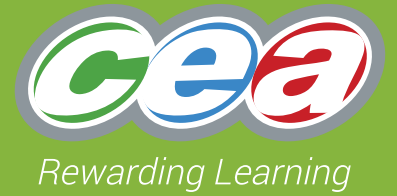


GCE



**Chief Examiner's and  
Principal Moderator's Report  
Performing Arts**

Summer Series 2024





## Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2024 series.

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

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



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# GCE PERFORMING ARTS

## Principal Moderator's Report

### Assessment Unit AS 1      Developing Skills and Repertoire

#### Internal Assessment Overview

- There are two internally assessed and externally moderated units: AS 1 and A2 1.
- Candidates have the opportunity to develop specialist knowledge, understanding and skills in either performance or production.
- Candidates choose one discipline, within either performance or production, to develop through AS and A2.
- Through AS 1 candidates develop their skills in the chosen discipline, through application in a performance context.
- Through A2 1 candidates develop their understanding of how to find work in their chosen discipline, through research, preparing and participating in an audition/ presentation and interview and compiling a promotional portfolio.
- Across both units candidates investigate working methods and employment opportunities linked to industry practice, providing a sound basis for progression to further training and/or study.

#### Unit Overview

This unit gives candidates the opportunity to develop one discipline within Performing Arts (from either Performance or Production) and then apply this discipline in a performance context.

Candidates develop skills and repertoire through the exploration of two extracts working individually and then in groups of between two and nine. The candidates choose the repertoire from a range of existing material including musical scores, set works and published extracts.

Candidates are required to produce a portfolio of work consisting of a summary of research and skills audit, a record of work, risk assessments, a recording of a performance or presentation, and an evaluation.

Candidates research their chosen discipline to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of professional practice. They research the skills required in their chosen discipline and then assess their current skill level and complete a skills audit. Candidates select an existing extract of repertoire from a preferred period of time, a specific practitioner or a particular style or genre to present individually. They research the social, cultural and historical context of the extract and develop an action plan, outlining strategies to improve their skill level in their first extract of repertoire. They keep a record of their skills development for the extract as they rehearse and practise the performance or develop the production materials, setting targets for improvement.

Candidates compile a record of work that shows evidence of their development as a performer or production worker. Their record should demonstrate a clear understanding of the preparatory work required for the performance or production of the extracts of repertoire. A risk assessment detailing health and safety issues relating to their chosen discipline will also be completed.

Candidates engage in ongoing self-evaluation and record their progress throughout, setting targets for improvement. Each candidate also evaluates the final outcome of one other candidate as part of their written evaluation. Candidates evaluate their own and others' contribution to the final performance, including analysis of aesthetic and technical quality, and impact on the audience.

## **Administration**

Performance disciplines continue to be the most popular disciplines with a range of production disciplines being offered across centres. Overall, work was well organised, including the top and bottom candidate, and submitted in rank order. However, centres are reminded to check all USBs to ensure that all the work is present and in working order. Work submitted on USB needs to be clearly labelled and organised to support efficient moderation. Centres are reminded to ensure each candidate clearly states their name, candidate number and the stage of the performance/presentation at the start of each recording, this is especially important for the final stage of the group piece of repertoire.

Centres are encouraged to use the suggested Annotation Code, available from the subject area of the CCEA website, which not only serves to justify the rationale for the marks awarded, but also reduces the time burden of annotation on the teacher. Centres are reminded that it is best practice to include the mark or mark band with a summative comment at the end of each piece of assessment evidence. It is important that the comments on the e-Candidate Record Sheets reflect the marks and annotations on the body of the work. Those teachers this year who did record their comments on the work submitted, provided clear insights into the marks awarded.

### **Key Points to consider:**

- Complete eCRS comments highlighting any specific areas related to the candidate's work and the application of the assessment criteria to support the marks awarded.
- Adhere to the page limits for each piece of assessment evidence as per pages 11–13 of the specification.
- Annotate work with the annotation code and include a summative comment and a mark/mark band awarded for each section.
- Include a signed Sample Cover Sheet from the CCEA e-moderation webpage.
- All candidates need to be clearly identified to camera at the start of the final stage recording.
- Organise and label digital submission in folders for each candidate with their candidate number.
- Check digital submission and ensure all the required work is included on USB.



## **A01            A Summary of Research and Skills Audit**

### **Section 1: Style and Genre within the chosen discipline**

Most candidates researched a range of styles and genres relevant to their discipline, with sources clearly footnoted. All candidates should consider contemporary styles and genres within this section.

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

In this section candidates are required to define and exemplify the skills required of a professional in their discipline, as listed on pages 8–10 of the specification. There was a distinct lack of professional practice referenced in Section 2 this year, with several candidates giving definitions of skills needed in their discipline without any research of how these skills are used in professional practice. In some cases, these read more like a review of a performance, rather than using the examples to illustrate why the skills are important for the professional and their ability to communicate meaning to an audience through the performance or production skill. Centres are reminded that the examples of professional practice should largely come from stage rather than screen as this is the medium through which they are assessed in this specification.

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

Many candidates clearly researched the ways in which professionals use new technologies to promote, prepare and perform their role. Technologies were clearly evidenced and mostly relevant to professional practice. However, when exploring how to ‘promote’ themselves, some candidates went into a lot of detail on casting agents and agencies, replicating what is expected for Section 2 in A2, and lacked focus on how technology is used to promote professional work. A suggested approach for their research might be to investigate how different professionals in their discipline utilise social media platforms to promote themselves. Candidates should ensure that there is a balance across their research into how professionals use technology to promote, prepare and perform their role, and that the technologies referenced are current.

## **Skills Audit**

Candidates identified their experience in all the skills relevant to their discipline, as listed on pages 8–10 of the specification, using a ranking system or colour coding to indicate their current skill levels. Those awarded the top mark bands justified their current skill level with precise examples of their experience utilising the relevant skills. Candidates who had little experience in Performing Arts prior to starting the course, were able to use the skills gained in other subjects and work experience, as well as pre-course practical activities to complete an effective Skills Audit. However, in some cases, candidates referenced their work on the extracts. Centres are reminded that the Skills Audit, should be completed before they commence work on the extracts as it should inform the skills they wish to develop through the rest of the course.

### **Key Points to consider:**

- Sections 1–3 require research into professional practice in the chosen discipline. Examples should come from a range of sources, performance, case studies, interviews, and insights from practitioners.
- Sources should be clearly referenced in the body of work, with footnotes.
- The Skills Audit should include a rating of all the skills in the skills list, with examples drawn from experience before they start working on the extracts selected on the course.
- A summative comment in the Skills Audit, of the key skills they wish to develop during the course of the unit, is good practice.

## **A02            A Record of Work**

A pleasing breadth of repertoire was utilised by candidates to develop their skills in their chosen discipline. There were some excellent examples of centres choosing contrasting repertoire from different styles and genres, which enabled candidates to access the full range of marks available. Candidates who took a holistic approach to each of the different aspects of this assessment objective produced detailed and meaningful work, which followed through into their AO3 performances/presentations. This also supported the analysis in AO4 as candidates could refer to the contrasting impact on the audience and had a depth of understanding of the technical and aesthetic demands of the extracts.

### **Social, Cultural and Historical Research**

Candidates in the top mark bands insightfully linked their research into the social, cultural and historical contexts to specific moments in their extract, for example, through the use of quotations from the extract. Research should be connected to how it might inform the candidate's own interpretation either as a performer or production worker. Research into the original performance conditions of the extracts and more recent productions should form part of the research undertaken by candidates. Production candidates should draw on the work of practitioners (in their discipline) in professional productions of the chosen extract as part of their research.

### **Action Plans**

The most effective Action Plans were those that provided a clear succinct plan of action for how the candidate would take the extract from Page to Stage using a range of techniques relevant to their discipline and the demands of the extract. Some candidates produced very generic Action Plans with little distinction between extract 1 and 2. Extract 2 needs to explicitly reference their work with others. Whilst there may be a certain overlap in some of the actions required, it is important that the Action Plans reflect and reference the specific demands of the chosen extract. Candidates should adhere to recommended page limits of 1 side of A4 for the Action Plan and focus on specific actions to be carried out. In some centres candidate strayed into evaluating the actions in this document which should be confined to their Evidence of Practice, which carries the higher weighting of marks for this section.

### **Evidence of Practice**

The Evidence of Practice has the higher weighting of marks for the Record of Work, as candidates are assessed under two bullet points in the Assessment Criteria related to their use of skill and techniques to show their progression and the consideration of their strengths and weaknesses. For candidates to access the full range of marks available they should ensure their Evidence of Practice explicitly references:

- the skills being developed;
- the techniques used to develop the skills;
- examples of how the chosen techniques were applied to their work on the extracts;
- examples of strengths and weaknesses through their preparation period;
- analysis of the how their skills progressed through the application of techniques.

Candidates who applied discipline-specific techniques were able to show progression and evidence their skills development throughout AO2. However, many candidates lacked reference to specific techniques and rehearsal methods and, while candidates are clearly working on developing skills, assessing their progress and setting targets, this prevented them from accessing the top mark bands. In some centres there was little differentiation between the skills and techniques used for extract 1 and extract 2. Choosing a clearly contrasting piece of repertoire for the second extract also enables candidates to apply different techniques to develop the contrasting skills required. Some candidates evaluated their final stage in this section which should be discouraged. The Evidence of Practice should focus on their first analysis of the extract through to the dress/tech rehearsal.

**Key Points to consider:**

- Social, cultural, and historical research should be linked to the extract and now it may influence the candidate's final outcome.
- Research into a range of professional performances should be embedded into the social, cultural and historical research.
- Action plans should be clear and succinct, differentiate between the demands of both extracts, and explicitly reference work with others in extract 2.
- The Evidence of Practice carries most of the weighting for this assessment objective and the terminology of the assessment criteria should be used to focus the candidates' responses.
- All sources should be footnoted.

**A03**

**(i) A Risk Assessment**

Generally, the risk assessments presented used an appropriate layout and accounted for risks to performers, audience and production workers. To secure the top mark bands, candidates need to reflect professional practice through application of research. There were several instances where the risk assessments for each extract were duplicates of each other. In some cases, risk assessments were not specific to the chosen extracts and did not reflect professional practice in the use of terminology, tense, and accurate calculation of risk. Risk reduction should be aligned to professional practice in the performing arts industry and take account of relevant legislation. Centres are reminded that the total page limit for the risk assessment of both extracts is two pages.

**Key Points to consider:**

- Focused research into Health and Safety practice and guidance for the Performing Arts industry to guide and inform the candidates responses.
- All risk assessments should reflect the risk reduction protocols already in place at the venue in relation to fire hazards.
- Additional risks should be explicitly linked to the extract.

**(ii) A Performance/Presentation**

There was a range of repertoire explored this year, with some contemporary pieces adding variety to some classics which made moderating this aspect very enjoyable. Performances were mostly accurately assessed, with some strong pieces across a range of centres. The assessment criteria refer to:

- contrasting skills
- communication of meaning
- technical/aesthetic factors
- professional practice

A focus on these four elements ensures an accurate application of the assessment criteria and should be taken into consideration when choosing the extracts for assessment.

The majority of centres created an appropriate sense of occasion for the final performances and presentations. Aesthetic awareness is a key aspect of the criteria for AO3 (ii) so performers should reflect this when staging their final performances, through their choice of costumes, set and lighting/sound as suited to the extract. It is important that their peers are present as an audience to watch their final performance as they will be assessing it for AO4.

Production presentations showed a good understanding of the need to show all evidence of addressing the skills required from the skills list on pages 8–10 of the specification. Final presentations were largely conducted with the aid of PowerPoint which had examples of their paperwork, and final outcomes embedded into them. Candidates should also ensure they have their original paperwork on hand and any mock up and models should be presented clearly to camera during the course of the final presentation.

**Key Points to consider:**

- Focus on how each performance/production extract enables the candidates to showcase contrasting skills.
- Create a professional environment for the performances and presentations without disruption, and with peers and teacher present as the audience.
- Ensure the assessment evidence listed on pages 8–10 of the specification for production candidates is shown to camera during the presentation.
- Stick to the time limits: baseline and midway recordings do not need to be the full extract.

## **A04            An Evaluation**

Centres are reminded that candidates should assess the same peer across both extracts.

There were some excellent examples of a focused approach to both peer and self-evaluation with candidates giving detailed examples of the how the skills and aesthetics used communicated meaning for the audience. However, some candidates referred to the process of developing their skills which is not part of the assessment criteria, neither is setting targets for their peers. Some production candidates evaluated their presentation skills and the PowerPoint. Production candidates need to focus on how their choices and execution of the skills in their discipline would create impact and meaning for the audience.

The most underdeveloped section was identifying ideas for further development and target setting, which does have a full bullet point in the assessment criteria and therefore needs due consideration. This gives the candidates an opportunity to reflect on their learning throughout the unit and set targets for the future. This can be woven through the self-evaluation and explicitly presented as a target or be presented as a stand-alone section. Centres who adopted the latter approach with candidates reflecting on the progress made from their initial skills audit were able to access the top mark bands.

### **Key Points to consider:**

- Candidates should identify one peer at the start of the assessment process and evaluate their **final** outcome (performance or production) for **both** pieces of repertoire.
- Peer and self-evaluation of production candidates should focus on the final outcomes and not presentation skills.
- Ideas for further development and target setting for the future needs to be addressed fully with explicit reference to targets to access top mark bands.
- Candidates should focus on only setting targets for themselves and not for their peer.

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

### Unit Overview

This unit gives candidates the opportunity to plan and realise a Performing Arts event in response to the pre-release stimulus material. The pre-release stimulus for this year was 'Darkness and Light'. Candidates agree the venue, target audience, style, form and genre. To fulfil the criteria, pupils must analyse a range of live or recorded Performing Arts events that relate to the chosen style, form and genre.

### Supporting Document (48 marks)

Each candidate must produce a supporting document from his or her notes under controlled conditions. A maximum of two hours is set aside to complete the supporting document under controlled conditions. This document can be either handwritten or word-processed.

The supporting document should include the following sections:

#### Section 1 (maximum of 600 words, 8 available marks)

A response to the pre-release stimulus material:

- A summary of research into the social, cultural and historical context of the chosen performance style, form and genre.
- A summary of practical and artistic constraints that includes information on the group's skills, venue, target audience, length of performance and production costs.

#### Section 2 (maximum of 1200 words, 32 available marks)

Developing the Performing Arts event:

- A summary review of two live or recorded Performing Arts events from the perspective of the candidate's chosen discipline.
- A summary of experimentation in rehearsal of two ideas drawn from the candidate's review of live or recorded Performing Arts events.
- A summary of the candidates' strengths and weaknesses through the process and how the work was shaped.

#### Section 3 (maximum of 600 words, 8 available marks)

Rationale, Evaluation and Summative Statement:

- Rationale for the candidate's choice of one idea that they have implemented in their realisation of the Performing Arts event.
- An evaluation of how the candidate's and other group members' ideas contributed to the Performing Arts event.
- A summative statement linking the candidate's experience of working on the Performing Arts event to employment/future opportunities in the Performing Arts industry.

## 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. The overwhelming majority of centres approached the Pre-Release stimulus with creativity and focus, allowing for a wide range of work.

Please note that the Supporting Document should be submitted with a completed Candidate Assessment Form; these can be found on the CCEA website. The document should be stapled or tagged in the top left corner; poly pockets or folders should not be used.

It should be noted that this piece of work is to take place under controlled conditions; these are clearly outlined in Section 3.2.

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

### **A01            A Response to the Pre-Release Stimulus Material (8 marks)**

- This was generally a successful section of the document, where Mark Band 3 and higher was commonly awarded.
- The vast majority of centres referenced the Pre-Release Stimulus in some way.
- The majority of candidates focused on practical and artistic constraints, outlining group skills, venue, target audience, length of performance and production costs.

#### **Areas for Consideration**

- There is an over reliance on plot retelling or character summary, this should be avoided.
- The specification indicates that social, cultural and historical contexts should be researched as well as form, style and genre. Where either element is missing it is not possible to achieve the highest mark band.
- Focus should be on the specific skills of group members and how that might benefit the group performance.
- Footnotes are required to reference contextual research.

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

- Strong responses reviewed several skills from the list in Section 3.1.
- The best candidates selected a skill or technique they had seen in one of the reviewed performing arts events focusing on developing that skill personally.
- Strong candidates outlined exactly how the experiments took place in rehearsal.
- Having a discrete paragraph detailing strengths and weaknesses worked effectively.

**Areas for Consideration**

- A plot review is not necessary and should be avoided in light of the limited word count.
- Candidates should use the skills list on pages 8–10 in the specification to give a more focused response and ensure that all skills are covered.
- The specification states ‘appreciation of skills and techniques in the chosen discipline’; some candidates were self-penalising by reviewing skills from a different discipline.
- Creative experimentation implies influence from research of professional practice.
- Strengths and weaknesses were not always explicit resulting in a loss of marks.

**AO4            A Rationale, an Evaluation and a Summative Statement  
(8 marks)**

- The strongest responses reflected on one idea from Section 2 and gave a fully justified rationale as to why it contributed to the realisation of the performance.
- The best candidates used reflective language and referenced feedback from peers and production candidates.
- Most candidates commented on their future or made a link to how this experience prepared them to work within the Performing Arts industry.

**Areas for Consideration**

- Only one fully justified rationale is required.
- Both individual and group contributions should be recognised.
- Evaluations tended to be mostly descriptive, with only some elements of analysis.

**Visiting Examination (32 marks)**

This unit involves responding to pre-release stimulus material. The pre-release stimulus material will be concept, theme or issue based. Students interpret this stimulus to create a performing arts event that will draw on existing material. The pre-release stimulus for this year was ‘Darkness and Light’.

Students present their performing arts event to an audience and the external examiner in groups. Each group should consist of between two and nine students. Although each group prepares and presents the work, the external examiner assesses each student as an individual. There must be a minimum of one performer per group. No more than one student per group can undertake a particular production discipline. Performances should last between 10 and 40 minutes, depending on the size of the group. Larger groups should not exceed the maximum time limit. Each production student gives a presentation, lasting between 5 and 10 minutes, to the external examiner. They also carry out their role, if appropriate, during the performance.



## General Observations

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

There was a steady number of music and production candidates amongst the drama candidates, whilst dance remains in the minority. The Pre-Release stimulus of 'Darkness and Light' provoked some very creative and engaging work. Centres are to be commended for the way they approached the stimulus and for the breadth and range of material used.

Centres are reminded that the Examination Record Sheet is of upmost importance to the Visiting Examiner, as this specifies the candidate's discipline, the chosen repertoire material and the style/genre of the piece. Centres are requested to take the time to complete this fully and return it to CCEA at ([performingartsvisits@ccea.org.uk](mailto:performingartsvisits@ccea.org.uk)) by the requested date. This date changes each year and is stated on the Examination Record Sheet on the CCEA website.

The examiners were warmly welcomed at all centres and the hospitality shown was very much appreciated. The majority of centres provided a conducive environment with audiences in attendance. 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.

In terms of chosen material, the most popular choices were Little Women, A Streetcar Named Desire, The Long Road, The Cagebirds, Girls Like That and Macbeth.

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 reached. Overlong performances can also disadvantage performers, as there are challenges in sustaining focus over a longer period of time.

### **A03                    Working independently and with others to deliver performance skills/production ideas**

- The pre-release stimulus of 'Darkness and Light' 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.
- A huge amount of time and effort had been spent to create some very memorable Performing Arts events.

### Areas for Consideration

- It is challenging to integrate different disciplines into one performing arts event, therefore appropriate time and planning is needed to ensure this is done successfully.
- Drama candidates playing several different roles tended to be disadvantaged as they couldn't show full development of the role.
- Candidates should all be given enough exposure time to showcase their skills fully.
- All repertoire, for all disciplines, must be recorded on the Examination Record Sheet.
- 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.

### **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.
- 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

- The style and genre of the piece must be clearly stated on the ERS, which is used by the examiner to award marks. Mark band 4 states, "performance/ presentation that fully conveys the chosen style, form and genre of the event and produces fit for purpose outcomes."
- Production candidates should explicitly refer to the chosen style, form/genre in their presentation to the examiner.

### **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.
- Production candidates must rehearse their presentation and receive guidance on this process to ensure all points are covered within the time limit.
- Communicating the meaning of the work can be lost when the repertoire is overly long. It is entirely acceptable to present a capsule of work that meets all of the requirements without an entire narrative.
- Please consider how the examiner will identify the candidates. In ensemble work especially, some thought is needed around using colours/costumes/props etc. so that each candidate is easily identified.

### **Summary**

Centres are to be congratulated on their examination outcomes. The work of candidates once again showed commitment and dedication and the wide range of repertoire presented was commendable. Congratulations to students and teachers who contributed to these successful outcomes for 2024.

## Assessment Unit A2 1      Planning for Employment

### Unit Overview

This unit gives candidates the opportunity to develop their understanding of how to find work in their chosen discipline. Candidates work individually to explore the range and scope of employment opportunities in the performing arts industry. They develop materials that will assist them in gaining employment in their chosen discipline.

In the written report candidates focus their research on skills and training, the role of outside agencies in helping them gain employment and create an employment plan exploring three potential job opportunities in their discipline. Performance candidates are required to prepare two contrasting performance pieces (not already explored in AS) for audition. Production students are required to prepare two presentations that reflect the application of their discipline in two productions (not already explored in AS).

Through this unit candidates acquire knowledge and understanding of how to gain work in the performing arts industry by investigating and compiling a written research report into:

- the training required;
- the role of unions, agents and recruitment agencies in securing work locally and nationally.
- jobs available in their discipline

Candidates apply their understanding of industry practice by producing a CV and a promotional portfolio to market themselves. The portfolio should reflect their experience in their chosen discipline and emphasise their employability. Candidates should be

given opportunities to build and develop their CV by participating in a range of activities appropriate to their discipline, for example short performances, workshops or coaching.

Performance candidates apply their skills through preparing for and participating in an audition and interview. Production candidates apply their skills through preparing for and participating in a presentation and interview. The audition and interview, or presentation and interview, should be recorded, following industry practice and last between 10–15 minutes per candidate.

Performance candidates must prepare two contrasting performance pieces (not already explored in AS) for audition. Production candidates must prepare a presentation that reflects the application of their discipline in two contrasting productions (not already explored in AS). Each candidate participates in a teacher-led interview that focuses, for example, on their choice of material, interpretation, production ideas and style of delivery. Feedback is an intrinsic part of the process and helps inform candidates of the areas they need to develop to gain employment in their chosen discipline.

Candidates then evaluate the process, reflecting on feedback given on their promotional portfolio, and the strengths of their audition or presentation and interview. They set targets to enhance their employability in the performing arts industry.

## Administration

Performance disciplines continue to be most popular, with an increase in uptake of Music, and some production disciplines. Overall, the candidates' work was well organised for submission. However, there were still some technical difficulties accessing work on USBs, including missing work, sound issues, corrupt files and incorrectly labelled USBs/ DVDs.

**Please note that DVDs/CDs will no longer be accepted as part of the coursework submission for this unit.**

Centres are reminded to ensure all materials are in working order and include the full sample prior to submission.

There was some excellent annotation of the work, and comments on the eCRS which helped justify the marks awarded. However, in some cases the marks awarded did not reflect the comments or the annotation of the candidates' work, so the rationale for the marks awarded was inconsistent. Centres are reminded to utilise the suggested Annotation Code to support their marking, which can also help reduce workload, whilst providing a clear indication where the candidates have met different aspects of the assessment criteria.

### Key Points to consider:

- Read and follow the Instructions to Teachers guidance, available under the Support tab on the Performing Arts microsite.
- Download, complete and attach the Sample Cover Sheet from the CCEA e-moderation webpage.
- Clearly label and check all recordings are in working order prior to submission.
- All work submitted should be in Arial 12 and adhere to the page limits as detailed in the Assessment Evidence on pages 23–24 of the specification and be collated as a portfolio of work in the order of the specification.
- Use the Suggested Annotation Code to annotate the candidates work, with a summative comment and a mark awarded for each section.
- All candidates need to be clearly identified to camera at the start of the audition/presentation and interview.
- Adhere to the 15-minute time limit for audition/interview.

## AO1 A Written Report

Centres should view the Written Report as a holistic document which develops the candidates' knowledge and understanding of the various stages they need to go through to secure employment in the Performing Arts industry. Each section should build on the next to create a connected plan for employment.

### Section 1: Skills and Training

Most candidates successfully identified vocational, academic, and experience-based training, with a clear focus on how the skills needed to be a professional in their discipline would be enhanced by undertaking the training offered. Candidates who made links between the routes explored, skills developed, and employability, achieved highly in this section. The highest achieving candidates looked at the content for each course and gave examples of skills that would enhance their current skill set and employability. Candidates should be reminded that entry requirements and fees are not overly relevant to this section unless connected to skills. The experience-based route continues to be underdeveloped, leading at times to some imbalance in this section. Candidates should deepen their research into training programmes, internships, apprenticeships, theatre-based work experience and working with amateur companies.

## **Section 2: How to Gain Employment**

It was evident that candidates had undertaken a good range of research with focused examples of different unions, agencies, and recruitment websites relevant to the candidate's discipline. Most candidates considered the development of an online presence. The strongest candidates included analysis and personal application as to the benefits of each organisation in supporting them to gain employment. Given that most candidates outline UK and Irish based training routes in Section 1 they should focus on UK and Ireland based agencies and organisations. Some candidates referenced the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, but without an explanation of how this organisation might help them to gain employment.

## **Section 3: Employment Plan**

Centres showed a clear understanding of the requirements of this section, with candidates exemplifying 3 live jobs in their discipline and outlining information on:

- the qualifications and experience required.
- contractual obligations
- fees/salaries
- progression

Candidates who demonstrated how they met the criteria through links to their current experience and the imagined experience gained by completing courses outlined in Section 1 achieved highly in this section. However, in some cases a centre-based approach was evident with several candidates exploring similar jobs for all three employment opportunities. Page 20 of the specification suggests that students explore 'working on a film, then working on the stage, and finally working as a workshop facilitator in their chosen discipline'. Centres are reminded that, for performers, at least one of the jobs should be a performance role.

### **Key Points to consider:**

- Encourage candidates to focus on the skills that each training route would develop by focused research into the course content and the skills that are developed in the modules offered.
- Ensure candidates explore a range of experiences that could enhance the experience-based training.
- Research for section 2 should be balanced across agents, unions, recruitment agencies, and self-promotion.
- In Section 3 application of suitability of the candidate for the job, and cross-referencing Section 1 and 2 enables candidates to access the range of marks available.
- Footnote research within the body of the work, with a comprehensive bibliography at the end of each section.

## A02            A Promotional Portfolio

It was pleasing to see an increase in the number of centres submitting the candidates' portfolios digitally as this reflects current professional practice. Most of these were well organised with individual folders per candidate with clearly labelled CV, Headshot and Showreel. Overall, the quality of the headshots showed a good understanding of professional practice. There was an increase in the use of templates by candidates to create their CVs. Whilst these may look attractive, they did not always contain the relevant information required for a Performing Arts discipline. A variety of formats were used to record the showreels/demoreels, which generally reflected professional practice. It was evident some candidates sought further opportunities or recorded short pieces for inclusion which showed a commitment to showcasing a range of skills.

There were some excellent examples of design candidates' sketchbooks being submitted as portfolios, which can also be digitised for submission. Whilst other production disciplines can evidence their work on showreel by using recordings of past performances, inclusion of presentations plus long unedited showreels/demo-reels do not fully reflect professional practice and cannot access the top mark bands.

**Please note that submitting work on DVD/CD no longer reflects professional practice, and centres should submit work in a digital format on USB. Further guidance will be available during the Agreement Trial.**

### Key Points to consider:

- Candidates should research and apply current professional practice and industry standards to create of their Promotional Portfolio.
- The style, content and layout of the Promotional Portfolio needs to reflect industry practice to access marks in the top bands.
- The duration of the showreel/demo reel needs to reflect industry practice to access marks in the top bands.
- Check all show reels/demo reels are fully functioning and correctly labelled prior to submission.

### **A03 An Audition/Presentation and Interview**

The classics were popular again this year, in addition to some interesting new contemporary pieces which enabled candidates to showcase their skills. However, some of the monologues were over four minutes long, which does not reflect industry practice. In some cases, there was a lack of contrasting skills demonstrated in the performance of the pieces, which was not reflected in the marks awarded. Centres should support their candidates in choosing contrasting performance pieces that show the range and level of their skill.

In the main, centres have a secure grasp of the requirements for production candidates to showcase the skills listed in pages 8–10 of the specification through their presentation of two contrasting extracts. Centres are reminded that candidates should also show the final outcomes and mock-ups as per the specification. In some cases, production candidates did not demonstrate all aspects of the required assessment outcomes, but this was not reflected in the marks awarded.

Teachers are commended for asking questions in the interview that allowed candidates to demonstrate their research, knowledge and understanding of their chosen extracts. In the case of dance or music performers it is acceptable to have the interview before the performance, if this supports the candidate. Some centres went over the prescribed time limit of 15 minutes. This can be difficult for production candidates as the bulk of their time is used to deliver the presentation, but an example of good practice was where centres factored in a few minutes to ask the production candidates about other practitioners who influenced their work.

To ensure candidates fully prepare for their auditions and presentations, centres should actively encourage candidates to utilise and build on the range of professional techniques initially explored at AS 1. This can enhance the candidates' final outcomes and deepen their responses in interview.

#### **Key Points to consider:**

- Ensure the choice of repertoire enables the candidate to showcase contrasting skills.
- Guide the candidates in a range of techniques to support skills development as they prepare for the audition/ presentation and interview.
- Adhere to the time limit of 15 minutes as directed within the specification.
- Ensure that there are no interruptions, and the sound is working on the recording equipment prior to starting the interview and audition.



## **A04            An Evaluation**

As outlined in the Assessment Criteria there are three aspects to the evaluation which are:

- Analysis and evaluation of all aspects of the promotional portfolio including **feedback**.
- Analysis of the **strengths** of the audition/ presentation **and** interview
- Identification of areas for development

Centres are reminded that the evaluation is a significant aspect of this unit of work and the level of detail produced should reflect that. The general approach was overly descriptive of the creation of their promotional portfolios and the audition/presentation and interview, making it difficult for candidates to secure marks in the top bands. Centres are reminded that candidates should include feedback when evaluating the quality of their promotional portfolio. Therefore, centres should create opportunities for candidates to receive feedback from others, which may be their peers, the teacher or professionals in the industry.

Overall, evaluations tended to be unbalanced, with candidates referring briefly to the skills shown in their audition, with some focusing on the process, which is not part of the assessment criteria. Similarly, production candidates focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the presentation rather than how they demonstrated their skills to create the final outcome. Teachers are advised to recap with their candidates the approach to evaluations for AS1, where candidates securely identified the skills shown in their performances and presentations, through precise examples and consideration of impact.

Candidates in the top bands gave areas for improvement throughout the evaluation and gave some post A-Level future targets. However, many candidates did not reference areas for development for the future. More explicit consideration of this bullet point in the assessment criteria is needed.

### **Key Points to consider:**

- Provide opportunities for feedback on the promotional portfolios.
- Focus on the exemplification of strengths of the audition/presentation with reference to the skills on the skill list.
- Include target setting and identification of areas for further development as a discrete concluding paragraph.

## Chief Examiner's Report

### Assessment Unit A2 2

### Performing to a Commission Brief

#### Unit Overview

This unit gives students the opportunity to form a production company to realise a performing arts event from an externally set Commission Brief. Students research, promote, plan and perform the event.

Students demonstrate their skills in their chosen discipline by realising the Commission Brief practically for an audience and the external examiner. Although students prepare the work and present it as a group, the external examiner assesses them as individuals. There must be a minimum of one performer per group. No more than one student can undertake a particular production discipline or administrative role per group. Groups should be between two and six. Performances should last between 15 and 40 minutes, depending on the size of the group. Larger groups should not exceed the maximum time limit. Students focus on performing or producing original material in response to the brief. While planning the event students also consider the factors that influence their choices and how feasible their ideas are, as they realise the event.

The Commission Brief, which we set and release each September, offers students a choice from:

- a cultural theme, historical topic or social issue;
- the performance style of a playwright/practitioner, composer/musician or dancer/choreographer; or
- a published poem or song, a theme, a quotation or an image.

Students work in groups to make planning decisions and agree the type of event and the performance concept for the event. They work to an agreed production schedule to meet deadlines. Students decide on a suitable venue for the performance and take account of production costs and budgetary constraints. Students also consider their target audience and how to market the event.

Also, as production company members, students research the financing and marketing practices at two professional venues/contexts. They use their findings to carry out one of the following administrative roles:

- front of house;
- health and safety officer;
- budget and finance;
- education officer;
- press officer; or
- publicity officer.

No more than one student per group can undertake a particular administrative role.

**Performance** students learn how to perform their chosen discipline in the Commission Brief to the external examiner.

**Production** students learn how to present production ideas to the external examiner.

As production company members, all students also investigate professional practice and learn how to carry out an administrative role in their group performance. They learn how to use existing professional practice to inform their personal practice by:

- analysing the financing and marketing practices of two professional venues;
- summarising their research findings; and
- using their summary of findings to inform their approach to carrying out their chosen administrative role.

They present their findings in a Record of Work which is examined.

### **Record of Work (48 marks)**

From the Pre-release stimulus choice students produce 'a record of work' comprising:

#### **A01 - a research report in two sections:**

**Section 1:** a summary of individual research on the social, cultural and historical context of their chosen Commission Brief (a maximum of 600 words);

**Section 2:** an analysis of the financing and marketing practices of two professional venues (a maximum of 600 words);

(8 marks total)

#### **A02 - a summary of findings:**

ideas from the practices at two professional venues/contexts linked to how they carried out their chosen administrative role (a maximum of 600 words) the roles include:

(16 marks total)

- Front of House
- H&S Officer
- Budget & Finance
- Education officer
- Press Officer
- Publicity Officer

#### **A03 Evidence of tasks completed**

Each student must produce 3 tasks items identified for their chosen administrative role (a maximum of six sides of A4 paper, or equivalent, depending on the evidence produced).

(16 marks total)

#### **A04 An Evaluation**

From his or her notes, each student must produce an evaluation, under controlled conditions, for inclusion in his or her record of work. The evaluation can be either handwritten or word-processed.

(8 marks total)

## General Observations

Generally, the presentation and administration of the work was clear and presented to a high standard. A full range of administrative tasks were provided, with many candidates enjoying the opportunity to work collaboratively. Most centres included a cover page detailing the candidate's chosen discipline and administrative role.

For a significant number of candidates, the Summary of Findings tends to be the least successful section. Further attention needs to be given to linking the findings to carrying out the admin role. Research findings should be current and up to date.

Most of the sections included appropriate word counts and references for research but there was evidence of being over the word count work this year.

There was still some over-reliance on subject website examples for Section C, this disadvantaged candidates as there was no evidence of the candidates' own research of professional practice.

It was felt that overall more time should be spent on this component given it is worth 48 of the total mark of 80.

## Research Report - Section a (i)

A summary of individual research on the social, cultural and historical context of their chosen Commission Brief.

- The Commissions based on CB1 and CB3 were the most popular.
- Most candidates outlined how this research generated ideas for their Commission production.
- The research reports were generally well linked to the Commission statements.
- Only a minority of candidates focused their research on specific social, cultural and historical contexts.

## 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.
- Stand alone research with no link to the Commission Brief was the weakest type of answer.
- 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.
- There was a growing tendency to discuss budget, group skills and working together which is assessed in section (d).

## Research Report – Section a (ii)

An analysis of the financing and marketing practices of two professional venues.

- Candidates who clearly divided their work into income and expenditure within the finance section were able to evidence their detailed research.
- Some centres used screen shots effectively to exemplify marketing practices.
- A range of centres generally discussed finance practice but no specific figures were referenced.
- Marketing information was extensive for some candidates. The best marketing research covered a full range of marketing strategies not just websites and social media.

### Areas for Consideration

- There was use of outdated research figures i.e. 2019 figures from venues.
- A range of centres used background information on the two theatres/contexts; this is not necessary.
- There was some use of contexts/venues on which there was limited information.

## Section (b) Summary of Findings

- The strongest candidates provided a short overview of the chosen administrative role and then focused on how this information influenced them in carrying out the roles and tasks.
- Precise quotations from the venue/personnel source underpinned high quality research.
- Making links from research to the carrying out of the admin role was assisted by using the tasks as headings.

### Areas for Consideration

- Some candidates did not consider all three tasks and instead focused on one task in detail.
- Some candidates spoke generally about the role and then briefly about what they were going to do in their tasks; detailed links must be made as to how the role and tasks are carried out within the industry and how this informed their practical approach.
- Some candidates were over the word count for this section.

## Section (c) Evidence of Tasks

- Outstanding work included: - QR codes on tickets and posters, online ticket examples, a digital poster to be used on a TV screen, online evaluations and staff training/ briefing notes.
- There were some very creative ideas on using all 6 A4 pages, showing full engagement in the admin role with annotation around tasks and final versions.
- Some excellent links to professional practice were demonstrated through the use of personalised logos for the company and reference to support groups if linked to a serious topic.

**Areas for Consideration**

- Some candidates handed in a range of drafts but did not clearly outline which was the final product.
- Programmes for the role of Publicity Officer should be fully realised, the Education Officer should provide sample support materials and the H&S Officer a diagram of the venue with the FE plan.
- Weakest responses were Press Officers with only an email for the press invite or merging a press release and invite as one thing with only a few press contacts.
- Under page count work was regarded as underdeveloped.
- Missing tasks led to a MKB1 award.
- Over use of microsite examples was an issue for this series as the work lacked evidence of individualised research of current professional practice.

**Section (d) Evaluation**

- Some candidates used the bullet points within the assessment criteria to structure their response which ensured that all parts of the evaluation/analysis were covered.
- The majority of candidates explored problems and solutions in good detail.
- The best candidates used evaluative language to consider their contribution and admin role.

**Areas for Consideration**

- A majority of candidates were descriptive in their approach, with little analysis evident, particularly in relation to the negotiation of the brief and agreement on the concept.
- Many candidates did not fully consider deadlines and production costs in the section on decision making and problems/solutions.
- Many candidates did not fully evaluate the outcome of their administrative role or their own contribution;
- Some candidates were over the word count in this section.

## Visiting Examination (32 marks)

Students demonstrate their skills in their chosen discipline by realising the Commission Brief practically for an audience and the external examiner. Although students prepare the work and present it as a group, the external examiner assesses them as individuals. There must be a minimum of one performer per group. No more than one student can undertake a particular production discipline or administrative role per group. Groups should be between two and six. Performances should last between 15 and 40 minutes, depending on the size of the group. Larger groups should not exceed the maximum time limit. Students focus on performing or producing original material in response to the brief. While planning the event students also consider the factors that influence their choices and how feasible their ideas are, as they realise the event.

Students also apply the skills of their chosen discipline in rehearsal and performance, building on those developed during the AS course.

Through their work as a production company, students respond in performance or production to the Commission Brief and learn how to:

- select a suitable option from the externally set Commission Brief;
- research and explore the social, cultural and historical aspects of the chosen option from the brief;
- decide on a target audience;
- devise an agreed concept for the performance;
- create and select material appropriate to the chosen brief;
- agree a production schedule;
- work within the financial constraints of their particular circumstances to ensure the feasibility of their ideas;
- market the performance;
- apply health and safety practices;
- agree a contingency plan;
- rehearse the event; and perform the event for examination.

## 2024 Pre-release Stimulus Material

Performance students must perform their chosen discipline, in response to the Commission Brief (see below). Each student's performance should last a minimum of 5 minutes.

Production students must present their production ideas (lasting no more than 10 minutes) to the external examiner and carry out their chosen discipline, as appropriate during the group performance.

## Commission 1

An event which explores a “challenging issue” aimed at an audience of peers.

## Commission 2

An event which explores one of the following:

- The performance style of a chosen Theatre Company
- The sound track of a film; or
- 21st century choreography.

## Commission 3

An event which takes as its starting point, an image or photograph of note.

Commission Brief 1 and Commission Brief 3 were the most popular, with some very effective responses for Commission Brief 2.

## General Observations

The performances and presentations for this series were generally good with some original, high quality work in evidence. It was felt, however, that there were fewer candidates reaching the top of mark band 4. This was due in part to the lack of obvious connection to the commission brief and there also seemed to be some superficial work which lacked originality and depth.

Look closely at the requirements of the assessment criteria when planning, rehearsing and performing/presenting/producing and use the criteria as a check list against final outcomes.

## 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.
- Strong candidates had worked collaboratively to devise thought provoking and engaging theatre that connected fully with their chosen brief.
- There were some strong music candidates this year who helped to convey mood and atmosphere related to the brief.
- Images for CB3 were used effectively to set context and convey meaning.

## Areas for Consideration

- Pieces should be refined and edited to make clear links to the brief which in turn will result in more effective engagement with the brief.
- Centres should be reminded that performances do not need to be overly complicated; numerous scenes with multiple blackouts detract from impact.
- In several centres some music/dance candidates were not fully integrated into the final piece.
- Some production candidates made very little connection with the Commission Brief.
- There were some obscure ‘challenges’ in the ‘challenging issue’ and overall impact was diminished.



## Level of Skills Development

- Candidates generally rose to the challenge and demonstrated their skills and personal style to good effect.
- The production candidates showed a competent ability, for the most part, indicating engagement with their chosen production field.
- There were some strong drama performances with a clear sense of characterisation evident and moments of great impact for the audience.
- There were some strong performances this year from music candidates 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 meaning to access the highest mark range.
- For quite a few candidates the application of skills required more originality to access higher mark bands.
- There were a number of drama candidates singing and music candidates acting; performances should represent the skills of the discipline.
- Several production candidates did not include the required materials (refer pages 27–29 of the specification).
- Some production candidates were very well prepared in their presentations, however, the evidence of their work in performance proved less successful.

## 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.
- Audiences helped create a sense of occasion.
- For the most part, the themes and plots that candidates developed for performances were original, engaging and entertaining.
- Multimedia was used to enhance performances with effective use of production elements to support meaning and vary the mood.
- Live singing or instrumentals often added flair and originality, enhancing mood and providing resonance to the themes explored.
- Students who worked with a Theatre Company produced some very good quality work.

### Areas for Consideration

- Again examiners reported some very episodic work which lacked the required quality of outcome through a loss of sustained performance time.
- At times the intended meaning did not correlate with the brief and outcomes lacked focus.
- Production candidates should make sure that their visions are realised through performance and all relevant work is referenced and available during presentations.
- Some performances lacked originality with dialogue which was sometimes fragmented leaving characterisation under-developed.
- Over reliance on existing script repertoire should be avoided. Use of dance and music repertoire should have an original outcome.
- The work of the A2 examination should be recorded by the centre. **Please note that the audience's use of mobile phones to record examination work is not permitted.**

### Summary

Centres are to be congratulated on their examination outcomes; well done to all the students, teachers and examiners who contributed to this successful series.

## Contact details

The following information provides contact details for key staff members:

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