

Performing Arts

Advanced GCE A2 H546

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H146

Report on the Units

January 2008

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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CONTENTS

Advanced GCE Performing Arts (H546)

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REPORT ON THE UNITS

Unit/Content	Page
Chief Examiner's Report	1
G380 Investigating performing arts organisations	5
G381 Professional Practice: Skills Development	7
G382 Professional practice: performance	8
G383 Professional Practice: Production	12
G386 Producing your own Showcase	13
G387 Production Demonstration	17
Grade Thresholds	18
How to Calculate a UMS (Uniform Mark Scale) conversion	20

Chief Examiner's Report

January 2008 proved to be a small session. There appears to be a preference to submit work in the June session, which is in line with the expectation of the specification. Despite a small cohort there was evidence of good practice in all units and varied work across the spectrum. Candidates are approaching the units with enthusiasm and centres are providing opportunities for candidates to develop greater knowledge and understanding of the Performing Arts Industry. This is encouraging as these opportunities fulfil the vocational aspects of the course.

The impression from the examiners and moderators was that candidates were generally well prepared and displayed an awareness of the requirements of the specification. Good practice was evident; in Skills Development the portfolio work was, in some centres, showing detailed analysis of skills development and its process; the Case Studies saw prepared and thorough answers, alongside research and good comparative skills in the study of organisations; Performance work in some centres was again recorded to be of a 'professional standard' with candidates tackling demanding and difficult performance pieces. Examiners/Moderators felt that it was a pleasure to witness some of the work seen or produced in portfolios and felt that centres had really started to develop the type of performance tasks undertaken. Candidates were able to access Assessment Criteria with confidence. They were able to use technical terms and appropriate terminology, which contributed to their increasing vocationality when tackling the tasks set for each unit.

Centres are reminded that there is Coursework Consultancy is available to them. They can submit marked coursework to the Principal Moderator for their marking to be reviewed. Please get in contact with the Subject Officer for more details. A few centres have used this facility and found it to be both helpful and of benefit to the candidates.

Centres also need to ensure they are compliant with the instructions relating to coursework issued by OCR and the JCQ. For example, coursework drafts must only be marked once by the teacher before they are submitted for final assessment. For all written work teachers are reminded that they need to ascertain that the work is the candidate's own, and to this end, must be vigilant against candidate's using a 'cut and paste' approach to internet sources as this does not represent their own work.

G380

This investigation unit was designed to help candidates to understand how 'the business' works and the range of roles within the organisation. Many candidates were able to produce case studies that covered the scope of the performing arts industries and the way in which they operate. There were some portfolios of a high standard where candidates had researched how organisations relied on the effective deployment of people and resources. Good practice saw information sourced extremely well presented using graphs, pie charts, data collection charted for comparative analyses and Power Point used to deliver the job presentation. The organisations were well researched and findings clearly presented. However, some of the tasks set were too self-limiting with candidates simply choosing organisations that were too small which meant that they could not get the depth or detail needed to access the higher mark bands. Candidates must also comment on aspects, such as pay and conditions, trade unions, the social and cultural dimensions of the organisations as well as the opportunities for progression and development.

G381

A very small entry as expected. The limited evidence of work does make it difficult to comment on, but despite this, there was clearly some improvement in the structure of candidate portfolios. Centres are clearly starting to organise the evidence needed. The unit gives the candidates the opportunity to develop professional practice and explore new skills in specialist areas of the performing arts. Candidates need to evaluate the level and range of their technical skills and identify suitable activities and exercises through practical exploration to develop and extend their abilities.

It was pleasing to see candidates able to take advantage of the range of expertise available and the level of resources that exist in centres. Candidates quite clearly had the freedom to choose appropriate contexts for their skills development.

All centres need to concentrate on the process of acquiring skills through practical involvement in pieces taken from repertoire. Performance work must be recorded on video/DVD and accompany the portfolio to support progress made.

G382-3

Despite a small entry there was a range of work seen for this unit. Some centres displayed a strong sense of professionalism in their work. The key factor was undoubtedly teamwork. Good centres demonstrated appropriate and effective interaction with everyone involved giving a feeling of unity and coherence.

This performance unit is about the skills and activities involved in a performance project from the initial planning to the development and ultimate performance of the piece. Some Candidates seen during this session had developed a real sense of 'belonging to' and 'ownership of' their work. The discussion saw candidates who were passionate about their performance work, what it meant to them and how they personally had developed. Centres really tried to provide challenging projects where candidates could aspire to professional standards in front of a 'live' audience. Selection of material is probably the most important factor for centres and during the next session they may wish to ask for further guidance and clarification as to whether their chosen piece meets the requirements of the specification.

G383 proved to be more successful during this session where candidates were more aware of providing DVD evidence. Good practice saw candidates presenting various aspects of their work to cameras creating 'DVD diaries.' This showed the examiner the preparation work that production candidates are involved in as well as what is going on before, during and after a performance. Portfolio work contained further evidence to support the candidates' work.

Centres still need to provide industry compliant software and process, including industry standard diagrams, scales and terminology. Teaching the G383 unit does need adequate planning and resources. Many centres do not have teaching staff that have the necessary experience or skills to teach on this unit. Centres must also ensure that they have the equipment and software that will allow candidates to receive appropriate teaching and exposure to technical tasks, computer programmes and technical tools. These centres should look to provide workshops, visiting speakers or look for specialist courses run by independent providers.

Performance

Good practice saw candidates performing with accuracy and control. They showed good performance technique, created as an appropriate approach to the type of audience selected. There was no doubt that for the majority of candidates the practical aspects of a performance

piece were both exciting and challenging and definitely motivational. Centres must ensure that candidates are prepared as there were clearly candidates who needed further guidance with singing in the correct key and tonal qualities.

Performance Diaries

The recording of this process was generally good with centres structuring the work with tracking sheets and observations. There was an improvement from the last session; but there was still evidence of poorly produced diaries, done almost as an afterthought. Centres must pick up on this as candidates are losing vital marks that will affect their overall grade. Centres may not have realised the importance of the diary but must be encouraged to bring them in line with the standards achieved for performance work. Good practice saw some very good diary/portfolio work where candidates had detailed and extensive work that showed the production process from start to finish.

Many of the recommendations made from the last session through reports and INSET have been taken on board by the centres. However, centres must ask for clarification of their material choice if they are at all unsure. Recording the performances was done well with chaptered DVDs but Centres are reminded that they must send the DVD recording to the examiner within three days. Centres must take responsibility for video/DVD recordings and ensure that they are of a good quality and that they can be played on a variety of DVD players.

G384

Candidates were required to prepare a promotional pack that included their CV, action plan and a prediction of their first year of work including income and expenditure. There was evidence of some outstanding work where candidates displayed a real sense of the income they could achieve alongside an understanding of the business and the professional aspects of getting employment. These candidates had a real awareness of the professional context of the work. Promotional packs were persuasive through visual evidence as well as realistic content. Interviews with freelance professionals are vital to both inform and help candidates in the planning aspects of the tasks. Quality in the outcome is essential to attract the professional agencies and employers. Candidates should focus on a particular market – agent, music/dance genre.

G386

A very small entry for this unit. Candidates were required to perform three pieces of work – two solos and one duet/duologue/ pas de deux. Nevertheless, there were some outstanding examples of accomplished and dynamic performances. Candidates were able to display complete mastery of their selected material. Good candidates were able to shape and mould their material to display a sophisticated understanding of the interpretative skills required. Performance work was impressive, candidates had made a real effort to perform their pieces using effective lighting, sound, live music, costume and make up. It was extremely impressive to see candidates achieving such high levels of skill as well as a perceptive understanding of the professional context of the work.

Centres were more confident with this unit. Candidates were performing to audiences with the focus very much on performance techniques and technical effects. Centres responded well to the unit requirements. The best work saw aspects of professionalism and outstanding practice. Where there was evidence of teacher guidance candidates were better prepared in both their selection of material and in the performance of the work.

Centres were showing evidence of greater understanding of the unit requirements.

Centres do need to read the Unit reports from the Principal Examiners/Moderators carefully, to ensure that they too are developing their understanding and subsequent application of the specification. Inset is strongly recommended.

G387

There were no entries for this session; however, guidelines for centres for the June session are detailed below:

Candidates are required through their portfolio work and product presentation to demonstrate a detailed understanding of the processes required to realise their designs. There should be research undertaken and whichever creative process adopted by the candidate should show a depth of understanding. Candidates must consider the social, historical and cultural influences on their designs. Material selected particularly at the highest mark should be impressively sophisticated. Candidates must display a good command of technical language and conventions as well as complying with industry requirements.

All work undertaken should be taken from a brief set by the teacher and designed to support candidates on the performance pathway, which is G382, G385 and G386. Centres should ask for guidance on this unit to ensure they are complying with the specification.

The product demonstration should be authoritative and absorbing. Designs need to create highly effective engagement for the audience. There should be evidence of technical accuracy. The candidate should be able to demonstrate a personal style in shaping and moulding the designs. Work scoring at the higher end should contain a level of originality in both its conception and realisation.

Candidates must submit both their preparatory notes and their portfolio containing their designs as well as pictures, photographs, DVD, or video evidence of their product demonstration.

Centres are encouraged to support production candidates in recording a video/DVD diary throughout the process detailing all aspects of the work undertaken. This helps the examiner to see how the candidate has worked and can be a better source of evidence than the portfolio and diary. All centres must ensure that the interview/discussion with the examiner and production candidate is recorded. Evidence is often difficult to provide for the production candidates and every opportunity to capture it should be undertaken.

G380 Investigating performing arts organisations

General Comments

This was the fifth session of G380. Deadlines were quite tight, and although most of the work arrived on time and was complete with administration in order, it was noticeable that some centres were still very late in their submissions, with the moderator having to contact them several times. Even then, some of the work arrived incomplete, without CCS160s and even MS1s. Occasionally important pieces of information, such as candidate numbers and mark totals, were left off the URS.

Also in the case of candidates re-submitting work, it is essential that the moderator receives all the evidence, not just those parts the candidate is trying to improve. It is suggested that new centres attend the INSET provided by OCR, so that these issues can be resolved.

As always, there was a wide-range of responses from candidates. Some of their portfolios were of a high standard and showed a considerable amount of research, which was often expressed clearly with good use of performing arts terminology. Some of the organisations selected were still far too big (Odeon cinemas, for example) and it would have been better if candidates had concentrated on just their local cinema in that sort of example. However, it was also evident that some of the tasks set were a little self-limiting.

Candidates need to choose organisations that offer them an opportunity to cover all Assessment Objectives in some depth – for example, it is difficult to discuss job roles and how they relate to each other in a one-person company. Many candidates present a schematic representation of the job hierarchy in each organisation, which should then be used as the basis of comment and comparison.

Fewer portfolios were presented in tabular form this time. The expectation for this Unit is that work should be presented as an essay. Centres should also be aware that they should avoid overlapping material in the portfolio with the job role chosen for the presentation. For example, to focus on the role of stage manager, John Smith, in the portfolio and then to use the same person and material in the presentation is not advisable, as two sets of marks cannot be awarded for essentially one piece of work.

Some centres used colour-coded systems or post-its to highlight where the Assessment Objectives were met – these were generally very useful, though it is still important to complete the URS comments section fully and clearly identify the location of evidence. This is an aid to marking as well as to moderation. It is *not* useful for the moderator to know that the location of the evidence is 'in the Portfolio' – a page number is essential. There were instances where annotation was still quite minimal and this made moderation much more difficult.

Internal standardisation was evident in all the centres moderated and some of the portfolio work showed evidence of a sound knowledge base and many candidates had researched both organisations in depth. However, in a few cases some candidates were awarded too many marks for work that did not compare and contrast the two organisations in enough detail, specifically with regard to roles, purpose, effectiveness and structure. Under AO1.2, centres are reminded that it is vital that candidates display an ability to draw comparisons between roles that exist in both organisations if they are to be awarded a mark in the highest band.

Centres must remember to award marks for spelling, punctuation, grammar and communication under AO1.2 and AO4.1. Some candidates did not receive their full entitlement of marks because of this omission and it was necessary for the moderator occasionally to make adjustments for that reason.

It was pleasing that in general portfolios seemed less bulky this time – with less candidates sending unnecessary material, such as programmes, leaflets and menus. However, centres need to ensure that such peripheral evidence is kept to a minimum. Teachers need to make sure that all of the work is in the candidates' own words as still occasionally the same photocopied sheets were seen in just a few portfolios. Please avoid including photocopies of job specifications unless they are to be used as the focus of comment, comparison or analysis by the candidate.

The presentation of the job role was generally done less well and was sometimes over-marked. Centres need to ensure that they provide evidence for the moderator to show where marks have been awarded. It is helpful to see the work actually happening – a video or DVD (DVD only as of January 2009) of a talk or PowerPoint presentation is very useful, along with a paper copy of notes or slides. Please ensure that videos or DVDs are labelled with all relevant information and have a list of contents with timings. Try to make the sound and picture quality as good as possible – avoid filming in a room with lots of flickering computer screens, and be careful that shadow does not intrude. Some of the presentations were knowledgeable and showed high levels of understanding of the chosen job role. However, some candidates only gave a very generalised talk on a type of job – 'an actor' was a favourite. Unfortunately this choice limits the amount of marks available. It is essential to set the role thoroughly within the context of one of the organisations. To access the highest marks in AO4 it is vital to discuss working practices, such as appraisal, progression, health and safety, contracts, unions etc.

G381 Professional Practice: Skills Development

General Comments

There was a very modest entry in this session: five submitted work out of the six that entered amounting to just 50 candidates. Most centres running the specification continue to see January as too early to fully exploit the opportunities the unit provides for artistic development and exploration, and for the generation of evidence that can place candidates in the higher mark bands. Hardly surprising that of the five centres, three had marks reduced during the moderation process. Of the two that had no change one had a very small entry and the other have been submitting candidates regularly during the January session and appear to have eventually 'cracked it', so to speak.

So it is possible for centres, after some practice, to achieve high marks but there remains a general trend that suggested candidates may have achieved higher marks had their work be entered after further development later in the year. Where a re-submission took place one centre appeared to submit previous moderated portfolios with no further additions, consequently attracting a further reduction in marks. Work presented for re-submission must be improved.

There was some improvement in the structure of portfolios with most centres providing development plans, good observations and feedback and evidence of three repertoire pieces. There remains some confusion over the nature of the third 'finished' piece and the need for good annotated DVD/video evidence. Indeed one of the issues for the January session is the failure of some centres in the rush to submit evidence failing to produce any DVD evidence at all.

Moderators use relatively simple observations in the analysis of whether the third repertoire piece is complete. As well as judging any artistic considerations such as, for instance, a full embodiment of the part being played or the level of confidence and technical skills being credited by the teacher, moderators will also look for evidence of an audience (the camera is not the audience), costume/design/props and an uninterrupted delivery. It is not usually enough for the candidate (or the teacher) simply to say 'this is the finished piece' before the recording of the extract/dance/recital.

The ideal format for recorded work is an annotated or chaptered DVD. At the very minimum centres should provide clear indications of which candidate is which. This session once again provided too many examples of very general performance recordings and poorly produced videos. Please note that as of the January 2009 examination session OCR will only accept recorded evidence in the form of DVDs. However the annotation by teachers, particularly on the URS, is becoming fuller and more useful in locating marks and evidence.

Generally the work submitted continues to build on previous sessions and there is some evidence, albeit partial, in this small sample that centres are responding to previous reports.

G382 Professional practice: performance

General Comments:

After some registration issues at the beginning of the session the number of centres entering settled at a modest six. It is clear therefore that, given the logistics and organisation of most centres, this remains not the first choice of session for the vast majority. Even for those entered, dates remained an issue, with three centres having performances outside of the designated window (one in advance, two after) and therefore for the next January session (2009) the period will run from 3 November to 17 January.

The centres were well organised and there was evidence of good use of the specification with examples of excellent professional practice. Centres were reported to examiners a more knowledgeable understanding of the unit Assessment Criteria.

Centres where good practice was evident saw candidates achieving well into the top range of the marking criteria. Performance work showed professionalism and in many cases outstanding practice. Although a small cohort, there was still a variety of performance types and more integration of the disciplines within them. Large groups coped very well, ensuring opportunity for all candidates across the performance pieces. Centres are advised to use existing material taken from repertoire. Centres are advised to contact OCR for further guidance if they are in any doubt over the selection of material for future submissions.

There was evidence of centres obtaining performance licences/rights as well as covering the full spectrum of putting on a performance with candidates taking responsibility for various aspects of the production in terms of job roles/ structure and technical/production. This enabled candidates to experience the vocational aspects of staging a professional performance.

One centre with a G383 cohort produced a particularly useful approach; recording both the interviews and provided a 'roving eye' DVD, that followed technical work during the performance, this with the final recording of the piece itself, and the portfolios gave a comprehensive range of supporting evidence and should be regarded as a model by centres entering candidates for Unit 4 in the future.

External Examination - management

Examiners commented on the organisation of the centres with well-structured timetables for the running of the examination. Centres where good practice was evident had ensured that all paperwork had been completed and sent in advance to the examiner with the candidates' diaries. Examiners were seated in an appropriate place with tables and suitable table lights. Most centres had considered the examiner and ensured that the audience were also seated appropriately. Interview/discussion rooms were provided as required. Examiners would prefer up to one-hour pause between the interview and the performance in order to allow candidates adequate time to prepare themselves.

Most of the performances took place in the evening, which enabled an appropriate audience to be invited. This is of benefit to the candidates, as it provides a performance that does have some relevance to professional practice, and removes many of the problems that can occur during a school/college day. Performances were around an hour to an hour and a half long, which worked very well enabling the examiner to assess the development of the candidates' characters.

Centres must discuss the performance arrangements with the examiner to ensure that there are no misunderstandings. Examiners may need to arrange overnight accommodation if the performance finishes after 10.00 pm and centres must be mindful of this. Centres must agree

the arrangements with the examiner as they have procedures to follow. Any particular requirement or special arrangement must be agreed prior to the examination. OCR cannot guarantee that any last minute requests can be accommodated for by the examiner.

The Performance

There was evidence of outstanding practice seen during this session. It is very encouraging to see candidates attempting and succeeding with material that is demanding in terms of skills and technical ability.

Centres that explored the selection process thoroughly and engaged in a professional approach were able to demonstrate good practice. Where teachers/tutors took an active part in the selection and production process candidates were clearly advantaged. However, there are still some issues with regard to the adequacy of exposure time for each candidate. Candidates need to be able to demonstrate a range of performance skills and development of character or of the piece. A few lines or a solo in a piece may not be enough for candidates to access the full marking criteria. Centres where there were fewer candidates did very well to make use of non-examined performing arts students to support the piece.

The recommended length of the performance in the last session was around 45 minutes to one hour. Many of the performance pieces seen during this session saw candidates involved on stage for a significant amount of time, showing development of both the piece and their role in it.

The use of lighting and sound during this session was extremely effective. Centres made every effort to use technical effects to create atmosphere and mood. Elaborate sets, props, costumes and sound amplification made a significant contribution to the performances giving candidates both a vocational opportunity to take on a production role as well as creating a professional feel.

All centres has considered the professional aspects of performance and audiences were present for all performance work seen. This enabled candidates to communicate and engage with an audience. Audiences ranged from classes of school pupils to larger scale public audiences. Good practice was seen where centres had produced glossy programmes, displays of photographs and elaborate ticket designs. There was a sense of a professional feel to all aspects of the performance project.

Performances tended to be in the evening with most starting around 7.00pm to 7.30pm. This enabled candidates to attend their interview and have time for preparation. Some centres had arranged a matinee performance starting at 2.00pm.

All centres met the requirement of recording the performance however; the examiners had to chase centres for these. Centres are reminded that they have 3 days after the performance to send the video or DVD to the examiner. The quality of these recordings was in some cases poor, with the beginning of the first half or second half missing. Centres must ensure that they are able to produce a recording of the highest quality. This is a mandatory requirement of this unit and in the best interests of the candidates.

There was a range of performance material seen during this session including:

Musical Theatre *We Will Rock You*
 Oliver
 The Wiz (for G383)

Plays *The Canterbury Tales*
 The Nativity

The Company Meeting/Interview

The interview with the performance group remains a useful way to become familiar with individual candidates and is the necessary first step in knowing the candidates. There is also some enjoyment and relaxation in the process with candidates, once they understand there are no marks attached, being able to show their preparedness and understanding of the process they are able to embark on. Generally candidates were fluent and articulate.

Candidates did vary in their approach to the meeting/interview. Some were knowledgeable and able to discuss various production aspects showing good understanding of the material. They were able to comment on the playwright/composer's intentions as well as the themes, historical, social and cultural aspects. All candidates were able to discuss personal and spatial health and safety. There was extensive evidence of warm-ups, exercises, mental preparation and relaxation techniques. Candidates were generally very well prepared.

The Working Diaries

There was a continuing improvement on the last session. Centres are now more aware of the significance of marks lost when candidates have not produced a performance diary. In this session many of the candidates were not only submitting extensive works but also really focussing on their characters journey and its development from the start of the project to the finishing post. Candidates were reaching the higher band with some scoring full marks. Centres had clearly provided candidates with support and guidance, which focused more on the rehearsal process. There were teacher observations, self-evaluations, peer comments and a range of feedback giving candidates opportunities to develop and improve. Assessment and re-assessment of how the candidate was progressing certainly helped the candidates to understand how they could achieve their aims.

Centres are advised to refer to the unit specification and teacher guidelines where the requirements for the diary are clearly outlined. A comprehensive checklist is as follows:

- Selection of material
- Audience intention
- Audition process
- Candidate's own rehearsal plan
- Rehearsal planning and progress
- Target setting
- Skill development
- Health and Safety
- Production meetings, planning and team dynamics
- Performer's responsibilities e.g. costumes
- Relevance of production aspects to performance
- Research and its application
- Teacher comments and feedback
- Individual interpretation
- Regular lesson logs/diaries outlining progress made

- License and contracts
- Use of technical aspects
- Working with others

Candidates are encouraged to write up sessions regularly and not in retrospect where knowledge may be lost during the process. Candidates must also note that Internet printouts with highlighted text are not acceptable in defining an understanding of the work. Candidates must acknowledge the source of their findings and not submit teacher notes or Internet findings as their own work. Candidates may work collaboratively but must be able to show who had been responsible for each aspect.

Administration

Centres are still having some difficulty with aspects of the administration process. Examiners found it very difficult to actually contact the person responsible for the unit within some centres. This is not acceptable. Teachers must respond to the examiner and keep the lines of communication open. Centres must realise that the whole purpose of the unit is the fact that it is examined. Too many centres see the examiner as an afterthought. This is a shame. The examiner has a wealth of experience that can support centres and candidates through the process. Centres who display good practice ensure that the examiner is well informed, and adhere to all requests for paperwork, forms and deadlines.

Many centres claim not to have received the appropriate forms and paperwork. Teachers must check that they have the necessary administration and contact OCR if they need any further documents. OCR sends out the formal documents to centres via the examination officer prior to the examination period, together with instructions and details of the examiner apportioned to the centre. The examiner will make contact with the centre to arrange a suitable date for the performance. If centres are constrained by a school/college calendar and find that they are compromised, they should contact OCR to discuss dates for their performance.

Diaries should be forwarded to the examiner 14 days in advance of the examination. Some centres were not compliant with this putting undue pressure on the examiner. Diaries should be clearly labelled which is essential in identifying each script. Centres should also note that diaries are not returned to centres after the examination but retained by OCR like other examination scripts. Centres must apply for the diaries if they would like them returned through the 'Return of Scripts' procedure.

All candidates require a GCW212 Form that identifies them and gives information to the examiner on roles undertaken, details of scenes and appearances. Candidates are required to submit two photographs of themselves, one of which must be in costume. Centres should ensure that photographs are attached to the forms and are of a good quality.

G383 Professional Practice: Production

Entry levels were extremely low during this session. Entries were seen for props, set design, lighting, costume design and sound. Candidates were fully involved in the production process and able to make a significant contribution to the process.

Work produced was varied with many of the candidates working under their own steam. However, it was encouraging to see evidence of professional design being used by some candidates, in both the planning and recording of their work. Centres are reminded that documentation must be equivalent to industry practice and whilst there was more evidence of its use there was still too much of the candidates' own drawings. Diary entries were difficult to draw out from the production portfolio and had little or no relevance to the development of the project.

G386 Producing your own Showcase

General Comments

There was only a small cohort for this session however, Centres responded well to its requirements with examples of good practice evident. The best work was at the top end of the marking scale showing professionalism and aspects of outstanding practice. There was evidence of teacher guidance in both selection and performance of the material. Examiners observed examples in all the disciplines with drama and dance as the most popular options. Candidates were asked to produce a Showcase of three pieces of work, containing two contrasting solo pieces and a duologue, duet or pas de deux.

The candidates were assessed over five aspects concerned with preparation and the performance itself. These included selection and preparation of the materials; accuracy and expression; stylistic awareness; difficulty of material and communication. Candidates were also required to produce preparatory notes to demonstrate the preparation process of putting their Showcase together.

Examiners reports generally commented on a session of variable standards of performance work. Selected material was appropriate for most candidates and was well prepared and rehearsed in most centres. There were a number of candidates who scored high marks in this section. Examiners saw candidates tackle the challenge of 'live' performance with increasing enthusiasm and skill technique. Centres approached the work as a 'process to performance' encouraging candidates to create 'The Showcase' - developing and improving skills and performance techniques whilst tackling material" that was both challenging and in some performances effective.

Some candidates were selecting pieces on the basis of 'challenge', when they should have considered 'strengths' and 'skills' more carefully. Some candidates were playing safe and recycling material, which they had performed before.

Administration in Centres was generally good. Good practice was seen in Centres that ensured the paperwork arrived in plenty of time, provided a running order and details of candidates' performances. Preparatory notes were labelled. Evidence of performances was on DVD or VHS; some Centres produced excellent DVD material with clear chapter labelling and candidate identification.

Provision of a suitable performance space is important. Good centres are providing excellent facilities for both the Examiner and the candidates, with Centres opting for a studio or theatre space.

Centres ensured that candidates fulfilled the specified time requirements of 15 minutes to cover all three-performance pieces, which included breaks/changing between pieces. The majority of candidates were equally prepared in all three pieces. Good candidates also considered the difficulty of the material tackling difficult and challenging pieces trying to access the higher marks awarded for technically demanding pieces.

Centres that demonstrated good practice made every effort to engage fully with the Examiner over all necessary details from pre-examination through to providing a video/DVD at the conclusion of the examination. Good practice included; details of candidates' showcases highlighting their chosen pieces including copies of scripts, music, lyrics or synopsis of dances, named photographs, running order, programme notes and travel arrangements. This process enabled the session to run smoothly.

The Discussion

Centres and candidates were well prepared in this session. Although there were no marks available the candidate was able to discuss with the examiner the selected pieces detailing how they would be performed and personal interpretation. The discussion gave the candidate a chance to talk about their showcase and give the examiner an insight into what the candidate was trying to achieve. The informal discussions produced a relaxed and informative result. Candidates showed a good understanding of the creative process as well as health and safety and warm-up procedures.

Good candidates were equally prepared in all three pieces so as not to disadvantage themselves. They were able to talk about each stage of the preparation for their Showcase, including evidence of supporting research .

Many candidates submitted substantial and interesting portfolio work to support their practical performance. Candidates were able to use these portfolios during the discussion to detail their research and understanding to the Examiner. Those candidates who produced little or no working notes were disadvantaged and unable to access the higher marks. The preparatory notes are worth 20% of the final grade and both centres and candidates must be aware of this.

Dance

Dance candidates need to demonstrate an understanding of style, genre, musical awareness, motif and technical language. Good candidates had researched their pieces thoroughly and could talk about influences of dance practitioners and performances seen. They had an in-depth knowledge of both their choreography and performance. Good candidates successfully described the choreographic process employed to learn their work. They were aware of stylistic influences and able to put the dance into context, describing the purpose of the pieces, the intended audience and its impact.

Drama

Drama candidates were generally well prepared. Good candidates displayed a thorough understanding of their chosen pieces as well as an appreciation of the playwrights' intentions. They were able to discuss their ideas for performance of the pieces, influences, style and context as well as characterisation, period, mood and atmosphere. Good candidates had excellent knowledge about the style of their pieces. This enabled them to inform the Examiner of their intended interpretation. Knowledge of the play and the period of history are fundamental to all aspects of preparation and development of the work.

Music

Good candidates were able to discuss their own interpretations on style and content and relate them to historic and social influences. Candidates need to be able to discuss technical competence and how they have achieved balance/contrast in their showcase. Many Candidates were actually 'performing' the pieces and not relying on the sheet music and were able to discuss the advantages of this. Candidates are awarded higher marks for learning the pieces, which also allows for audience interaction and communication; there was good evidence of this from the candidates.

The Performance of the Showcase

Many Candidates were well prepared and had rehearsed their pieces. There was a good variety of interesting performance work covering a range of genre and style. Successful candidates were able to perform in contrasting styles and showed a good range of skills and techniques. Selection of appropriate material is still an area for development. Successful centres are guiding candidates in their choice of performance material and selecting appropriate pieces in terms of technical competence/difficulty. Overall, performance material was varied and the diversity of material selected for the showcase was very encouraging.

Technical support was also evident and enhanced many candidates' performances. Centres provided sound and lighting as well as a suitable performance space that was well lit and appropriate. Many performance pieces were presented with full use of costume, stage and lighting which, although, not examined, does add to the spirit and realism of the candidates work. Candidates working at this level deserve the opportunity to perform to a live audience demonstrating the skills learnt and honed over the two-year course. The focus during this session was on the performance aspects of skill development and this enhanced candidates' performance.

Dance

Candidates performed choreographed routines taken from repertoire. Good candidates showed the style through the appropriate movements and stylistic features achieving a good technical standard. Well-choreographed routines taken from repertoire included various dynamic elements such as tension, force, strength, speed, tempo and rhythm. The selected routines in contemporary, theatrical and ballet dance focused on form and structure. Good dance centres were able to provide the candidates with material from choreographers and a wealth of performance pieces. This gave the candidates the opportunity to perform works of a good standard.

Dancers seen were able to show awareness of Health and Safety issues. They had discussed various aspects of footwear, jewellery, hair and costume in their preparatory notes. Spatial awareness and suitability of the performance space were also highlighted.

Drama

All candidates choose pieces from repertoire during this session. Candidates were performing with imagination and at times prepared to take risks with challenging pieces. Successful candidates showed how effective research had been used in performances and were always aware of the whole play having read the text. Vocal skills were good with emphasis on effective voice projection and clear diction. Good Shakespeare was evident where candidates had an understanding of iambic pentameter, clear diction and clarity of voice. Centres must ensure that candidates performing Shakespeare pieces can discuss the structure of the language and how they have interpreted the work.

Good candidates were using costumes and props. This was effective and even simple costumes enabled candidates to really 'get inside the character' which added impact.

Staging of the pieces still needs some attention. Good performances considered the audience and engagement with them was enhanced through consideration of blocking and motivation behind movement. Credibility of character allowed for a more believable performance. Good candidates were using a range of skills, techniques and drama conventions.

Music

There were some very good performances of musical theatre with the emphasis on singing. Candidates had considerable expertise and advanced technique tackling some very demanding performance pieces. Some music candidates used professional backing tracks. Good candidates had rehearsed with the backing tracks to ensure that they were familiar with the key and style of the song.

Choice of material allowed more candidates to display a range of performance and vocal techniques. The Musical Theatre pieces allowed candidates to develop facial expressions and gesture, characterisation, and to capture the feeling of the piece, as well as demonstrating the candidates' technical ability. Candidates who played musical instruments were well rehearsed playing from memory. Selections of pieces were taken from the Rock School Syllabus at grade 7 and 8.

Many candidates in the session were able to produce dynamic performances of their Showcase showing mastery of their selected material. Good candidates were able to shape and mould their material, displaying a sophisticated understanding of the interpretative skills required. Candidates at the highest level showed a committed personal style. It was impressive to see candidates displaying such a high level of skills and a perceptive understanding of the professional context of the work. Good practice saw candidates producing performances that really engaged with the audience.

Preparatory Notes

Preparatory notes submitted were of a mixed standard. Good candidates had demonstrated a developed and applied awareness of their approach to performance preparation. They were able to demonstrate a highly detailed understanding of the processes required, with particular reference to social, historical and cultural influences. This was evident for many candidates in the performance of their pieces. Candidates showed the process for their selection of material focussing on breadth and depth. There was good evidence of developing skills and techniques through a fluent demand of technical vocabulary. Those candidates who produced thorough preparatory notes were better prepared and this was evident in the Showcase performance.

G387 Production Demonstration

There were no entries for this session.

Guidelines for centres for the June session are detailed below:

Candidates are required through their portfolio work and product presentation to demonstrate a detailed understanding of the processes required to realise their designs. There should be research undertaken and whichever creative process adopted by the candidate should show a depth of understanding. Candidates must consider the social, historical and cultural influences on their designs. Material selected particularly at the highest mark should be impressively sophisticated. Candidates must display a good command of technical language and conventions as well as complying with industry requirements.

The product demonstration should be authoritative and absorbing. Designs need to create highly effective engagement for the audience. There should be evidence of technical accuracy. The candidate should be able to demonstrate a personal style in shaping and moulding the designs. Work scoring at the higher end should contain a level of originality in both its conception and realisation.

Candidates must submit both their preparatory notes and their portfolio containing their designs as well as pictures, photographs, DVD, or video evidence of their product demonstration. Centres are encouraged to support production candidates in recording a video/DVD diary throughout the process detailing all aspects of the work undertaken. This helps the examiner to see how the candidate has worked and can be a better source of evidence than the portfolio and diary; All centres must ensure that the interview/discussion with the examiner and production candidate is recorded. Evidence is often difficult to provide for the production candidates and every opportunity to capture it should be undertaken.

Grade Thresholds

Applied GCE Performing Arts (H146 / H546)
January 2008 Assessment Series

Coursework Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	a	b	c	d	e	u
G380	Raw	50	41	35	30	25	20	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G381	Raw	50	43	37	31	25	20	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G384	Raw	50	42	37	32	27	22	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G385	Raw	50	43	38	33	28	24	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0

Examined Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	a	b	c	d	e	u
G382	Raw	50	40	35	31	27	23	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G383	Raw	50	40	36	32	28	25	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G386	Raw	50	41	36	31	26	22	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Uniform marks correspond to overall grades as follows.

Advanced Subsidiary GCE (H146):

Overall Grade	A	B	C	D	E
UMS (max 300)	240	210	180	150	120

Cumulative Percentage in Grade

Advanced Subsidiary GCE (H146):

A	B	C	D	E	U
0.0	25.0	75.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
There were 5 candidates aggregating in Jan 2008.					

Advanced GCE (H546)

Overall Grade	A	B	C	D	E
UMS (max 600)	480	420	360	300	240

Cumulative Percentage in Grade

Advanced GCE (H546):

A	B	C	D	E	U
0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
There were 2 candidates aggregating in Jan 2008.					

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see;
http://www.ocr.org.uk/exam_system/understand_ums.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

How to Calculate a UMS (Uniform Mark Scale) conversion

This method can be generalised to apply to any set of raw marks and any uniform mark scale.

You must have the appropriate session's grade boundary threshold information at hand.

- I. Determine which grade the candidate obtained
- II. Find out how many raw marks there are in that grade
- III. Find out how many marks are in the equivalent uniform mark grade
- IV. Calculate the conversion factor. This is the number of uniform marks in the grade divided by the number of raw marks in the same grade
- V. Calculate how many raw marks the candidate had scored over the raw mark boundary
- VI. Multiply this number (v) by the conversion factor (iv)
- VII. Add the result to the uniform mark boundary for the grade. This will be the UMS for the candidate.

Example

Gill gained a raw mark of 35 on unit G380 and a UMS of 68.

The raw mark and UMS boundaries were determined as follows:

Unit		Max mark	a	b	c	d	e	u
G380	Raw	100	41	36	31	26	22	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0

Step I	Gill gained a C grade
Step II	There are 5 raw marks (36-31) in the C grade
Step III	There are 10 marks in the equivalent C UMS grade (60-50)
Step IV	The conversion factor is 10 divided by 5 = 2
Step V	Gill scored 4 marks over the C raw boundary (35-31)
Step VI	$4 \times 2 = 8$
Step VII	This is $8 + 60 = 68$

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