of networking and self-promotion which was pleasing. Some candidates referenced professional actors in this section which gave detailed insight into the pros and cons of the agents, unions and organisations explored. The best candidates linked their research to their own requirements and employment opportunities.

Section 3: Employment Plan

The majority of centres have consolidated their approach to this section with most candidates considering real job opportunities in their discipline. This made the work much more relevant and allowed the stronger candidates to access the top mark bands. Candidates in the top bands very successfully linked and applied all aspects of their written report which demonstrated comprehensive knowledge and understanding of how to gain employment in the Performing Arts industry.

In several centres, the majority of candidates all discussed the same three employment opportunities, and this prevented candidates having a fully holistic written report as the employment plans did not link to the training routes identified. This approach should be discouraged as there was too much similarity between candidates' work. For those following a performance pathway, particularly Drama there was more emphasis on performance work this year, but this was mainly within the entertainment industry and candidates should be encouraged to look for theatre based acting roles as well.

Areas for Consideration:

- Candidates need to focus on how the training routes identified in Section 1 will develop specific skills and make them more employable.
- Connections between each section of the Written Report should be encouraged to create a more holistic personalised approach.
- A greater range of jobs should be explored within the Employment Plan and an individual approach taken rather than a whole centre approach to this section.

A02: A Promotional Portfolio (12 marks)

The majority of portfolios included all the required elements, but the professional standard varied across centres. Some candidates really replicated professional practice and presented high quality promotional portfolios worthy of full marks. Music candidates submitting a demo CD showcased some excellent industry standards which included a track list. However, some candidates were disadvantaged by rubric errors such as: wrong size or unprofessional headshots; clips in showreels of excessive length; details and headshots missing from showreels; rehearsal videos and stills included in the showreels; CV of poor layout and failing to list credits in reverse sequential order on the CVs.

Areas for Consideration:

- More thorough and detailed research of what constitutes professional practice for each aspect of the promotional portfolio.

A03: An Audition and Interview or Presentation and Interview (24 marks)

Centres are reminded to ensure the camera position for audition and interview makes it possible to see the candidate fully.

Both interview and audition should not be completed in school uniform as this does not reflect professional practice. Centres are reminded that the audition and interview should be one continuous recording. It was evident that some candidates had carried out their audition on a different day than when they carried out their interview.

Centres are reminded that the assessment should be carried out formally. There should be no questions/prompting directed at production candidates during their presentation.

Audition/Presentation

Overall, the materials used for audition enabled candidates to access the full range of marks. In most centres there was good contrasting use of comedy and another genre for Drama candidates, while production candidates used contrasting period and genre to good effect. Drama candidates presented a range of monologues during audition pieces including extracts from musicals with 'Waitress' ft. Sara Bareilles, and Goodbye Charles as popular choices for many and various Shakespearean extracts proving popular. Candidates who have carried out thorough research and applied it to their chosen extracts tended to achieve a higher mark band. Candidates should be discouraged from using one off monologue downloaded from the internet as these lacked depth and did not allow candidates to demonstrate the full range of skills which often disadvantaged them, both in the audition and interview. Production candidates did not always fulfil the requirements of the specification and centres need to refer closely to the demands of the specification. For all disciplines, the skills list in Section 3.1 still forms the basis of the skills to be demonstrated, coupled with those detailed in Section 3.2. It is also good practice to refer to the skills detailed in Section 3.4 for A2 Unit 2 and use the audition/presentation as an opportunity to hone these skills prior to the final unit.

In some cases, auditions were too long or too short. Centres should research industry practice relevant to the discipline and apply it in line with the rubric of the specification. Some candidates used the guidance issued by their chosen training routes in the Written Report to form the basis of their audition/presentation choices, which made for a more meaningful assessment experience.

Interview

Interview questions on the whole allowed candidates the opportunity to explain and outline their working practices, research and application to the extracts. At times the answers were over prepared and overly long. Research based questions should be followed up with how this research was used and influenced their final outcomes.

It would be beneficial if centres familiarise themselves with the range of questions available on the on the CCEA Performing Arts Microsite.

Areas for Consideration:

- Guide candidates in their choice of audition/presentation materials to ensure a contrasting range between the two pieces.
- Adhere to the time limit of 15 minutes for the audition/presentation and interview.
- Ensure the questions address research and allow candidates the opportunity to demonstrate how they apply this to their final outcome.

A04: An Evaluation (12 marks)

Overall, the evaluation was approached well with centres applying the mark scheme appropriately. Whilst, evaluations showed secure analysis of their audition pieces, candidates need to be encouraged to evaluate the quality of their promotional portfolio and interview technique in equal detail. Centres should be congratulated for providing a range of feedback opportunities for their candidates, which made the evaluations more meaningful. Feedback is an intrinsic part of the evaluation process and time should be set aside to allow for peer assessment, teacher feedback, industry specialists and others to provide formal feedback to the candidate, which was evidently the practice in many centres this year.

In some centres candidates focused on evaluating the rehearsal process, when the assessment criteria is focused on the execution of the final performance/product. Centres are reminded that candidates should evaluate both the audition/presentation and the interview. They also need to consider areas of development, which can be linked to the process. Strong 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. When candidates embedded their targets and made weak references to feedback, application of the marking criteria was more difficult.

Areas for Consideration:

- continue to offer opportunities for feedback throughout the unit;
- focus the evaluation on the final outcomes;
- give equal weighting to evaluating the promotional portfolio and the audition/presentation and interview;
- consider both the audition/presentation and the interview in the evaluation; and
- consider areas for further development as a conclusion to the evaluation.

Conclusion

The majority of centres applied the assessment criteria accurately across AS and A2 and it was pleasing to see that advice given at Agreement Trials is being acted upon to the benefit of the candidates. Centres are reminded that resources and sample materials are available online and that there is a Portfolio Clinic available. Centres can also request a centre visit to address specific queries and give further guidance on delivering the specification. Further exemplification of the standard will be given at the Agreement Trial.

Assessment Unit A2 2 Performing to a Commission Brief - Record of Work

In general candidates performed well at the top end of the mark range in the Record of Work for A22 this year with some candidates achieving very strong outcomes for this series.

The pre-release stimulus material presented a range of ideas for exploration with the two most popular briefs being CB1 and CB3. Both worked well in terms of outcomes for section (a) and section (d).

A number of 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.**

Centres must ensure that the work of candidates is individualised; there should be no overuse of online resources or exemplar materials particularly for work presented for the second part of Section (a). The best centres again offered a range of professional contexts for this section which allowed for more diverse outcomes.

It was disappointing to note that the “Summary of Findings”, Section (b) was not always being clearly expressed. The findings, for a considerable number of candidates, were only somewhat linked to their administration role and to the related tasks.

The tasks in Section (c) need to be presented to a professional finish and for a significant number of candidates, this was not the case.

There is still an overall feeling that not enough time is being given to this part of A22 with elements remaining underdeveloped or missing and frequently lacking in the professional standard that can give candidates access to the excellent mark band range.

In general, it was noted, that there may be a decline in the overall standard of the middle range of candidates with a significant amount of the work being at the lower end of MB3 or upper MB2.

Research Report-Section 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. Some of the research highlighted a breadth of knowledge and extended research, considering books, information from current podcasts and online research.

Areas for consideration

- Candidates should state which Commission Brief they are focusing on explicitly at the start of the document and should consider the whole brief e.g. not just Malala, but the ‘words of Malala.’
- More direct links were needed between the contextual research and how this research informed and influenced practical ideas.

- Much of the research was not referenced with footnotes or with an attached bibliography, this is good practice and clearly exemplifies that thorough research has been completed.
- This section was sometimes over word count.

Research Report - Section 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 clearly expressed income and expenditure within the finance section had a more defined outcome.
- 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 individualised for the most part and there was 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 worked best.
- A range of centres used up too much of the word count providing information on when and where the theatres/contexts were built and historical information regarding them. The research should be acutely focused on finance and marketing.
- Marketing research was generally focused on the context's website or social media – a full range of marketing strategies should be highlighted.
- 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.
- A number of candidates offered no information for this section.

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.
- Some candidates were able to make detailed links to how they would emulate professional practice within their own tasks by discussing the intended impact on the consumer.
- Screenshots were well utilised to evidence the professional practice that had been discovered.

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 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.
- A few candidates diluted the findings through an exploration of more than two contexts.
- Some candidates provided an overview of what the administrative role entailed which was much too general – this limited the candidates from making links between professional conduct and carrying out the administrative tasks.

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 2/3.
- 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.
- 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.
- Candidates who used the maximum page number evidenced a greater depth of professional practice within the tasks. There was some very creative ideas applied to the use all six A4 pages.
- Some candidates were very creative and were able to confidently present tasks which reflected professional conduct and originality.
- It was clear where the candidates had actually assumed the role and higher marks were awarded where candidates had time to undertake and develop the role in a professional way.

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 the submitted items.
- A list of support materials for the Education Officer role was the task which was 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.
- Many candidates did not include the Briefing to Staff within the Front of House section – this should be paired with the Projected Staffing List.
- A significant number of candidates did not utilise the full page count. It is advised that candidates should use all six A4 pages allocated to the completion of tasks in order to access the top mark bands.
- Drafts of work e.g. tickets or posters should be labelled as such to easily identify which is the final product.
- Programmes which were not fully realised did not provide the required insight into the Commission Brief.

Evaluation (8 marks)

- Some of the better evaluations were able to present the required detail within word count.
- Candidates who used the bullet points, within the mark scheme to structure their response, ensured that they covered all parts of the evaluation.
- Some candidates were evaluative and focused on strengths, weaknesses and challenges with ideas on how they overcame any obstacles.
- Candidates who included feedback and how they acted on this, presented a better quality outcome.

Areas for Consideration

- Candidates must present a precise evaluation with all points covered if they are to access MB4.
- More attention needed to be given to the evaluation of group negotiation, decision making and problem solving.
- The meeting of deadlines and consideration of production costs is often not included in the overall evaluation.
- Some candidates were much too descriptive and summarised what they did in their performance as opposed to evaluating the impact of group negotiations and the overall impact of the administrative role.
- There was an over emphasis on re-telling plot in the evaluation of the group negotiation. A minority of candidates just stated the tasks they had completed for the admin role and did not offer evaluative comment.
- Some evaluations were over the word count.

Assessment Unit A2 2 Performing to a Commission

Brief - Performance/Production

General Observations

The Pre-Release Stimulus Material presented a challenging range of alternatives this year with the most popular choices being CB1, an issue of current interest aimed at an audience of peers and CB3, the words of Nelson Mandela or Malala Yousafzai as a starting point. Examiners reported that the candidates embraced the challenges but stated there were some issues with interpretation and connection to the brief as well as conveying overall meaning.

CB1 was interpreted in a number of ways, however, the aspect of the brief which addressed an issue of current interest could have been further developed for some centres. Several centres had over-reliance on pre-existing material and ignored the audience of peers' aspect of the brief. Other contexts had relevance for the students themselves but were sometimes not tied in fully to the current issue idea. In total 28 groups performed CB1.

CB3 proved popular with 17 groups choosing to perform this brief. Within the brief, quotations were used as starting points and a number of centres also chose to embed the words of either Mandela or Malala into the dialogue/ script of the devised work. The centres with a more concrete connection fared better overall as the work was more fully connected to the brief throughout. Nonetheless, there were interesting interpretations using words as starting points which led groups into original and imaginative territory. For a number of centres the links to the actual words of Mandela and Malala were not explicit enough to gain MB4 for the first bullet point.

Overall the choice of a distinct style of performance was generally in evidence this year and there were a range of approaches including influences from the practitioners, Brecht, Stanislavski and Artaud. There was also evidence of a Physical Theatre, Verbatim Theatre and Theatre of Cruelty approach at some centres which worked well for the attending audiences.

Attainment

The work presented was predominantly in the MB3 range with evidence of original work from some really impressive candidates whose attainment represented the very top end of MB4. The standard of the work overall seemed to have been largely maintained from last year and there was some credible presentations from some new centres. There were, however, more candidates than previous who attained MB2 for work which was underdeveloped.

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 satisfying 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. There still remains, unfortunately, a lack of evidence that the candidates have formed a production company and carried out the admin roles in a real context.

There were some issues with performances which were under or over the time limit. Work which is under the required amount of time was not able to access MB4 and performances which were overlong were 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 CB1 “an issue of current interest aimed at an audience of peers” and CB3 using the words of Nelson Mandela or Malala Yousafzai as a starting point.
- Some work was very engaged with the brief and truly conveyed the intended meaning to the audience.
- Strong performances resulted in outcomes which were “hard hitting, meaningful and enlightening”.
- There was clear evidence of a professional quality of devised material coming from a few of the top achieving candidates.
- Current issues were used very effectively to connect with Commission Brief 1.
- It was inspirational to hear some of the words of Nelson Mandela or Malala Yousafzai creatively interspersed through original drama based on Commission 3.

Areas for Consideration

- Care should be given to the completion of the Examination Record Sheet prior to the event to ensure that there is 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. Closer connection to the intricacies of the brief was required.
- 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.
- A few 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, particularly in relation to the themes of “Times Up” and “Me Too” related to CB1.
- The production candidates showed a competent ability, for the most part, indicating engagement with their chosen production field. Use of a stylised, symbolic approach to design worked very well for some strong candidates.
- There were some very strong drama performances with a clear sense of characterisation evident and moments of great impact for the audience.
- There were some very strong performances this year from singers, musicians and dancers who developed work with an original outcome.

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. As a result, candidates were disadvantaged.
- Some work of a very episodic nature with distracting scene changes was presented which did not allow for character or content development.
- 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. Reference should also be made to design requirements for other units to represent synoptic outcomes.
- Musicians must focus their performance on one instrument and this should be the instrument demonstrated in performance at AS and at audition in A2. Musicians who also sing can only be assessed on the lead instrument.

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.
- Once again 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.
- A Verbatim approach was evident at some centres and this proved successful in supporting quality outcomes in final performances.
- 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. Too much time was spent in blackout which detracted from overall attainment.
- 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 and pieces lacked finesse.
- In a few of the performances, work was clichéd and there was overreliance on poorly drafted dialogue and over dependence on production values in an effort to create mood and atmosphere.

Contact details

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