

Performing Arts

Advanced GCE A2 H546

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H146

Report on the Units

June 2009

H146/H546/MS/R/09

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

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Chief Examiner's Report

June 2009 saw a good level of entries on this specification with most centres submitting work for the majority of units in the June session as expected. There was evidence of good practice in all units and varied work across the spectrum. Centres are providing increased opportunities for candidates to develop greater knowledge and understanding of The Performing Arts Industry through increased workshops and performance work. This is encouraging as these opportunities fulfil the vocational aspects of the course.

Candidates were generally well prepared and displayed awareness of the requirements of each unit. Good practice was evident in all units; in unit G380 the Case Studies saw prepared and thorough answers, alongside research and comparative skills in the study of organisations; in G381 Skills Development the portfolio work showed detailed analysis of the skills development process; G382/6 saw work of a 'professional standard', with candidates tackling demanding and difficult performance pieces. The weakest units were the production pathway units G383/7. This was mainly because many candidates are still not using industry style conventions when tackling their set briefs.

Candidates were generally, across the units, able to access the assessment criteria with confidence. They were able to use technical terms and appropriate terminology, which contributed to their increasing vocational awareness when tackling the tasks set for each unit.

G380 Investigating Performing Arts Organisations

This investigation unit was designed to help candidates to understand how 'the business' works and the range of roles within the organisation. There was a wide range of responses from candidates. Some of the portfolio work was of a high standard showing a considerable amount of research and presented accordingly with a good use of terminology and technical terms. Many candidates were able to produce case studies that covered the scope of the performing arts industries and the way in which they operate. Good practice saw information that had been sourced extremely well presented with the use of graphs and pie charts; data collection charted for comparative analyses and Power Point used to deliver the job presentation. However, some of the tasks set were too self-limiting with candidates simply choosing organisations that were either too small (which meant that they could not get the depth or detail needed to access the higher mark bands) or far too large (making it difficult to access information). 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. Good candidates were able to make perceptive comments on the effectiveness of the organisations. Comments about purpose, structure, operations and markets are essential alongside a good analysis of the job structure within the organisations.

The second aspect of the unit containing the job presentation was less well done again this series. Issues with regard to the type of job selected and generic evidence meant candidates were unable to access the higher marks. It is essential to set the role thoroughly in context of one of the selected organisations.

G381 Skills Development

The key factor in this unit is the inclusion of a detailed Skills Development Plan (SDP). Significant numbers of candidates did not include this essential aspect. The whole unit hinges on initial targets that are regularly visited and updated through feedback and progression of the work undertaken. If candidates do not include this plan they are unable to comment on the

progress and development made. 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.

There was evidence of a wide range of art forms and a broad variety of work across the art forms. Production candidates were also submitting work in costume and set design as well as technical aspects such as lighting. However centres must ensure that portfolios are unique to each candidate's skills and abilities. Research must be relevant to the selected repertoire pieces and should include the work of practitioners. Good practice included detailed commentaries and candidate ownership of their selected pieces.

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. All centres need to concentrate on the process of acquiring skills through practical involvement in pieces taken from repertoire. There were issues with self-devised work, which is not in line with the specification.

Performance work must be recorded on DVD and accompany the portfolio to support progress made. Good practice saw chaptered DVDs that recorded the candidates' journey through the development of the pieces and gave an insight into the progress the candidate had made rather than just the end product.

G382 Professional Practice: Performance

There continued to be a strong sense of professionalism in the work undertaken. Centres were well organised and there was evidence of good use of the specification with examples of excellent professional practice. 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. Centres that had larger cohorts produced performances split through two casts ensuring that all candidates had the same opportunities to access the higher marking bands. Some centres had obtained full performance rights and produced large full-scale works.

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 they must adhere to the use of repertoire and not self-devised works.

Performance

There was evidence of outstanding practice with candidates tackling material that is demanding in terms of skills and technical ability. Candidates showed good performance technique, created appropriately for the type of audience selected. Audience awareness and communication are key features in the marking criteria and candidates must ensure that they are able to demonstrate a good understanding of this. 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 occasions where candidates needed further guidance for example, singing in the correct key and tonal qualities, as well as basic skills and stylistic demands. Candidates should not be left to produce and direct the pieces. Teachers must take responsibility for these areas.

Many centres considered the professional aspects of performance and were including the use of lighting and sound as well as elaborate sets, props and costumes. The inclusion of an audience allowed candidates to communicate and engage giving the event a real sense of occasion.

Performance Diaries

The criteria for supporting portfolio work changed significantly this year with health and safety now marked from the portfolio and not the performance. Some centres had failed to pick this up and candidates lost valuable marks in this area. Centres must familiarise themselves with this change and work to ensure that detailed, effective application of health and safety is included in the portfolio diaries. This should include all areas of both personal and spatial safety as well as risk assessments and policies.

The recording of this process was generally sound 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. Candidates 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. Candidates must include a performance diary/log. 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.

Recording the performances was done fairly well, with some chaptered DVDs, but centres are reminded that they must send the DVD recording to the examiner within three days. Centres must take responsibility for DVD recordings and ensure that they are of a good quality and that they can be played on a variety of DVD players. Identification of candidates must be included on the DVD with supporting notes of entrance and exits as well as key scenes and moments.

G383 Professional Practice: Production

Entry levels were low on this unit. Good practice saw candidates presenting various aspects of their work to camera 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. Many centres do not seem to understand the range and depth of technical evidence that is required both in the portfolio and the production demonstration. Centres must look to provide industry compliant software and process including industry standard diagrams, scales and terminology. When delivering the G383 unit centres must ensure that they plan carefully and have adequate resources for the 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. Centres that do not have teaching staff who have the necessary experience or skills to teach on this unit should consider the provision of workshops, visiting speakers or look for specialist courses run by independent providers. Centres should contact OCR for advice and guidance or look to attend INSET courses to gain a better insight into how to deliver this unit.

G384 Getting Work

The levels of understanding of the demands of this unit have continued to develop and this has enabled candidates to produce more accurate and detailed responses. Candidates are required to prepare a promotional pack that includes a CV, an 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 grasp 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.

Centres need to read the Principal Moderators report for further guidance.

G385 Exploring Repertoire

There was an improvement in the standard of work seen in this unit. Moderators commented on some outstanding performance pieces where centres had worked to apply professional standards. There appeared to be a real sense of engagement with the concept of repertoire and its demands. Centres need to be aware that equal marks are attached to both performances, a significant number of centres are producing one high quality full-scale production and one production that is almost an afterthought. For many of the historical performances, candidates needed to display how key factors they had researched had impacted on the performance of the piece. Centres must ensure that they are not over-marking their candidates by applying the marking criteria more rigidly. Selection of contrasting works is also essential, giving candidates very different roles in a different genre/style. The written essays were not always sufficiently related to the practical work undertaken. Centres had responded to the change in the amount of words allowed for the written submissions and good candidates were able to produce excellent detailed and well-researched essays. The Principal Moderator has written a detailed report and centres should read this as well as seeking further advice from INSET meetings and exemplar materials.

G386 Producing Your Showcase

Candidates are required to perform three pieces of work – two solos and one duet/duologue/pas de deux. There were some good examples of accomplished and dynamic performances, however, standards were not as high as in previous sessions. Some 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. For these candidates, performance work was impressive, they 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 must recognise that the performance aspect of this unit is essential and centres must attach greater importance to the organisation and outcome of this unit. The unit is called 'Producing Your Showcase' and yet some candidates are still performing in classrooms. This is poor practice and severely restricts the candidates. Where centres had supported candidates from selection through to performance, the candidates were able to access the higher marking bands, showing professionalism and in some cases excellent practice. Centres must attach more status to the event, ensuring that it is a real sense of occasion. Standards at this level are expected to be significantly higher than the AS performance unit and centres must acknowledge this.

Centres do need to read the Unit reports from the Principal Examiners/Moderators carefully, to ensure that they are developing their own understanding and subsequent application of the specification. Many centres do require guidance on how to complete the preparatory notes, as too many candidates are losing valuable marks in this area. INSET is strongly recommended.

G387 Production Demonstration

This unit only attracted a small entry and candidates did not respond to the industry requirements that have been suggested. Many candidates select a technical realisation but are unable to document the process and subsequently, deliver an end product that does not meet the demands of the unit. Work seen generally on this unit was of a poor standard. Many candidates do not consider the idea of collecting evidence to support what they are doing and only present an end product/demonstration. Many candidates responded to requests by examiners for presentations of their work and this did help to improve the marks awarded.

Candidates must show evidence including detailed DVDs, thorough preparatory notes and planned demonstrations. A few candidates, through their portfolio work and product presentation, were demonstrating a solid understanding of the processes required to realise their designs. They included research undertaken and creative processes adopted, showing a depth of understanding. Not all candidates considered the social, historical and cultural influences on their designs. Some candidates were able to display knowledge of technical language and conventions with stronger candidates working to comply with industry requirements. Stronger submissions supported the candidates on the G386 pathway, which is how the unit was originally designed to work. 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. Candidates should be able to demonstrate a personal style in shaping and moulding the designs. Presentations of the work at the higher end should contain a level of originality in both the conception and realisation.

Candidates must submit both their preparatory notes and their portfolios containing their designs, as well as pictures, photographs and DVD evidence of their product demonstration. Centres are encouraged to support production candidates in recording a 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. Those candidates that did comply with DVD diaries were able to capture work undertaken that may not have been obvious in their portfolios and awarded marks which may have been lost without DVD evidence.

Centres should ask for guidance on this unit to ensure they are complying with the specification.

G380 Investigating performing arts organisations

General Comments

Most of the work arrived on time and was complete with administration in order. Only a few Centres were late in their submissions, though some of the samples were slow to arrive. Some of the work still arrived incomplete, without CCS160s and even MS1s. Occasionally important pieces of information, such as candidate names, numbers and mark totals, were left off the URS and totals omitted.

Almost all Centres complied with the new requirements to provide DVD rather than Video evidence. Centres should be aware that evidence not supplied on DVD may in future not be accepted.

In the case of candidates re-submitting work, it is essential that the moderator receives all of the evidence, not just those parts the candidate is trying to improve.

As usual, there was a wide-range of responses from candidates. Some of the portfolio work was of a high standard showing a considerable amount of research and often expressed clearly with good use of performing arts terminology. Even so, some of the organisations were still far too big (the BBC). On the other hand, selecting a one-person company, such as a piano teacher, can prove self-limiting. Candidates need to choose organisations carefully, so that they have the opportunity to cover all the Assessment Objectives in some depth, especially the section on job roles.

A history of each organisation still dominated the studies of weaker candidates. Although this may helpfully put the organisation in context and describe its development, it is an understanding of its current purpose, structure, operations and markets that is sought. Although audiences were often mentioned there was rarely any analysis of the target groups in terms of age and socio economic grouping.

Few candidates were able to describe the organisation in terms of its job structure. The stronger candidates included organisational charts that were explained in these terms. Some candidates clearly thought structure was about the building and spent time describing the physical nature of the venue which was not credited.

There were very few perceptive comments on the effectiveness of the organisations. Successful candidates made reference to the mission statement of the organisation and commented on its success in meeting the aims stated. Other candidates quoted balance sheets or attendance figures, the number of shows and the range of audiences engaged, to comment on effectiveness. Some quoted the artistic policy and then commented on how this extended or balanced the range of entertainment opportunities in the locality.

Few portfolios were presented in tabular form this time. The expectation for this Unit is that work should be presented as an essay. Centres should be aware that 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 a sound engineer in the portfolio and then reproduce the same person and materials 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 to highlight where the Assessment Objectives were met - this was generally helpful, though it is still important to complete the URS comments section fully to 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

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Portfolio" or "on the DVD" - a page reference or timing is essential. There were still instances where annotation was still minimal or even non-existent. This makes it far more difficult for a moderator to agree the centres marking.

Internal standardisation was evident in most of the Centres moderated and some of the portfolios showed evidence of a sound knowledge base. Some 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 job roles, purpose, effectiveness and structure. Under AO1.2 Centres are reminded that it is vital that candidates display an ability to make comparisons between job roles that exist in both organisations for them 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 to make adjustments sometimes for that reason.

A minority of portfolios contained unnecessary and irrelevant material this time - Centres are starting to keep peripheral evidence down to a minimum. Assessors need to make sure that all work in a portfolio is in the candidate's own words, unless the sources are identified. Candidates should avoid including photocopies of job specifications unless they are to be used as the focus of comment or analysis.

The job presentation was done rather less well. Some Centres seemed unaware that this should be based on a single job within one of the chosen organisations. It is helpful to see the work actually happening - a DVD of a talk or PowerPoint presentation is the most common format. Paper copies of notes or slides are also extremely useful particularly when supported by speaker's notes. Centres should ensure that DVDs are labelled with all the relevant information and have a list of contents with timings. The sound and picture quality should be as good as possible so centres are advised to avoid filming in a room with lots of flickering computer screens and record at a reasonable sound level! Candidates need to announce their names and candidate numbers clearly at the beginning of their talk. Centres should not penalise candidates for poor delivery skills – the content is what is marked.

Some of the presentations were knowledgeable and demonstrated high levels of understanding of the chosen job role. However, some candidates only gave a very generalised talk on a type of job - a "stage manager" was still a favourite. This choice limits the amount of marks available under the mark scheme. It is essential to place the role thoroughly within the context of one of the studied 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.

It is a requirement for this unit that each submission must be that of a single candidate. Work presented jointly is considered to be a rubric infringement.

G381 Professional Practice: Skills Development

Most aspects of the moderation process went well. Centres generally understood the sampling process and enclosed the correct documentation. However, some centres did not include the Centre Authentication Form (CCS 160). This led to moderators chasing centres for those documents. It is important that centres send all documentation promptly. Centres must send work on time and not wait to be chased by moderators. Internal Standardisation should take place in good time before the OCR deadline for submission.

There has been a problem this session with internal Standardisation. In some cases, it appeared that different members of staff had assessed the portfolios according to art form but there was no evidence of any internal Standardisation. Some candidates were on the same mark but were clearly not of the same standard. Consortiums should be aware of this and make sure that an internal Standardisation takes place across the centres involved.

If a centre has ten or fewer candidates, they should send all the coursework promptly to the moderator. If the centre has more than ten candidates, they should send the MS1 and wait for the moderator to send them a letter stating which candidates' coursework should be sent as a sample. DVDs must be sent with the portfolios and centres should not wait for moderators to request recorded evidence. DVDs should be checked and played before they leave the centre. The moderator must be able to play the DVD on a DVD player. Moderators had problems with DVDs which would not play on any lap top or computer or DVD player. It is recommended that centres keep a copy of the DVD. Videos are no longer acceptable. If a video is sent as evidence, it cannot be played as moderators no longer have access to video players.

A few centres are still mistakenly offering devised work rather than repertoire. This is not permitted.

Centres should include a front sheet as page one of the portfolio clearly stating the skills chosen for development and the three pieces of repertoire with details of titles of work and the names of the playwrights, composers and choreographers e.g. "Hamlet" by Shakespeare, "Swansong" by Christopher Bruce (1987). Candidates should have researched the repertoire and be able to give detailed notes relating to when the piece was written, who performed it and where. There should be an explanation about which version of the repertoire they are using and how they have adapted it for performance. This is particularly important for dance pieces and physical theatre. Stand-up comedy should not be devised. If the work cannot be identified as repertoire then it will be disregarded as evidence.

Centres must identify the candidates on the DVDs. Ideally candidates should introduce themselves to camera by name and number. There should be a recent photograph of the candidate and details concerning their appearance on the DVD such as a brief description of their costume so that the moderator can identify them. DVDs should be chaptered with a clear indication of where the candidate appears on the DVD for example John Smith 0234 enters stage left at 10 mins 30 seconds. Too much time is wasted by moderators' searching for candidates' performances on the DVD. If the candidate cannot be identified, the evidence will be disregarded.

The position of the camera in relation to the stage needs careful consideration. Sometimes moderators could not see the candidates at close range and could not assess the performances. The most helpful recordings showed work in progress at close range so that the facial expressions and eye focus were obvious to the viewer. For final performances with live audience, the camera is naturally placed further away. Some of the best DVDs showed a

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development of the piece from first attempt through rehearsal to the final performance. Final performances must take place in front of a live audience in an appropriate venue. Rehearsal rooms and studios are not likely to produce the best type of final performance for the candidate.

The pages in the portfolios should be numbered and centres should use these numbers when referring to the location of evidence. Centres should apply the assessment criteria rigorously and provide detailed annotation on the pages of the portfolio and on the URS to justify the marks awarded. Reference should be made to the DVD to help locate the evidence. Please state exactly where on the DVD the evidence is located using minutes and seconds eg John Smith chapter 3, 2 mins 35 secs., Hamlet monologue.

Portfolios should be unique to the candidate and art form and relevant to the skills chosen for development. Internet research and studies of practitioners must be relevant to the repertoire chosen for performance and annotation of research should make this clear. Please do not allow candidates to include downloads and teacher handouts which have not been annotated by the candidate. Whole scripts should not be included.

The Skills Development Plan (**SDP**) should be detailed and include a summary of what the candidate has already achieved. This should be a resume of no more than 500 words and can be in the form of a CV or short biography. The SDP should outline which skills are to be worked on and state the three pieces of repertoire work (two in progress and almost complete and one finished piece performed in front of a live audience.) The SDP should be adjusted as the unit progresses. The SDP is the framework for the unit and should include notes on workshops and lessons.

Commentaries should be in written form or presented on DVD. They need to be detailed and demonstrate candidate ownership. There have been some very informative and detailed commentaries presented on DVD which have provided good evidence. Tick box approaches and pro forma documentation are not conducive to in-depth analysis and they hinder personal engagement. The commentary should be an independent document which explains how the repertoire demonstrates the skills development. The candidate can write notes throughout the portfolio detailing development and then a commentary at the end.

Observation reports must likewise be detailed analyses of the candidates' work and development, written by appropriately skilled observers who use appropriate technical terminology and their experience to make artistic judgements. In order to document the journey made by the candidate throughout the unit, it is helpful to make observations at the beginning and end of the unit and at key points on the way.

The unit has presented a wide range of work this session with some re-sit portfolios

Most centres show good awareness of Health and Safety procedures and this is clearly shown in the portfolios. There needs to be a constant update of Health and Safety regulations to encourage candidate awareness. Dance performances should take place in a room with a sprung floor. It is not safe to perform a dance solo in a class room full of tables and chairs, nor in a music practice room with keyboards on stands around the room.

G382 Professional Practice: Performance

G383 Professional Practice: Production

General Comments:

There continues to be a wide range of responses to the specification both in terms of assessment evidence and administrative procedures. Examiners reported that most centres were well organised and had an increasing understanding the paperwork and documentation with portfolios usually arriving in the specified timescale and material on the day of the examination proving useful and a good aid to identification.

Centres were well organised and there was evidence of good use of the specification with examples of excellent professional practice. Centres were reporting to examiners a more knowledgeable understanding of the unit assessment criteria. Issues of repertoire are becoming rarer and in any event are addressed within the new specification.

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. 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 ensuring the 5 minutes each of exposure time required. 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.

Centres are beginning to understand the need with a G383 cohort to produce as much DVD evidence as possible recording both the interviews, the technical work during the preparation and design as well as the final recording of the piece itself with the portfolios this gives 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 recommend a pause of up to one-hour 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 has some relevance to professional practice and removes many of the problems that can occur during a school/college day. Performances were between one and one and a half hours 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. Amendments cannot be made within 10 days of the examination.

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 is between 45 minutes and 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 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:

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe
Two
Be My Baby

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Beside Herself
Cradle Me
Blood Brothers
Little Women
After Juliet
Grease
Confusions
Little Shop of Horrors
Whale Music
Rainbow's End
Blasted
Crave
Antigone
Cinderella
The Tinder Box
Citizen
Animal farm
Closer
Arrivals and Departures
Chicago
Bang Bang You're Dead
Chorus Line
Road
The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband

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 identifying 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.

Supporting Portfolios

The criteria for Supporting Portfolios has changed considerably from last year with Health and Safety now part of the assessment criteria, allocated 6 of the 15 marks. It was clear that not all centres were aware of this with some candidates being clearly disadvantaged by the lack of evidence in this area. Generally therefore the H and S component was not dealt with adequately. Candidates' must be directed towards a full and clear understanding of the demands of H and S from personal, technical and artistic perspectives. Risk assessment pro-forma is useful but needs to be dealt with fully and individually. Art-form differences must be analysed and articulated and placed in a personal context. H and S now represent 40% of the diary mark and there must be full and comprehensive account taken off it.

In any event centres should be more aware of the significance of marks lost when candidates have not produced a performance diary. In this session some of the candidates were not only

submitting extensive evidence but also focussing on their character's journey and its development from the start of the project to the finishing post. A number of candidates reached 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. These approaches need to be more fully replicated across centres. There are still candidates producing excellent performance work that is not supported by equally excellent supporting portfolios

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. Where candidates work collaboratively they 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 with many messages not responded to. 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 to examine performance, it would appear that in a number of centres arrangements for the examination are seen as an afterthought. 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.

A number of centres claimed that they had not 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 send 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.

Supporting portfolios 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 continue to be low. Entries were seen for stage management, set design, lighting and sound. Some candidates were fully involved in the production process and able to make a significant contribution.

It is still apparent that many centres underestimate the range and depth of technical evidence that needs to be produced both in portfolios and in production. Documentation must be equivalent to industry practice or a clear replication of industry practice and whilst there was more evidence of its use there was still too much reliance on the candidate's sense of unbounded but technically inadequate enthusiasm. Written submissions were generally weak and did not support the candidate's production work. Centres are advised to read the specification and seek guidance from training courses. Centres that had links with local technical professionals and venues were much more successful. Candidates need to have much more sense of the potential of their skill especially in centres where the performance opportunity provides for minimal technical support. Centres should also refer to the point made above on additional evidence for production candidates. Examiners will ask for more recorded evidence of preparation and operational competence, some of this will be done on the visit but it is candidate's interests to record earlier and more on-going evidence of work.

As indicated above Health and Safety is now required in the written evidence and technical candidates need to display *leading roles* in this area wherever their own expertise.

G384 Getting Work

General Comments

Moderation was generally efficient. It is becoming increasingly rare for centres not to follow the published procedures and they should be credited with improving the processes in this respect. Just to make sure however, centres should note that –

- They should send all portfolios to the moderator if there are less than 10. With a cohort over 10 they should send the mark sheet and moderators will choose which 10 portfolios they need to see
- A Centre Authentication Form should be sent with portfolios
- Lever-arch files should be avoided

Promotional pack

There was a wide range of promotion packs. Some were highly produced and effective with a strong sense of what is required to sell the candidate in a professional context. These candidates were clearly drawing on their research and experience to be able to speak directly and with focus to those potential employers working in a specific vocational area. Here there was a good underpinning knowledge and understanding. Weaker candidates had little of this underpinning knowledge and were obviously working in a very narrow context, one essentially provided for them by the centre and entirely focused on their own anecdotal or school-based knowledge and not on interviews conducted with freelance professionals. At this level it is essential that candidates talk to working professionals and experience the vocational context in both replicated events or in real visits to professional venues and spaces.

The promotional pack needs to work with the work-plan and some candidates made good links between, for instance, a set of credible qualifications in a resume and what could be reasonably expected in the first year of work. Some candidates had very modest CVs based on what they had actually done and wildly ambitious plans for their first year. Candidates can have fictitious resumes and qualifications: they just need to be *credible* and *sustainable* and working in a well-informed professional context.

Some candidates produced very good but unsuitable material promoting a new performance company. While this produced well-researched and informed evidence it did not respond to the need for individual portfolios of professional work.

It should be noted that promotional packs covered with teacher annotations are not packs but *drafts* of packs and for the pack to be fully promotional for the given audience annotation on them should be avoided.

Some candidates still rely heavily on CVs only, while useful in some packs CVs are not always appropriate and centres should avoid using them routinely without assessing their full and focussed use in the right context. Similarly responses to specific job advertisements are not always appropriate and in some centres appear to be used simply because they always have been.

Plan of first year of work

Again, a wide range of responses here with a variation in the number of years forming the basis of projections, some very ambitious earning and some unrealistic ideas of what work might be available in the first year. Most candidates however kept to the prerequisite for 50% contract and 50% freelance although some didn't always understand that the contract work should be in a related area rather than any part-time casual work. A number of centres took a more formal line to freelance and contract work and presented research and compilations of what constituted the

differences between the two – this was obviously a response to taught sessions and while relevant pedagogically the results were better placed in an appendix rather than the working document.

Some centres had very detailed statistical projections over varying periods of time, these were useful when placed in context but pages and pages of them, however meticulously produced, add little to the evidence in terms of grading criteria.

The use of 'strands' of work proved mostly useful providing structure and focus to the material. As previously indicated the best candidates linked the plan very closely to the promotional pack giving the overall evidence credibility and coherence.

There was some use this year of the plan being written as a retrospective of work acquired rather than a projection of potential work laid out in a plan of action. A projected *Plan* integrates the possibilities of the roles as outlined and the subsequent income with a range of other possible job opportunities being considered and presented as evidence for knowledge and understanding of the industry. Whereas a retrospective tends to limit this range and also wastes a lot of time and energy in some very facile diary entries trying to present the verisimilitudes of everyday life at university. In other words by saying these are the jobs I've already got the candidate is restricting the range of evidence he or she could present. Retrospectives of this nature should be avoided.

Analysis of the plan

This section continues to be the main differentiator between candidates and standards of work. It is an opportunity to reveal a depth of analytical language and insight and those candidates that provided coherent packs and plans know clearly where the strengths and weaknesses of the market and professional area were and used this to contextualise their own personal analysis. Weaker candidates tended to restrict their analysis just to their personal strengths and weakness and even here not very effectively.

Much of the weaker work was in response to a misunderstanding of the purposes and intention of a SWOT analysis. The best portfolios had very succinct analyses because they had looked at their overall plan and projections and done a focused SWOT analysis of the market and where relevant and appropriate of their own abilities and personal characteristics. Better candidates also "topped and tailed" the SWOT analysis with summaries, fuller evaluations and a further projection of work.

Use of Appendices

To mitigate against using too much material in the body of the portfolio candidates are encouraged to make use of appendices to contain researched material or material edited out of the pack. This shows a sophisticated use of editing and selection skills, avoids stuffing the portfolio with material 'just in case' and produces smarter evidence more responsive to the assessment criteria.

Conclusion

Generally the level of understanding of the demands of the unit continues to grow and subsequently evidence in the portfolios is becoming more accurate and focussed. Centres still need to consider more specialist professional and technical input into the teaching of some of the more professional elements, especially to meet the assessment demands at this level, some centres continue to ignore the need for interviews with practitioners, for instance, a vital part of the evidence that plays a significant part in the decisions of moderators.

G385 Exploring Repertoire. June 2009

Overall there has been a significant improvement in the standards seen by moderators during this session. The key features of the session are outlined below. It should be noted that the use of the term 'texts' refers to performance material representing all three art forms.

Essays

In terms of research this needs to be more relevant to the practical work done. Candidates should be encouraged to develop an understanding of the purpose of the research and how it contributes to the performance produced and any interpretation thereof. Centres are urged to coach their candidates in the art of editing research so that only truly relevant material is included. For example, while Shakespeare emerges as an enormously popular choice many of the essays contain large chunks of his personal biography which has little relevance to the socio-historical context in which his plays were written and performed. The purpose of the research is to identify material that can be demonstrably related to the issues, genre, style and performance and production methods of the day. Where personal events in the life of a practitioner can be cited as having had a direct bearing on the piece performed then this is of course, acceptable

Centres are requested to note that it is a **requirement** for all essays to include the following:

- Word Count
- Bibliography/webography
- Footnotes/citations according to current academic practice

There have been good examples of repertoire with genuine contrasts. In some cases however, selected texts were too 'close' to each other in style, period and/or thematic treatment. There is also evidence that some centres are manipulating the choice of texts so that candidates effectively get two chances at realising material at which they are able to perform well. Work is needed to ensure the two choices really do offer a contrast to widen student knowledge and expertise.

OCR has been reluctant to impose strict cut-off dates separating the 'historical' from the 'modern'. This is largely because there are differing perceptions of where the transition begins and ends within each of the creative disciplines. However, a significant number of centres have not demonstrated sufficient observance of the specification requirement in this respect.

In the case of music there is a strong argument for taking the Jazz era as a major period of transition but the problem arises that within the genre itself there are many forms and it is hard to 'draw a line'. Others point to the development from spiritual music to the Blues and so on. In dance there is a continuing debate about where classical ends and contemporary begins, with Fuller perhaps marking the end of the former and with Graham the beginning of the latter but again there are many shades of interpretation. Ethnic and tribal dance remains for many timeless but where this is treated it should be in its pure form and not as interpreted by a contemporary choreographer. Drama is no easier to 'pigeon-hole'. In the case of British drama some like to point to the 'kitchen sink' genre of the 50's as a clear turning point while for others the rise of the 'well-made play' points to an earlier and entirely different transition point. To add a further level of difficulty, Brecht's personal canon may be said to bridge two distinct theatrical eras.

There can be no hard line here but centres are requested to make *intelligent* choices that demonstrate clearly the contrasts between the selected texts and *both* the socio-historical

context which spawned them *and* the performance/production methods influencing their realisation. Please note that in future sessions the selection of obviously inappropriate texts that do not offer sufficient contrast within the spirit of the unit specification will be self-penalising. If a centre is in doubt it should contact OCR for guidance.

It is also drawn to the attention of centres that candidates are expected to justify production decisions in their essays. Where an historical text has been adapted or updated there needs to be a clear explanation of the reason for this and the benefits to a modern audience which may be accrued from these choices. For example, a performance of Victorian Music Hall would not normally be expected to have amplification or incorporate modern instruments (i.e. electric guitars) as part of the orchestra. This clearly, is not in harmony with the rubric of the specification and unless a justification can be made on the basis of creative/audience needs rather than that of the Centre's own teaching preferences, such options should not be entertained.

Performance

In the case of performance there were some truly exceptional examples which were at once skilfully designed and expertly played.. Without exception these productions have been the result of the professional standards aspired to by those centres which are clearly committed to the aims and objectives of the Specification. These centres have openly engaged with the Profession and have steered their candidates along a route of uncompromising artistic integrity. The most striking of these have been in musical theatre and Shakespeare.

In contrast, it has to be said that moderators have also experienced the polar opposite of this. It is of concern that a significant minority of centres submitted material with production values well below that which might be expected at GCSE level. Typifying this category of work are drama productions in classrooms featuring plastic chairs and actors in school uniform who are very much 'on book'. In the worst case this meant that performers stood rooted to the spot as they peered at their scripts endeavouring to play opposite the drama teacher (also on book) who was also playing several roles. Such low levels of production integrity do nothing to help candidates achieve meaningful learning outcomes nor do they engage with the aims and objectives of the Specification.

It is also noted that there often exists an imbalance in production values between the two pieces. The challenges of putting on two productions, in addition to the already significant demands made upon teaching staff, cannot be underrated, but often the moderator is given the task of comparing an 'all singing, all dancing' (literally) school show on a big budget and something not too dissimilar from the lowest common denominator discussed in the preceding paragraph. Centres are not expected to be able to put on two full-scale productions; indeed much of the available repertoire requires very little staging indeed, but it is in the spirit of the Specification that attention is given to adequate staging and production values for *both* pieces.

Documentation

Centres will appreciate that in order to ensure that results are processed in time for the August release date OCR is dependant upon teachers/exams officers to ensure that evidence not only arrives by the due date but is also fit for purpose. During the course of the June session moderators reported the following issues in quantity:

- Late submission of work
- Omission of MS1
- Omission of CCS160 (statutory requirement)
- Use of outdated (and therefore inappropriate) URS cover sheets
- Incomplete URS cover sheets

- No candidate contribution forms (GCW969) with photographs submitted

Centres are requested to ensure that **URS** evidence is clearly presented. Comments need to be specific and related to the appropriate Assessment Objective (AO). Best practice is that which links the assessor's comments on the URS to marginal annotations on the essays. A colour-coded approach has proven very effective in achieving this with a minimum of work involved.

Please note that the submission of form **GCW969** is a requirement for each candidate (one for each performance). This form should include a summary of the contribution they have made and must have a photograph of the candidate (in costume if appropriate) attached. This is a requirement for **all** candidates.

DVD Evidence

In general DVD's were better in terms of quality/identification. Some centres are still failing to organise for **each** performance, an 'identity parade' of candidates in costume before the show goes up. It cannot be stressed enough how important is this device for the moderator. Centres are reminded that, in the case of performance, the DVD evidence is all the evidence a moderator has to go on. Groups in ensemble and all dressed in black without anything to distinguish between them can make it extremely difficult for the moderator to identify individuals and thereby support the mark given by the centre. Please ensure that candidates can be seen and are relatively easy to identify. In order to ensure this it may entail each candidate wearing a unique identifier. As incongruous as this may sound in terms of historical verisimilitude, please consider the moderator's need to identify candidates as paramount. This also applies to highly 'dramatic' or intense lighting states which make it impossible for the moderator to see which candidate is which. If a lighting candidate is being assessed it may even be necessary, in the most extreme cases, to perform the piece once under general lighting for the assessment of performance candidates and once under the intended lighting design for the assessment of the designer.

Additionally, centres are urged to try and position the camera closer to the performance area. Cameras stationed at the back of the auditorium fail to capture essential detail and nuance and in numerous cases have had the line of shot partially obscured by an audience. The camera should be placed under the control of a competent operator who can pan and tilt the camera to follow any action and who is capable of acquiring close-ups at the opportune moment.

There is here, also a plea for attention to be given to obtaining adequate sound quality. A significant number of performances could not be audibly discerned because of lack of attention to this crucial detail.

In some cases centres failed to send adequate DVD evidence, submitting only one performance or a faulty DVD(s). Please ensure that DVDs are playable, by default, on Windows Media Player before submitting them. Moderators have wasted much time returning unplayable DVD's and awaiting replacements. DVD's should also be **chaptered** for ease of access. Relatively cheap software exists for this process and most centres now possess the ability to do this.

Technical Candidates

These are still very much in the minority, especially for G385. Centres are requested to renew their efforts to support technical candidates in obtaining appropriate knowledge and experience to enable them to address all the assessment objectives. In most cases the work submitted is evidence of candidates that are unable to demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding, that seem to have little concept of what the professional context of their chosen discipline demands. Where a centre does not possess adequate and up-to-date expertise in-

house it is highly recommended to assist those candidates following the production pathway to forge professional links with a practitioner.

In conclusion

There was much to recommend in this year's June submission. The centres which have performed best are almost without exception those who have grasped the tenets of the specification and which understand the vocational and indeed 'professional' aims and objectives it seeks to achieve.

On the other hand, centres who perceive this specification as 'just another performing arts programme' will continue to underachieve. In the case of G385 this unit sets out to combine academic precepts with informed creative process and considered judgement. More focus on appropriate research techniques and the processing and application of that research is the foundation upon which quality production work will be based.

The future is looking most promising and as more centres begin to assimilate the working methods and production processes required we can be confident that standards will continue to rise year on year.

G386 Producing your own Showcase

G387 Production Demonstration

General Comments

The performance aspect of this unit is essential and many centres need to attach greater importance to its organisation and ultimate outcome. The unit itself is designed to be a 'Showcase' where candidates take a holistic approach towards demonstrating the skills and performance techniques honed over the course. Many examiners felt that several centres seem to have abandoned or forgotten the element of 'show' in the Showcase. There were numerous examples where candidates had put little or no thought into the presentation of their pieces. This was a shame as this unit provides the opportunity for candidates to really show what they can do. Where centres had supported candidates from the selection of their material right through to the final performance the work was at the top end of the marking scale, showing professionalism and outstanding practice. This meant that the whole event had a sense of occasion.

There was evidence of teacher guidance in both selection and performance of the material. Centres must realise the importance of selecting the right material. Candidates need guidance and support and should not be left to select, rehearse and perform without input. Unfortunately, too many candidates were selecting works that were unsuitable and far too difficult for them to cope with. For many of these candidates prompting and cueing was expected however, this meant that the candidates could not show mastery of the material or produce dynamic performances.

Candidates should be producing a Showcase of three pieces of work containing two contrasting solo pieces and a duologue, duet or pas de deux. Candidates can choose to work in a single art form or choose a combination of art forms. Evidence of good practice was seen where centres ensured that candidates fulfilled the specified time requirements of 15 minutes to cover all three-performance pieces, which included breaks/changing between pieces. Candidates can select the running order of their performance, which ideally would be solo, solo, duo/duet or duo/duet, solo, solo. There were still a few centres that were allowing candidates to perform their work in a compilation/variety show where their programme is interspersed with other candidates work. The challenge of this unit is to perform all three contrasting pieces over a fifteen-minute period showing a range of skill and abilities. The unit is about endurance, fitness and strength. Candidates should move from one piece to the next showing focus and complete mastery of each piece. Centres that had organised a variety showcase were asked by examiners to revert to individual showcases but there were still quite a few centres that did not adhere to the requirements.

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.

Examiner reports again commented on a session of variable standards of performance work. Candidates must ensure that they have the appropriate skills to tackle their selected pieces. Choosing a piece just because they like it is not a valid choice and centres must guide candidates away from doing this. Examiners saw many candidates tackle the challenge of 'live' performance with increasing enthusiasm and skill technique. Good practice was evident where 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 effective.

Centres are reminded that the showcase is not an appropriate opportunity to attempt a 'new' skill. Quite a few candidates had elected to sing or dance despite the fact that they had never done this before. Candidates are highly unlikely to have enough time to gain complete mastery of the material and skills required if they are learning a new art form. Some candidates made selections only on the basis of 'challenge', when they should have considered 'strengths' and 'skills' more carefully. Some candidates were playing safe and re-cycling material, which they had performed before. This too is not in the spirit of the examination.

Administration in centres was again generally good. With the convenience of email, communications are significantly better and there appeared to be more contact between the centre and the examiner with regard to the details of the examination. Good practice was seen in centres that ensured the paperwork arrived in plenty of time, provided a running order and details of candidates' performances. Centres were generally adhering to the request for work to arrive 14 days before the examination. All performance work was on DVD; some centres produced excellent DVD material with clear chapter labelling and candidate identification. This is very useful and helpful for the examiner. Poor practice was unfortunately evident where examiners received little or no preparatory notes, portfolios, details of running orders and no candidate identification. Some examiners were not receiving the information to check, which meant that issues regarding running orders and how the showcases were organised were not discussed in advance. This put examiners in a very difficult position when they were then faced with having to ask a centre to alter the running order immediately prior to a performance.

Some centres had full audiences. They had considered the benefits of having a 'live' audience and felt that it did indeed give the occasion status. Good organisation is essential when juggling a Showcase event. Centres had considered programmes, refreshments and incidental music between pieces to keep the audience focused.

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 who continue to use classroom space are not providing an adequate space for candidates to create a showcase event. Many centres are now using lighting and sound amplification, which does enhance the performance aspects of the work considerably.

There is no doubt that many centres are demonstrating good practice and making every effort to engage fully with the examiner over all necessary details from pre-examination through to providing a 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, travel arrangements. This process enables the session to run smoothly and allows candidates the opportunity to achieve their potential.

Hospitality for the examiner is also important. Examiners may travel long distances; being welcomed and provided with refreshments is very much appreciated. Many examiners commented on the lack of refreshments and provision of adequate breaks in long programmes. Examiners should not be left to 'fend for themselves'.

The Discussion

Although there were no marks available for this part of the examination, many candidates entered into the spirit of arriving well prepared. The discussion gave the candidates a chance to talk about their showcases and give the examiner an insight into what they were trying to achieve. The informal discussions produced a relaxed and informative result. Many candidates showed a good understanding of the creative process as well as health and safety and warm-up procedures. The discussion gives the candidates a valuable opportunity to take ownership of

their work. Many candidates talked about their vision and interpretation of the selected pieces. Fewer candidates were interviewed alone; many chose to discuss their programme with their performance partner. This provided detailed discussions and gave many candidates confidence.

Dance candidates need to demonstrate an understanding of style, genre, musical awareness, motif and technical language. Many candidates were able to indicate where they had taken the work from and discuss the issues that arose in taking a dance from DVD or paper and creating it in its repertoire form. Good candidates had researched their pieces thoroughly and could talk about influences of dance practitioners and performances seen. Good candidates successfully described the choreographic process employed to learn their work. They were aware of stylistic influences and were able to put the dance into context, describing the purpose of the pieces, the intended audience and its impact. There were significant numbers of dance candidates who did not select work from repertoire and had in fact self-devised the pieces; therefore they were unable to discuss any of the above. This is in breach of the specification and centres must ensure that all selected dance pieces are taken from repertoire. Personal interpretation of the works is allowed.

Drama candidates appeared to be better prepared. Candidates displayed an understanding of the process, but many failed to really understand their chosen pieces, with little appreciation of the playwrights' intentions. Good candidates were able to discuss their ideas for performance of the pieces, influences, style and context as well as characterisation, period, mood and atmosphere. They had excellent knowledge about the style of their pieces, as well as detailed character analyses. 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. Candidates should have read the complete plays from which their selected works are taken. This knowledge gives the candidates the appreciation of the social, historical and cultural dimensions of the selected works.

Music candidates, particularly instrumentalists, were generally well prepared. They were able to discuss factual information regarding birth dates of composers, names of other pieces written or how successful the music had been in the charts and gave an understanding of style, genre, musical awareness, how the composer communicated the work, technical language and influences. 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. Candidates are awarded higher marks for learning the pieces, which also allows for audience interaction and communication. Centres should check that the selected pieces are appropriate for an advanced level examination as low graded pieces and set studies do not always fulfil the assessment requirements. Singers must ensure that they select songs that are suited to their vocal ability. Too many singers were choosing pieces without looking at key signatures and the range of notes covered. It is not acceptable to select a song and then change the note structure because it is not suitable for the vocal. Candidates will require teacher input to ensure that they are selecting songs that complement their singing ability and still provide good balance and contrast.

The Performance of the Showcase

Performances were of a very mixed standard. Where candidates were unable to perform because of the limitations of the performance space, this meant that they were unable to access the assessment criteria in the higher band. There was a good variety of interesting performance work covering a range of genres and styles. Successful candidates were able to perform in contrasting styles and showed a good range of skills and techniques. Many candidates showed a greater understanding of audience awareness, and communication was generally better. However, a number of able actors/dancers reduced their overall marks by choosing to perform

songs despite the fact they could not hold a tune. Overall, performance material was varied and the diversity of material selected for the showcase was very encouraging.

Technical support was also generally good and enhanced many candidates' performances. Good centres had provided sound and lighting as well as a suitable performance space that was well lit and appropriate. Many were able to provide projections and media coverage that enhanced the overall look of the performance. It was particularly effective for the dance candidates giving visual depth and meaning to their performance work. Many performance pieces were presented with full use of costume and lighting, which added to the spirit and realism of the candidates work.

The unit focuses on the performance aspects of skill development and not the audition process. Candidates deserve the opportunity to perform to a 'live' audience and evidence suggests those that did have an audience produced better performances. Many centres are now making the showcase an event on the centre calendar.

Dance

Dance was more popular during this session. Good candidates performed choreographed routines taken from repertoire. They showed the style through the appropriate movements and stylistic features achieving a good technical standard. Good practice saw the inclusion of the five basic actions, gesture and stillness, for example, steps, jumps, turns, lifts, falls, locomotion and balances. Dancers confidently used motif, development and variation. Spatial awareness was included with use of shape, size, pattern, line, direction, level and location. Well-choreographed routines taken from repertoire also included various dynamic elements such as tension, force, strength, speed, tempo and rhythm. The selected routines in contemporary, theatrical and street dance focused on form and structure. Good dance centres were able to provide the candidates a wealth of performance material. This gave the candidates the opportunity to perform works that provided the correct standard and access to the assessment criteria in the higher bands. There were still some centres that allowed candidates to devise their own dances. This is, in fact, in breach of the specification and disadvantaging the candidates. Many dancers at this level do not have the ability to choreograph works that match professional standards. There are plenty of professional works available and centres must employ these in order to provide the correct standard of dance and works from repertoire. Centres who enter dance candidates must be able to facilitate the material required.

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. There was also evidence of costume and appropriate setting and style. Dancers must ensure that their choice of costume is appropriate as too many dancers were adjusting their costumes during the performance.

Drama

All candidates choose pieces from repertoire during this session. Some candidates selected very challenging and demanding pieces, which posed questions as to whether candidates should select difficult pieces or 'play safe' and select simple pieces. Candidates should be reassured that the assessment criteria used takes this into consideration. Strong candidates displayed good vocal skills 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. However, many candidates performing Shakespeare pieces were unable to discuss the structure of the language and how they had interpreted the work. There was evidence of some difficult and challenging works selected, but some candidates were

unable to cope with the demands of the works. There was far too much prompting of candidates. Centres must support candidates in both the selection and direction of their selected pieces.

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

Candidates need quality teacher input with regards to direction, blocking and staging. Good performances considered the audience and engagement with them was enhanced through consideration of blocking and motivation behind the movement. Good candidates were using a range of skills, techniques and drama conventions. The material selected was challenging with examples of contemporary drama, Greek Theatre, Classical Speeches and Shakespeare. There were good examples of duologues i.e. from Caryl Churchill's overlapping dialogue in *Top Girls* to the demands of Pinter's pauses.

Music

There were some good performances of musical theatre with the emphasis on singing. Candidates were able to demonstrate expertise and advanced technique tackling some difficult performance pieces. Many of the pieces were performed with backing tracks and good candidates had obviously rehearsed thoroughly as they were able to achieve fluency in performance.

Some music candidates used live music. Good candidates had rehearsed with the pianists to ensure that they were familiar with the key and style of the song.

Musical Theatre allowed more candidates to display a range of performance and vocal techniques combined with facial expressions, gesture and characterisation to capture the feeling of the piece, as well as demonstrating the candidates' technical ability.

A few candidates in the session were able to produce dynamic performances of their Showcase showing complete 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 extremely 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 a number of candidates producing authoritative and absorbing performances, which really engaged with the audience.

Preparatory Notes

Many candidates still do not appreciate the importance of the social, historic and cultural contexts of their chosen pieces and chose not to write anything about them in their notes. Others appeared to think that the context of the piece means nothing more than writing a brief synopsis. In many cases this had a direct impact upon the quality of the performances. For example, some candidates did not realise that their pieces were American (despite the language indicating this clearly) and thus misinterpreted their character and failed to use an accent.

Several candidates, having found monologues on the Internet, stated that they could not find any information about the contexts. Centres should give clear advice to candidates; if they cannot find any information and background they should choose different pieces to perform.

Most candidates gained a higher proportion of marks for their performance than for their preparatory notes. The best examples displayed a professional approach to planning for performance, with their research into potential pieces and selection procedure explained rather

than merely described, with relevant research into the social, historical and cultural context of the pieces actually applied to the final performance. A few dance candidates submitted DVD evidence of the dances that they were going to perform. This was very helpful as it provided undisputed evidence that the pieces were repertoire. Dance candidates should be encouraged to follow this process. There was also clear evidence of initiative and the adoption of targeted rehearsal and preparatory techniques, including meaningful evaluation of the process. There was good evidence of developing skills and techniques through a fluent demand of technical vocabulary. Centres must ensure that the preparatory notes contain evidence of each stage of the preparation process and that therefore some kind of a diary is necessary.

Unfortunately, for some candidates submissions were little more than basic descriptive logs, with limited Internet research that was not applied and little evidence of the use of action planning and feedback to develop the final showcase.

Those candidates who did not produce and submit any 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.

G387 Production Demonstration

This session saw a small entry. Evidence including detailed DVDs, thorough preparatory notes and portfolios and planned demonstrations/ presentations was not as forthcoming as in previous sessions and many candidates were unable to demonstrate what they had actually done. Too many candidates have selected technical skills yet failed to really implement what the industry requires in practice. Candidates in this session were generally weak because they were unable to show both process and production demonstrations. Design work was not evident in many portfolios. Hand drawn diagrams and lack of technical terms impeded many candidates. Standards in this unit must match those on the performance pathway and in this session too many candidates produced poor quality work.

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. Candidates should be working alongside the G386 candidates and not on stand-alone projects. Briefs should be set and monitored by the teaching staff and candidates need to be accessing professional theatre practice.

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. Where production candidates work alongside the performance candidates this shows how the specification should be applied and taught in centres.

Less successful candidates need to improve the research, detail and presentation of their work. There must be evidence of industry standards, scaled drawings and construction techniques. Drawings and designs of period sets and costumes must be historically accurate and candidates must ensure that any accessories/props are to scale. Buying the dressings for a set box from retailers is not what the unit is about.

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.

Grade Thresholds

Applied GCE Performing Arts (H146/H546)
June 2009 Assessment Series

Coursework Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	a	b	c	d	e	u
G380	Raw	50	42	37	32	27	22	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G381	Raw	50	43	38	33	29	25	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G384	Raw	50	42	37	32	27	23	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G385	Raw	50	42	37	32	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	42	37	32	27	23	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G383	Raw	50	42	37	32	27	23	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G386	Raw	50	42	37	32	28	24	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
G387	Raw	50	42	37	32	28	24	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
8.4	26.4	54.6	79.1	92.4	100
There were 646 candidates aggregating in June 2009.					

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
10.2	31.6	66.3	89.8	98.5	100
There were 529 candidates aggregating in June 2009.					

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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