

## **Performing Arts**

Advanced GCE A2 H546

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H146

### **OCR Report to Centres**

---

**January 2012**

**H146/H546/R/12J**

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, OCR Nationals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support, which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

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

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

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

© OCR 2012

Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications  
PO Box 5050  
Annesley  
NOTTINGHAM  
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622  
Facsimile: 01223 552610  
E-mail: [publications@ocr.org.uk](mailto:publications@ocr.org.uk)

## CONTENTS

**Advanced GCE Performing Arts (H546)**

**Advanced Subsidiary GCE Performing Arts (H146)**

### OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
Overview	1
G380 Investigating performing arts organisations	5
G381 Professional Practice: Skills Development	7
G382 Professional Practice: Performance	11
G383 Professional Practice: Production	13
G384 Getting Work	14
G385 Exploring Repertoire	16
G386 Producing your own Showcase	
G387 Production Demonstration	18

## Overview

This session saw a relatively small entry for the majority of units. However, despite a smaller cohort there was evidence of good practice in all units and varied work across the spectrum. Candidates are approaching the units with enthusiasm and Centres are providing opportunities to develop greater knowledge and understanding of the Industry creating more opportunities for a vocational experience.

Examiners and Moderators reported that candidates displayed an awareness of the requirements of the specification. Good practice was evident, although lack of refinement was often a barrier to achieving the highest marks in some of the units, which may reflect the need to develop the work over time more thoroughly. Portfolio work in many units saw a better use of technical terms and industry conventions supporting the vocational aspects of the specification.

Most Centres ensured that candidates were able to access the assessment criteria for each unit. There is assistance on the OCR website to support teachers with detailed guidance and assignments.

### **G380 Investigating Performing Arts Organisations**

This investigation unit is designed to help candidates to understand how ‘the business’ works and the study of job roles within an organisation. Moderators commented that many of the portfolios presented reflected research into how organisations operate including generating an income, employment of staff and the marketing of shows or products. Centres must ensure that candidates have access to appropriate organisations, as there are still some concerns that some candidates are studying the same organisations and presenting on the same job role. Centres must encourage individual responses from candidates.

Comments about purpose, structure, operations and markets are essential, alongside a good analysis of the job structure within the organisations. Candidates must 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. Candidates need to be able to express opinions and qualify them with reference to measurable outcomes. Good practice saw information sourced, well presented, using graphs, pie charts, data collection charted for comparative analyses and PowerPoint used to deliver the job presentation.

Locating evidence was often difficult for Moderators. Centres must use the location column and ensure that the URS sheets are filled in so the marking trail is visible. Centres are reminded that annotation of the written work is not just highlighting it with different colours.

### **Unit G381 Professional Practice-Skills Development**

This unit presented a very small entry as expected, preference to submit work in the summer session clearly gives candidates more time to develop and refine skills. The Skills Development Plan is crucial to identifying strengths and weaknesses and documenting progress throughout the unit. Regular reviews of the plan showing feedback and evaluations of development may provide good evidence of development.

Centres must ensure that all candidates have included their Skills Development Plan as well as commentaries and observation reports. Centres that recorded this journey from initial readings to the finished piece were able to justify marks awarded and evidence the development made. All aspects of development should be captured on DVD and submitted as evidence.

Centres must follow the unit requirements with candidates selecting only three pieces of work. Including extra pieces does not gain more marks. Moderators look at three pieces of work and make their judgements on this. Centres must also distinguish between the finished piece and the works in progress. Only the finished piece needs to be presented to an audience, the other two pieces can remain as work in progress.

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

### **Unit G382 and G383 Performance and Production**

This session saw a variety of performances at various Centres. A few Centres displayed a stronger sense of professional practice in their work with impressive theatrical performance work. Good Centres demonstrated effective interaction with strong unity and coherence.

This performance-based unit is about the development of performance techniques from the initial planning to the final show. There was good evidence of candidates who had really developed a sense of belonging and ownership of their work. Selection of material remains the most important factor for centres so that candidates are able to access the performance criteria. Candidates must be encouraged to embrace all aspects of performance techniques and rehearse their pieces thoroughly. Centres must ensure that candidates are thoroughly 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 projections, sets, props and costumes. Centres should also ensure that there is more importance attached to the performance, promoting it as an event with an invited audience. The inclusion of an audience allows candidates to demonstrate communication and engagement, giving the event a real sense of occasion.

### **Performance Diaries**

There was evidence of some thorough portfolio work where centres had ensured that candidates had diary logs, research and health and safety. Good practice was seen where candidates showed clear evidence of planning, target setting, diaries that contained reflective comments on progress and clear application of skills and techniques. Health and Safety remains the weakest aspect, candidates must consider more than just warm-ups and fire exits. There was still evidence of poorly produced diaries. Centres must pick up on this as candidates are losing vital marks that will affect their overall grade.

### **G383 Production Demonstration**

Good practice included candidates presenting various aspects of their work to camera, creating 'DVD diaries.' This showed Examiners the preparation work that production candidates were involved in, as well as what had taken place before, during and after a performance. Portfolio work should contain further evidence to support the candidates' work. Evidence of work undertaken is so important in this unit and candidates lost vital marks, as there was no visible evidence of their work.

Centres still need to provide industry compliant software and process, including industry standard diagrams, scales and terminology. Teaching the G383 unit does need adequate planning and resources. 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.

### **Unit G384 Getting Work**

Candidates appeared to be more aware of the professional context of Getting Work. They responded well to the demands of the unit, demonstrating a good understanding of how the industry operates with regard to employment opportunities. Research and independent work on the current industry was more apparent, with a realistic awareness of how to survive as a professional in the Performing Arts Industries. The SWOT analysis needs to be real and reflect the present economic climate.

### **Unit G385 Exploring Repertoire**

There was only a very small entry for this unit. Centres have continued to take on board the detailed advice given and have responded well. Centres appeared to have approached delivery of this unit in a more academic way and candidates had produced extensive research into both the stylistic features of the selected works and had applied these stylistic features in performance. Candidates written work was generally of a good standard. They were able to display how they had researched and gathered key information and then moved this knowledge into performance. Some candidates needed to focus on key moments and describe how research had been applied. Candidates must be guided towards the socio-historical contexts in which the selected works were written and performed. Centres must ensure that the written submissions support the practical performances, as the performance work in this session was effective.

Many Centres had worked to apply industry standards with a real feel of a professional approach attached. Candidates were more engaged with the repertoire and its demands. Centres do need to be aware that equal marks are attached to both performances and ensure that they are both of equal quality.

### **Unit G386 and G387 Producing Your Showcase/Production Demonstration**

There was a relatively small entry for this unit, nevertheless there were some good examples of accomplished performances. Many candidates had invested time and effort into refining their showcase but were unable to shape the material to reflect the professional context of the selected works. Selection of suitable material is essential in this unit and selecting pieces that are unsuitable, too difficult or inappropriate impeded some candidates. Many skilful candidates in this session lacked both dynamism and impact. Duologues, duets and duos were the weakest performance piece for many candidates.

Some candidates were better prepared in both their selection of material and in the performance of the work. Too many centres do not recognise that the performance aspect of this unit is essential. 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.

Many Centres should seek guidance on how to complete the preparatory notes, as too many candidates are losing valuable marks in this area.

All Centres should read the Principal Examiner's Report with particular note of comments about selection of material and the impact of selecting inappropriate pieces.

### **G387 Production Demonstration**

There was only a small entry for G387. Centres are reminded that capturing evidence throughout the process of design and realisation is crucial for the candidate. Centres should refer to teacher guidelines and also read the Principal Examiner's Report for further guidance.

To conclude, centres must read the unit reports from the Principal Examiners/Moderators carefully, to ensure that they are developing their understanding and subsequent application of the specification. Inset is strongly recommended. Centres are reminded that there is a coursework consultancy service offered by OCR. A few Centres have used this facility and found it to be both helpful and of benefit to the candidates.

## G380 Investigating performing arts organisations

During this session few centres submitted portfolios from candidates who had all studied the same two organisations and presented almost identical presentations on the same job role. Directions to avoid this practice have been issued in reports following all recent examination sessions.

As in other sessions a number of centres produced evidence of a group visit to a local performing arts organisation which had been followed up with group discussion which candidates then used to write up their first case study. Examples of best practice showed a second organisation chosen by the candidates (with guidance from their teacher) and researched personally. The best candidates then show what they had learnt by applying it to a new situation. For their second study, candidate must not be allowed to report on the same organisation, except in exceptional circumstances.

Two or more candidates from the same centre should not report on the same job role. not only does this present issues of potential influence for later candidates but also presents a missed learning opportunity..

The full completion of the URS form is essential to guide the moderator to the key evidence and get a sense of how the marker has applied the criteria. Scripts must be annotated to show where assessment criteria have been met and these must be signposted by using the location column on the URS. Writing merely 'portfolio or DVD' is not sufficient; specific page numbers must be given. Where evidence is not clearly signposted moderators will return work to the centre for further attention.

Most candidates adopted an organised approach to portfolio building. They used headers and footers to title, paginate and name their work. Organising case studies with headings, sub headings, paragraphs and indents make for a document that is easy to read and navigate; it also helps the candidates check through what they have covered. It has been noted that those who took such an organised approach often scored higher marks.

More and more candidates had used charts and graphs to explain funding streams, ticket sales and audience profiles. This was good practice and was frequently a feature of the higher scoring candidates. It was rare to find portfolios without organisational charts being used to help describe structure.

Comparisons between roles in respective organisations were often well approached but 'reflective commentary of effectiveness' continued to challenge many. (A04.1.2.2) Those who achieved marks from the upper band were able to express opinions about an organisation's effectiveness and backed this up with reference to sales, reviews, programmes and standing in the community.

Centres must encourage candidates to be succinct and not pad portfolios with unnecessary material to meet the 3000 word limit.

Some candidates were unsure of some of the key terminology used to describe performing arts businesses and this was not always picked up in the marking. Terms most misunderstood were 'operations' (confused with access), 'products' (confused with merchandise), 'structure' (confused with buildings) and 'marketing' (thought to be limited to advertising).

Job roles were often well chosen and candidates have been steered away from giving the 'careers talk' by the majority of centres: most are clearly being asked to unpick and describe the significance of this job role to the organisation. Weaker candidates remain unable to see beyond



the personalities in the role and their career path to it but very few are now giving a generic talk about job.

In this session the importance of including a DVD of the presentation with the PowerPoint print out was well proven. Many times the printed evidence did not seem to support the marking until the DVD was played. When talking, the candidates often revealed a deeper understanding than that represented by the bullet points on the slides. The recommendation that talks are evidenced, not only by the required PowerPoint print out but also by a script and a DVD recording remains.

# G381 Professional Practice: Skills Development

## General comments

Most aspects of the moderation process went well. Centres generally understood the sampling process and enclosed the correct documentation. It is important that centres send all documentation promptly. Centres must send work on time and not wait to be chased by moderators. Internal moderation should take place in good time before the OCR deadline for submission.

## Choosing repertoire

Some candidates entered three pieces of repertoire choosing one from each art form. This does not always succeed in demonstrating the development of skills as too little time is spent in each art form. Candidates must show evidence of leading and supporting roles. One way of achieving this is for a drama candidate to work on a monologue, a duologue and a group piece. Please make sure that pieces are sufficiently long in order to display skills under development.

## Recording of rehearsals and performances on DVD

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. Please make back up copies in case DVDs are damaged in the post or will not play. Please package the DVDs in padded bags to avoid breakage. Some DVDs arrived with their cases broken and this could be harmful to the DVD itself. The moderator must be able to play the DVD on a DVD player. Moderators had problems with DVDs that would not play on any laptop or computer or DVD player.

Some centres produced DVDs that presented the candidates by including a still shot taken from one of the performances and added the name and number of the candidate. This was extremely helpful to the moderator when identifying candidates. DVDs should be chaptered and show the progress made through various rehearsals through to performance.

It is very helpful if each candidate has their own DVD of evidence with their portfolio. Each recorded performance should appear in chronological order so that the moderator can assess the development of skills being made by the candidate. The final performance of one piece of repertoire should be in front of an audience. Centres **should not** send three final performances as two of the works must be works in progress.

Centres must identify the candidates on the DVDs. Ideally candidates should introduce themselves to camera by name, number and title of repertoire piece. DVDs should be accompanied by a running order. 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 on the running order sheet 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. Where a 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

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. Camera work has improved and many centres had remembered to ensure that the candidates present themselves to the camera **before** the performance and state their name and candidate number.

### **Candidates must not offer devised work in this unit**

There were still some centres where candidates performed devised dance instead of repertoire work. Moderators do not count a devised dance piece as one of the three works, either in progress or final performance. Only repertoire work is acceptable on this unit.

### **Front sheets**

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 eg "King Lear" by Shakespeare, "Ghost Dances" 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 must not be devised. If the work cannot be identified as repertoire then it will be disregarded as evidence.

### **The location of evidence**

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. If DVDs are chaptered, a reference to the chapter by title or number is sufficient. If the location column is not filled out using page numbers and DVD timings/chapters, the moderator will send the portfolio back to the centre for this information to be given on the URS. Most centres are using detailed annotation but some centres are still not filling in the location column with sufficient detail.

### **Research and handouts**

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**

The Skills Development Plan (SDP) should be detailed and include a summary of what the candidate has already achieved. This should be a resumé of no more than 500 words and can be in the form of a CV or short biography. There were some excellent examples of CVs and biographies this session. 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.

Candidates must refer to the SDP throughout the portfolio and explain how they have adapted it in response to feedback and self-evaluation. Some candidates presented this in the form of a table which worked very well.

### **Extraneous material**

There were some portfolios containing material which was not directly related to the skills under development and the three pieces of repertoire. Some candidates had included certificates which they had been awarded at festivals and for grade exams. This is not appropriate. Please just mention the highest grades achieved in the relevant discipline on the CV. If the material is not relevant to the three pieces of repertoire and the skills development, please do not include it. Portfolios which are over 300 pages long are unlikely to have a sharp focus on the chosen skills and the three pieces of repertoire.

### **Presentation of portfolios**

Please do not send portfolios in bulky ring binder folders, hard back photograph albums or scrapbooks. As long as the pages are kept together in a slim folder or by treasury tags, the moderator will have no difficulty finding the evidence.

There must be a contents page and all pages must be numbered.

### **Commentaries**

Commentaries should be in written form or presented on DVD. They need to be detailed and demonstrate candidate ownership. There were some very informative and detailed commentaries presented on DVD which have provided good evidence.

Tick box approaches and proforma 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**

Observation reports must likewise be a detailed analysis 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. Some Centres did not sign or date these reports rendering them invalid. There should be a minimum of three observation reports.

There was a wide range of work this session presented for this unit.. Some Centres are stretching their candidates and offering them some challenging texts to work from such as King Lear. Some very mature performances were presented across the art forms. However, three final performances and a weak portfolio will not gain high marks. The essential part of this unit is to show development of skills. For each piece, there should be recordings of first readings, rehearsals, dress rehearsals and final performance in the case of the finished piece.

### **Health and Safety**

Most Centres show good awareness of Health and Safety procedures and this was clearly shown in the portfolios. There needs to be a constant update of Health and Safety regulations to encourage candidate awareness. Health and Safety should be embedded in the portfolio not merely added in an appendix. Candidates should be able to show how they have used the information and knowledge in their practice.

**Performance venues**

Dance performances should take place in a room with a sprung floor. The majority of Centres chose appropriate spaces for their rehearsals and performances. However, some drama and music performances took place in computer rooms which are not appropriate performance spaces. If possible, try to give candidates a variety of spaces in which to perform.

## **G382 Professional Practice: Performance**

### **General comments**

Centres performed well where they responded effectively to demands of the unit and to the assessment criteria in terms of professional replication, choice of appropriate repertoire and depth of analysis in written evidence. In most Centres, candidates used their knowledge, skills and understanding to respond appropriately to the demands of the tasks and evidence needs.

The choice of material provided sufficient technical and artistic rigour to produce evidence at an appropriate level with very little devised work apparent during this session. All performances had audiences and good technical support; lighting, sound, costume and make-up was evident, particularly from those centres with G383 candidates.

Generally the external examination was managed well by Centres with appropriate timetables and organisation on the day.

Candidates did not do so well where the centre did not respond to professional production values as outlined above. The small number of Centres reproducing dance school or rock school pieces and who still do self-devised dance pieces also remain a problem since they limit candidates' ability to access the higher range of the criteria.

Centres also responded poorly generally in the demand for Health and Safety considerations in portfolios.

### **Individual tasks of the units**

#### **Performance (G382)**

Candidates that produced appropriate performances fully understood the vocational and technical demands of the unit and contextualised their preparation with reference to assessment criteria and demands. Consequently candidates that generally achieved well in the task of producing a performance were immersed in professional practice and choose clear repertoire pieces. Within this context there was evidence of a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding.

A range of approaches is expected given the choices and resources available but Centres must give candidates the opportunity to produce evidence that tests their understanding of professional practice against the assessment criteria. In the mark scheme there are clearly significant marks to be gained by engaging with, and understanding the needs of the audience and some confident performances failed to recognise the importance of this.

Some Centres continued to produce an evening of short variety pieces, some of which were self-devised and many of which were solos. G382 has criteria demands for group activities; solo performances where the candidate performed just one song/dance/piece of music within a group piece or as part of a band did not fulfil the unit demands.

Most Centres seemed to be fully aware that candidates cannot elect which art form they wish to be assessed on and understood that a candidate was marked on their entire performance.

Most candidates performed with a sense of commitment and worked hard to achieve the best performance that their skills allowed. In the larger groups a few candidates were overshadowed by others and had either not fought for a more prominent role or deliberately hidden (or been hidden) behind others.

Some Centres had encouraged the candidates to work as a 'company' and this had successfully engendered supportive working environments and co-operation between students. Less successful was the collaboration between technical/production students and performers.

### **Written evidence (G382)**

Portfolios continued to improve and candidates were able to respond to some very useful and comprehensive structures from Centres. Better candidates are able to augment these with committed and 'owned' responses drawing on practitioners and seen performances. The best portfolios showed clear evidence of planning, target setting, diary entries that showed progress and an application of techniques.

Health and Safety contents had improved with the use of risk assessments, annotated photographs and appropriate warm-up activities all contributing to an enhanced understanding. There were some good examples where candidates had really tried to link H & S to their own performance and this should be encouraged but many candidates were still relying on vague comments about wires and spills and keeping the stage area clear without much thought about their own, specific, circumstances. If they are performing they *must* have regard to the health and safety and condition of their physical instrument, this is not only essential evidence but a requirement of any professional practice context.

## **G383 Professional Practice: Production**

### **General comments**

Centres with G383 candidates continued to extend the range of evidence recording both the interviews and backstage and other technical operations, this gave a comprehensive range of supporting DVD evidence.

Most G383 students did not have the knowledge and understanding of professional contexts in their chosen technical areas to be able to replicate professional practice, skills and documentation. This remains a major concern in this unit.

### **Individual tasks of the units**

#### **Realised design/participation in production (G383)**

Given the very low numbers taking the unit in this session it is difficult to draw overall conclusions but very generally candidates performed better in lighting and sound where technical resources are used with some fluency and were less successful in make-up and costume where aspirations and assumed, anecdotal understanding far outstripped professional knowledge and the resources available to candidates.

#### **Design portfolio (G383)**

The production candidates (sound and light) spoke well in their respective interviews and their use of PowerPoint presentations as aide memoirs allowed them to focus what they said on the key issues related to their roles. There had clearly been time spent ensuring that production candidates were an integral part of the process rather than students who had been left to get on with it themselves.



## G384 Getting Work

### General comments

The number of entries for this session remains constant and consistent with last year. Moderation processes ran smoothly with all centres providing appropriate documentation and evidence.

### Professional Context

Generally there was a real awareness of the professional context of the work, although the most noticeable hindrance to this remained where candidates relied on their school or college experience to provide all of the details for their pack, this includes an over-reliance on the experience of teachers even when this experience has included professional work. This was invariably in the past and by implication therefore not a full-time commitment to current professional work in the industry. Interviews with working professionals are explicitly indicated in the assessment criteria and are not added value. There is a real need for portfolios to be based on research into the current demands of the industry, focused to a large extent by the interviews conducted with freelance professionals. In the best work these interviews were explicitly reproduced as appendices and also clearly referenced and informed all of the work.

### Promotional pack

The quality of the production of the packs varied significantly. At best, they were attractive, professionally produced with well-crafted text and imagery that drew the reader's attention. These packs had a clear reference to a specific artistic audience. They knew in effect who they were marketing themselves to and what those companies or professionals wanted. This is crucial since it indicates current industry conditions, a clear focussed vocational route and contact with working professionals all of which is necessary to address the criteria. At worst, it was difficult to disentangle the promotional materials from the plethora of print-outs of internet pages, photocopied handouts and extraneous working notes, all of which severely reduced the impact of the work, although it is increasingly unusual to find these unstructured portfolios. Some candidates included equity application forms in the pack. These have no assessment value whatsoever, they may possibly be included as an appendix but the inclusion of a form gives no indication of a candidate's knowledge and understanding of promotion to a specific area of employment in the industry.

Résumés and CVs were not always well thought out and did not demonstrate a good professional progression together with a strong sense of professional aspiration in particular artistic vocational areas. There were often anomalies between what was claimed in the CV and what the plan actually contained. It should be noted that CVs and letters are not compulsory. It entirely depends on the 'audience' for the promotional pack and they should not be included habitually. This also includes letters that are in response to an advertisement; these can sometimes reduce the range of evidence and are not always appropriate. Overall the impact and attractiveness in marketing terms is what candidates should consider when designing the pack. They should be dynamic and lively (as well as informed) in a way that standard CVs and letters are sometimes not. A range of material should therefore be considered including web-based profiles, DVDs, demo CDs and mail-shots.

Candidates should make more use of appendices to include the 'working out' of their promotional pack. In this way centres need not be anxious about editing rigorously to produce the essential, slick pack. It also means that promotional packs do not have to be annotated, the annotated copies can be included as drafts in the appendix. Pro-mo packs should be as they are when they land on the artistic director's (for instance) desk. It should also be noted that

inappropriately covering a folder in glitter in the misguided belief that this enhances the promotional value of the contents should be discouraged, especially when the glitter comes off onto the hands, desk and laptop of the potential employer.

Covering letters were generally of an acceptable standard but there was considerable scope for adopting a more professional – and hence more persuasive – tone. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar sometimes undermined the quality of what was being said. It is vital that candidates adopt high professional standards in their use of written English – this is clearly in the assessment criteria. Some letters were not addressed to anyone and therefore their power to influence was severely restricted. What's important is that there is understanding of what is expected in the professional context – are letters and CVs what's expected in the specific job or vocational context? A named professional would add to this evidence but not necessarily a specific advertised job which can restrict the scope of evidence.

### **Plan of first year of work**

The specification allows candidates to build their first year of work around a maximum of 50% contract work. This recognises the reality of the professional situation in providing a sustainable income during a period where getting work is difficult and where reputation is becoming established. It is a prerequisite, however, that such contract work should be in a related professional area. The majority of contracts were in teaching (either privately or in a college) and were appropriate in their scope and projected income.

The plans however were much more credible but some candidates still did not understand the need to get current rates of pay from the relevant organisations and unions and therefore come up with realistic earnings. The best plans were 'smart' and edited rigorously and provided figures that gave a clear indication of survival without providing multiple tables. Again, draft plans can be included in an appendix. Centres who give a format or specific set of tasks to candidates should note that replications of material such as the same job or interviewee limit the capacity of the candidate to produce individual and owned evidence.

Most candidates related the range of freelance work identified to the research interviews they had conducted. Some centres provided plans for three or even five years – one detailed year is the demand, although it is quite acceptable as part of the analysis to look forward to subsequent years. There was a tendency to change the run of years so that candidates were placed at the end of college/university courses this year, 2012. It is acceptable and perhaps preferable for candidates to project forward so that they place themselves in a position in the future, just about to embark on their first year ie 2015.

### **Analysis of the plan**

Better candidates did more than just provide a SWOT, there were introductions and conclusions that placed it in a much wider context. These candidates took a step back and used their knowledge and understanding of the industry to weigh up their chances of success with clarity and honesty. Most candidates were good at identifying the strengths of their plan since this was often closely related to the skills outlined in the résumé. Weaknesses were more difficult for candidates to identify. In terms of opportunities, the most able candidates could see that the nature of their work could grow in relation to their professional development and this provided a good source of discussion. Threats were more difficult to identify, but the strongest candidates were able to locate the work in a context that did identify such threats.

Good candidates placed their analysis into a wider professional context and related it both to a specific professional area and their place in it. Given the current economic climate it should be a given for candidates to mention both their own personal issues and contexts in the SWOT analysis as well as the effect economic downturn has on the industry and audience behaviour.

## G385 Exploring Repertoire

### General comments

This being the January session only three centres submitted and a significant number of entries were resubmissions. Centres generally made suitable choices for their candidates and presented opportunities for both individual and ensemble work.

Choices included Brecht, Godber, Music Hall, Classical Ballet and Contemporary Dance.

### Essays

The written work was generally of a good standard, although effort should be directed towards the thorough assimilation of research process (AO2.1) which should be given more emphasis and applied to the practical performances discussed in AO2.2. Candidates are encouraged to make full use of archive material when researching and deciding on which skills and techniques to focus.

Some essays contained a few examples of candidates having identified and analysed past performances on YouTube for example. Where this was done the candidate was able to cite specific performance challenges which focussed on skills adaptation, which is a central element of the process.

Typically, challenges were identified but confined to superficial aspects such as perfecting London accents and understanding the meaning of lyrics rather than the more significant adaptation and application of specific performance skills. As well as addressing socio-historical contexts candidates need to be able to discuss what actual physical **performance skills** were demanded of the original artistes thereby providing a foundation for discussion of how they themselves have attempted to meet the performance challenges this poses in terms of the realisation/adaptation of these skills for a contemporary audience (AO2).

Significant numbers of candidates still showed a disposition towards descriptive narrative at the expense of research of skills and evaluative analysis. It is not enough to simply describe the practical work, but rather, as explained above, the focus should be on what performance skills the original artistes required as well as the challenges posed to the candidates in adapting and applying those same skills. It is in this context that the discussion should review how the work both evolves and connects to the specific genre whose style has been acquired in practice. Not all candidates who had received marks in the upper band were sufficiently confident in using technical vocabulary; 'all at the same time' rather than, 'in unison' for example.

### Practical Work

Generally speaking, the practical work was effective and succeeded in conveying the appropriate stylistic conventions. Performances had considerable integrity and the stylistic conventions emerged most clearly, thereby demonstrating effective application of research (AO3).

### Academic Standards

Citations are now becoming a part of the essay writing process although there is some ground still to be made up in the quantity and quality thereof. Whilst some Centres clearly encouraged their candidates to access a wide range of material there were still some cases where candidates typically accessed two or three internet sites only and these of a somewhat generalist aspect.

Bibliographies and word counts are now more or less universally included.

### **Technical Candidates**

Technical candidates should be advised to focus upon one skill only. Where a technical candidate chooses to follow a combination pathway, both lighting and sound for example, (either of which is complex in itself) he/she will inevitably spread themselves very thinly and as a consequence may not cover the material as fully as is necessary to access the full range of marks.

### **Administration**

Centres are requested to note that it is mandatory to attach photographs of the candidate (both in and out of costume for each performance) to the CCP Candidate Cover Sheet. Also, it is mandatory for the URS mark sheet to be completed fully, including candidate number. Both of the above requirements have been neglected and where this important information is omitted, the Moderator is required to apply deductive methods, which is time consuming.

### **DVD**

Please take note that the DVD evidence is all the Moderator has to go on when attempting to appreciate the performance from an audience perspective. DVD material was not universally accessible by the Moderator and in some cases a replacement DVD had to be requested. In other cases the camera work was occasionally very unsteady and consideration towards this as well as the choice of appropriate angles and performers 'finding the light' is both recommended and requested. It is recommended that the recording process be placed in the hands of someone with some experience of moving image capture. Centres are required to ensure that the DVD evidence is both audibly and visually clear and is playable on Windows Media Player before it is sent out to the Moderator.

Where there are large numbers of candidates on stage at one time as part, for example, of a chorus or a *corps de ballet* it is requested that especial attention is given to identification of individuals. So often it is the case wherein the Moderator is presented with DVD evidence that omits an identity line-up prior to the performance. This sometimes involves the Moderator in as much as one or two hour's additional work, trying to work out who is who.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, this session has seen a reaffirmation of the evidence from last June, with candidates showing that they are both engaging with the content and enjoying the fruits of the module.

## **G386 Producing your own Showcase**

### **G387 Production Demonstration**

#### **General comments**

The January session only saw a relatively small cohort of candidates, which reflects the fact that many centres would rather wait and give the candidates more time to develop further their performance skills and confidence in solo performance work, entering in the June session.

It was apparent in this session that many candidates had found it difficult to produce a dynamic performance of their Showcase, showing mastery of their selected material. A few candidates were able to shape and mould their material to display a sophisticated understanding of the interpretative skills and personal style required at the top end of the marking band. However, many candidates were unable to reflect the professional context of the material selected. Again, only a few candidates were able to give authoritative and absorbing performances, with many candidates falling short as they had selected works that were unsuitable and too difficult for them to cope with, or pieces that were inappropriate for this examination.

The strongest performers were able to show a wide range of performance techniques with a good awareness of the audience through a varied programme, selected by the candidates that showed a variety of skills.

Examiners reports generally commented on a session of variable standards of performance work. Good practice saw candidates tackling the challenge of 'live' performance with increasing enthusiasm and skill technique. Quite a few Centres approached the work as a 'process to performance' encouraging candidates to create 'The Showcase.'

Provision of a suitable performance space is extremely important. Centres in this session did provide suitable spaces, although production values were mixed. Centres really must try to ensure that performances spaces give the candidates opportunities to perform as if they were on a professional stage.

Centres ensured that candidates fulfilled the specified time requirements of 15 minutes, however, there were a few candidates who selected very short pieces that did not give the candidates opportunity to display a range of skills and techniques or to do anything to mould and shape the material.

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

Administration in Centres was generally good. Most centres ensured the paperwork arrived in time, provided a running order and details of candidates' performances. Candidate photographs were however often missing and Centres did not always have the correct candidate forms. Provision of DVD-recorded evidence of the examination was generally good during this session.

## **The Discussion**

All centres and candidates were generally well-prepared. Most candidates were able to discuss with the examiner the selected pieces detailing how they would be performed and personal interpretation. These candidates showed an understanding of the creative process as well as health and safety and warm-up procedures. Many drama and dance candidates, who are selecting works from the Internet, must ensure that they can discuss the social, historical and cultural influences of the pieces.

### **Dance**

Stronger dance candidates had researched their pieces thoroughly and were able to talk about the influences of dance practitioners and performances seen. They had knowledge of both their choreography and performance. Candidates must be able to describe the choreographic process employed to learn their work. They should be aware of stylistic influences and be able to put the dance into context, describing the purpose of the pieces, the intended audience and its impact. Most of the dance candidates provided a copy of their selected dances on DVD in their portfolios and a clear website address for the examiner to be able to watch the selected pieces, particularly, if the selected pieces were by less well known choreographers.

### **Drama**

Drama candidates were generally well-prepared. Stronger candidates displayed an understanding of their chosen pieces as well as an appreciation of the playwrights' intentions. They were able to discuss their ideas for performance of the pieces, influences, style and context as well as characterisation, period, mood and atmosphere. However, too many candidates struggled with a lack of knowledge about the style of their pieces and how they could decipher them. This meant they were unable to inform the Examiner of their intended interpretation.

### **Music**

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

## **The Performance of the Showcase**

Most candidates were prepared and had obviously rehearsed their pieces. Successful candidates were able to perform in contrasting styles and showed a good range of skills and techniques. Selection of appropriate material is still very much an area for development. Overall, performance material was varied and the diversity of the material selected for the showcase was encouraging. However, too many candidates were unable to apply their findings from research into practice, as the material was just too difficult or demanding for them. Candidates must select pieces that they are able to perform. Choosing material because they 'like it' or because it is a 'challenge' when they do not have the requisite skills to realise the performance puts the candidate at a disadvantage.

Technical support was also evident and enhanced many candidates' performances. Many Centres provided sound and lighting as well as a suitable performance space that was well lit and appropriate. Many performance pieces were presented with full use of costume, stage and lighting which, although, not examined, does add to the spirit and realism of the candidates

work. Candidates working at this level deserve the opportunity to perform to a live audience demonstrating the skills learnt and honed over the two-year course, however in this session there were still centres who had not invited an audience.

### **Dance**

The majority of candidates performed choreographed routines taken from repertoire. However, some candidates had not actually learnt the repertoire dance but simply choreographed their own version from a DVD. Weaker candidates had selected movements 'in the style' of a particular dance or choreographer, this is not appropriate. Duets were not always taken from repertoire but performed as solo routines in a side-by-side performance.

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

### **Drama**

All candidates choose pieces from repertoire during this session. More successful candidates showed how effective research had been used in performances and were always aware of the whole play having read the text. Vocal skills were varied with many candidates needing to focus on effective voice projection and clear diction. Many weaker candidates were unable to vary their pace, pitch and tone, making their characters very 'one-dimensional'. Too many candidates had no real understanding of their characters and were unable to convey meaning and purpose. Candidates had learnt the words but were unable to do anything with them. Shakespeare was evident, but again too many candidates had little understanding of the iambic pentameter, clear diction and clarity of voice. Many of the performances of Shakespeare pieces were weak. Candidates must also ensure that all three performances are of an equal standard. Many candidates were unable to secure the third piece, with quite a few candidates choosing to move from drama to music, where they were unable to reach a comparable standard.

Duologues were generally the weakest pieces for most candidates, as many had selected pieces that were too difficult for them. Candidates must also look carefully when selecting pieces that require them to perform as the opposite gender or play an older character. There is a wealth of material to select from, particularly for young people, and it is really unnecessary to be selecting unsuitable pieces.

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

Staging of the pieces still needs some attention. Good performances considered the audience and engagement with them was enhanced through consideration of blocking and motivation behind movement. However, there was too much pacing of the stage and overuse of the arms and hands in conversation work or to make a point. Working in profile also inhibited communication aspects. Good candidates were using a range of skills, techniques and drama conventions.

### **Music**

A more appropriate choice of material allowed more candidates to display a range of performance and vocal techniques. However, too many candidates failed to capture the essence of Musical Theatre and opted to stand at the front of the stage and sing, particularly in the duets. If candidates select pieces from this genre they must embrace all aspects of it.

Candidates who played musical instruments were generally well rehearsed. Pieces were taken from Classical works, Jazz, Popular and Contemporary music repertoire. Classical instrumentalists must ensure that they can communicate the selected pieces to an audience. It is not enough to just sit and play, flair and interpretation is crucial. Instrumentalists and piano players must consider their position in relation to the audience.

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 and confidence in communicating their pieces. Good practice saw candidates producing performances that really engaged with the audience. Some music candidates used professional backing tracks, others either accompanied themselves or had piano/keyboard accompanists. Good candidates had rehearsed with the backing tracks to ensure that they were familiar with the key and style of the song.

### **Preparatory Notes**

Preparatory notes submitted were of a mixed standard. Good candidates had demonstrated a developed and applied awareness of their approach to performance preparation. They were able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of the processes required, with particular reference to social, historical and cultural influences. This was evident for many candidates in the performance of their pieces. There was good evidence of developing skills and techniques through a fluent demand of technical vocabulary. It was encouraging to see preparatory notes that supported preparation, written in continuous prose replacing compendium style folders. Those candidates who produced thorough preparatory notes were better prepared and this was evident in the Showcase performance. Weaker candidates did not address the demands of the social, historical and cultural aspects and failed to detail how each performance piece had developed through a diary and feedback.

### **G387 Production Demonstration**

There was only a very small entry for this session.

Candidates are starting to understand the processes required to realise their designs. Research was undertaken with consideration of the social, historical and cultural influences on their designs.

Material selected particularly at the highest mark should be sophisticated. Candidates must display a good command of technical language and conventions as well as complying with industry requirements.

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

Candidates must submit both their preparatory notes and their portfolio containing their designs as well as pictures, photographs and DVD evidence of their product demonstration. Portfolio and preparatory notes still remain the weakest aspect of many candidates work.

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.



**OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)**  
1 Hills Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2EU

**OCR Customer Contact Centre**

**Education and Learning**

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: [general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk](mailto:general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk)

**[www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)**

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored

**Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations**  
is a Company Limited by Guarantee  
Registered in England  
Registered Office; 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU  
Registered Company Number: 3484466  
OCR is an exempt Charity

**OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)**  
Head office  
Telephone: 01223 552552  
Facsimile: 01223 552553

© OCR 2012

