

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

GCE Drama and Theatre Studies
(6DR02)
Theatre Text in Performance

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6DR02 Text in Performance

Introduction

This is the third year of examination of the AS performance unit. Centres are reminded that in the rewriting of the specification it was decided to continue with a performance examination in the AS year as this had proved to be popular with centres and candidates. There was also the requirement as with all new GCE specifications to ensure that the same overall pattern of results was maintained from the legacy specification. This was achieved in 2009 and 2010.

Section A

Is equally weighted at 30% of the AS marks and all criteria are equally weighted.

Candidates can be examined as a single performer in a monologue, with one other performance candidate in a duologue or as a designer working on the same text as performance candidates. For all candidates independent research into the complete text is a requirement.

All candidates are required to complete under supervised conditions a written concept to support their practical work. This must be sent to the examiner to arrive least 7 working days in advance of the Section A examination.

Maximum time limits of 2 minutes for monologues and 5 minutes for duologues are also set in line with the time limits set by most tertiary institutions which require a demonstration of practical ability as part of the selection process.

Section B

The group performance retains the challenge and requirements of the legacy Unit 2 and is worth 30% of the AS marks.

All criteria are equally weighted.

6DR02 remains an externally examined unit but one in which the assessment objectives and criteria do not change from those printed in the specification and the work presented for examination is selected by the centre so this report does not need to reflect the individual demands of the questions in a written examination. In preparing candidates for this unit it was clear that in 2011 the majority of centres were confident and knowledgeable about the requirements for Section B. There were instances again in 2011 where centres did not fully meet the requirements of Section A.

It is the responsibility of each centre to select the playtexts, options taken by candidates and audience.

This remains a unique externally examined unit that has elements of both an examined and coursework unit.

Section A

For the majority of centres and examiners this was the third time of preparing candidates for this section.

There had been in 2010 a noticeable improvement in centres enabling candidates to achieve against the criteria in this section.

Examiners felt that that overall this had remained steady in 2011. There were still a number of centres who had not put in place the very clear requirements of this section.

Marks were awarded in all mark bands as in 2010. The majority of candidates performed monologues again this year. There were very few design candidates again in 2011. There was no evidence that candidates did better in any of the design options.

Again this year the centres which enabled the candidates to do well in this section clearly followed the requirements of this section.

Examiners report that there was clear evidence that many centres had responded to the advice given in last year's examiners report and ensured that the requirements in both the specification and The Instructions for Conduct 2011 were put in place. However it is disappointing to report again in 2011 that some centres did not meet the requirements of this section and this did disadvantage those candidates. Some examiners reported that they felt most centres did understand what was required.

This section is worth 30% of the AS marks equal to Section B but it was felt that there remain many candidates who were seen to be under prepared for this section. Where candidates produced work marked in the lower mark bands examiners frequently felt this was because insufficient time had been spent in preparation for this section.

Performance Candidates

Preparation and choice of text

Examiners felt that more candidates had been taught the skills needed for performance of the monologues or duologues at AS level in preparation for the chosen examination pieces. This should build on the work done in Unit 1 in exploring texts practically. Some candidates made reference to work done in Unit 1 in the Written Performance Concepts. This was felt to be good practice.

Again in 2011 some candidates had presented texts that did not support their skill level. Examiners felt very strongly that in too many centres not enough guidance and support had been given to candidates in selecting material.

It was reported that work was seen that was inappropriate for examination performances. Centres are reminded that the work may also be seen by an audience.

This could be the content of the text or more often the level of challenge for AS achievement.

Some examiners reported clear evidence that some candidates did not understand the text at all or had very limited appreciation of it. This was often felt to apply to Shakespearean and other classical texts where the entire cohort presented work from one or a range of these texts.

Equally limiting were texts that were short, often comedy, sketches or monologues that had been found on the internet as these did not meet the requirements of this section as detailed in the specification.

It is clear in the specification that all candidates must read and research the complete text. There was evidence again this year that candidates had made their choice by reference to one of the many monologue/duologue anthologies available both published and on the internet.

Centres must be aware that some of these publications for other examinations have both monologues and duologues that are not from complete published play texts but are adaptations from novels or other material.

It is now a requirement that the complete text studied by each candidate is available at the examination. The majority of centres provided these texts this year. Centres must ensure all texts are available in future. Some examiners report having to request that copies of the text were sent to them after the examination session to confirm the candidates had had access to the text.

A real positive this year was that there were considerably fewer candidates who presented the examiner with a photocopy of the pages from a monologue/duologue anthology. The vast majority of candidates had had access to the complete text and had worked on the complete play text in preparing for this section.

Again there were a very few candidates who presented work from film/television scripts or songs alone from musical theatre texts.

There was considerably more evidence that centres had given better guidance to ensure that individual reading and research had been completed by candidates. Examiners felt that there were still some candidates who had been 'left to get on with it' with little or no teacher guidance or support.

Centres are reminded that for both sections of this unit Edexcel has no issues with either accent or gender in performance. However again this year candidates tended to choose material that did not have cross gender playing and many candidates had worked on appropriate accents.

One significant change in 2010 was the increase in centres selecting a single play text and all candidates choosing monologues or duologues from this text. This was again reported in 2011 by some examiners as being centre practice in some areas. This was felt to support design candidates and some performance candidates. However there was evidence that this did not always support all performance candidates.

There were however more centres choosing an author or genre and this did give greater flexibility to all candidates. This was often reflected in the reporting of preparation work in the Written Performance Concepts referring

to class or group activities/workshops often in relation to specific practitioners

However centres are reminded that all candidates must also undertake some individual research in preparation for the examination.

This needs to be reflected in the Written Performance Concepts.

Timings

The maximum time is stated in the specification and The Instructions for Conduct 2011. Examiners report that there were still many candidates who did not meet this requirement particularly in monologues. There were still examples of almost 2 minutes having been used for introductory mime/movement work so little of the text was spoken in the time limit. There were again examples of monologues and duologues lasting in excess of 10 minutes.

It is part of the demands of this unit that candidates ensure the work presented for examination meets the time requirements. It is disappointing to report again in 2011 many candidates chose monologues and performed them as written without adapting them for the examination.

Centres are strongly advised to ensure that in the preparation for this section much more emphasis is placed on this requirement.

Candidates can perform text taken from different parts of the play however examiners felt that this needed a great deal of skill in order to produce a coherent performance. However there were many examples this year of where examiners felt that this had advantaged strong candidates, as this enabled them to show a range of skills.

In the 2010 report, it was reported that there were centres which used music and/or projection to set the scene, this could be very effective. However, this will be included in the timing of the performances. In general examiners felt that this was used by more centres this year but not always to best advantage the candidates.

All examiners are instructed to only mark work seen within the time limits for this section.

Examiners reported again this year that there were instances where the strongest work was outside the time allowed so could not be awarded any marks.

Examiners will start marking as soon as the candidate(s) performance begins. Most centres had put in place a system of clearly sign posting to the examiner when each performance began.

Introductions

The majority of candidates understood the requirements to state clearly and slowly their name, candidate number and details of the text and role immediately before the performance.

This could be followed by brief blackouts or dimming of the lights and examiners felt this worked well for candidates. Another method was for candidates to turn away from the examiner and turn to face the examiner to indicate the beginning of the performance. If the candidate pauses, needs a prompt or begins again, this will be included in the timing by the examiner.

There were examples of candidates losing focus and forgetting their lines completely. This was very stressful for those candidates. Centres are reminded that the examiner cannot intervene. It is acceptable for centre staff to stop the performance.

No candidate can be given a second chance to perform the monologue or duologue.

No requests for this by teachers or students can be made to the visiting examiner.

There were instances where the candidates introduced themselves to camera and the examiner and then spent some time organising the performance space or waiting for the camera operator to be ready. This was felt not to support the candidates in the examination process and must not be done in future. It did not enable examiners and centres to make accurate timings on the recordings of the performances.

Non Examination Students

There were virtually no examples of centres having non examination students working with candidates in this section in 2011.

In the 2010 report centres were informed that if a non exam student is present with any monologue candidate the examiner will inform the centre that the candidate must perform alone for the examination.

Centres are reminded that Edexcel will accept that in a centre there may be 1 candidate who wishes to perform a duologue but due to the numbers in the group has no one to work with. In this case another student can be used; otherwise all duologues must be 2 examination candidates.

Centres must ensure that in duologues both candidates have equal opportunity within the time limit.

Candidates may well be disadvantaged if these requirements are not met from now on.

Examination Conditions

Centres must ensure that all examiners are provided with the facilities and conditions to complete the examination of Section A professionally and with confidence.

The organisation and timing of Section A examination must be agreed with the examiner in advance of the examination sessions.

The vast majority of examiners were provided with the facilities as detailed in the Instructions for Conduct. Most exam sessions enabled examiners to remain in the exam space for an agreed number of candidates and then leave for a period of time to consider their marks in a private space.

Very few examiners reported this year that they felt under pressure to view too many candidates in too short a time.

Examiners are required to detail on the DTS2 form the start and finish time of each performance. This is to provide information of the timings of the Section A examination as part of the monitoring process of this section.

It was clear that the concern from many examiners that candidates wanted to involve the examiner in the performance was far less in evidence this

year. This was a positive for the security of the marking of this section in maintaining examination conditions.

Many fewer candidates made the examiner another role in the performance and tried to directly engage them. This was felt to disadvantage candidates who did this as examiners cannot respond in this way to the performance.

There were again fewer instances where candidates used the examiner and/or the table as part of the performance. There were a very few examples of candidates positioning themselves both on and under the table, touching the examiner, striking the table or moving very close to the examiner and speaking close to them. This was most often seen in extracts of texts that expressed strong emotions.

It was stated in the 2010 report that from 2011 all Section A performances must be completed with at least one chair space on either side of and behind the examiner and this same space between the performer and the examiner.

It is good to report that the vast majority of centres did this in 2011.

Vocal Skills

The same comments as reported in 2010 apply again this year.

Centres must ensure that all candidates have the opportunity to meet the criteria as listed. Again this year examiners report that many candidates had not considered the importance of projection. There was often a lack of pace and pause used in performance. Examiners reported they felt this could be due to nervousness as candidates may not have been well prepared by performing the pieces to others in preparation for the examination.

Movement Skills

The same comments as reported in 2010 apply again this year.

Some examiners report that very static performances did not support candidates in achieving in the criteria as listed. Both gesture and facial expression are considered by examiners in awarding marks for movement. However there were also many reports of candidate's ability to use stillness to great effect.

There was also concern that some candidates included abstract movement sequences either before or during the performance that did not support the interpretation of the role in performance. There was usually no reference to why this was done in the Written Performance Concept.

Characterisation

There was seen to be a real difference in candidate achievement in this criteria.

The performance must reflect an understanding of the role in the context of the complete text.

Where candidates had done this it could be very impressive within the time constraints showing how powerful and convincing the role could be in performance.

Disappointingly there were also many performances that showed very little appreciation of the knowledge of the role in context. Often this lack of knowledge was also there in the Written Performance Concept.

There was much less concern that some performances had almost become 'mini productions' that would not have been coherent in the context of the complete text.

Style and interpretation in performance must be clearly indicated in the Written Performance Concept.

Written Performance Concept

There was a marked improvement in this element of Section A in 2010.

However again in 2011 it was the area where candidates seem least well prepared and therefore are not achieving at the same standard as the 3 practical elements.

In the third year of this specification most examiners again reported that far too many centres ignored the 500 word limit. This year all candidates were required to confirm the word limit on the DTS2 examiner mark sheet. Many centres failed to complete this or regardless of the actual number of words wrote 500 in the boxes.

Examiners only mark the first 500 words beginning with the rationale. If this met or exceeded the word limit any annotation on the text was not marked. This was often where candidates detailed their intended interpretation.

All 3 areas need to be covered equally in the rationale and many examiners reported having to complete 'best fit' marking as at least one of the 3 requirements as detailed in the criteria was not covered or covered outside the word limit.

The challenge for candidates in the 500 word limit is to organise their knowledge and understanding succinctly and to cover all 3 areas. As the work sent to the examiner must be completed under controlled conditions it must be a personal response that reflects each individual's response to their chosen role.

Candidates often give copied or downloaded basic information about the text, author, plot and/or role chosen. This section of the WPC must show their understanding of this information rather than just state it.

Centres must ensure that the Written Performance Concept and the text are clearly identified with candidate name, number and running order as these will be separated from the examiner mark sheets when materials are returned by examiners to Edexcel.

Social, historical, cultural and political context

Centres were advised in last year's report to ensure candidates did not include too much factual information regarding the play's social, historical, cultural and political context.

There was again a great deal of factual information that often came directly from the introductions to frequently used editions, Wikipedia or the introductory paragraphs in popular monologue/duologue anthologies. This information frequently did not enable candidates to show understanding of the text in context. Candidates who achieved in this section captured how their knowledge and understanding of these factors has impacted on their performance. Not all four need to be covered but candidates should make a choice of those that are most relevant to their individual performance.

Preparation process

Overall this was stronger than in previous series.

There was a clearer focus on what each individual candidate actually did rather than general statements such as 'Hot seating was helpful'. Choosing significant moments was most successful in communicating the preparation process. Where there had been group activities led by the teacher candidates needed to detail their own individual involvement.

Intended interpretation

In previous series it was felt that where candidates had annotated the text to be performed this could be an effective way of indicating intentions for performance rather than including it in the rationale. However this year examiners report that often annotation alone did not clarify the intended interpretation and some further detail was needed to achieve in the higher mark bands.

There remains considerable concern about the number of candidates either detailing what they would be wearing and using as a set or what they would like to wear and have as a set. Within the constraints of the 500 word limit this information does not support the requirements of the criteria.

Centres are reminded that this final work submitted to the examiner must be completed under supervised conditions in line with Unit 1.

Duologue candidates must ensure that their rationale is individual with the focus on their character in the performance. Examiners report that although duologue candidates had worked together the centre must ensure that the response is personal and individual. It must focus on their individual role.

The challenge of the rationale is for candidates to capture all the above within the word limit but again this needs to build on the work done in Unit 1 in selecting the most relevant material.

It is disappointing to report again this year many examiners felt that some of this work had been poorly prepared and that centres had still not considered that it is worth 25% of the marks for this section.

The majority of rationales were received 7 working days in advance of the examination. Examiners are required to read and mark all the Written Performance Concepts before the examination sessions.

Teachers are not required to mark the WPCs or make any comments on them before sending to the examiner.

There were a few instances where candidates wrote about their Section B role. This cannot be awarded any marks.

Audiences

Centres are reminded that this is an examination worth 30% of the AS marks. It must take place under examination conditions. It has a different focus than that of the group performance in Section B.

In some centres just the examiner and teacher plus a technician making the recording were present.

The majority of centres had the other Section A candidates present. Some had also other students, friends and family. The most supportive audience was felt to be other drama students and teachers.

It will always remain centre choice for the size and composition of the audience but examiners report that most centres ensured the examination process ran smoothly.

Examiners must mark and make notes after each performance. A few examiners felt pressured to have as little time as possible between candidates.

Centres are strongly advised to allow approximately 5 minutes per monologue and 10 minutes per duologue when planning the examination session. This was detailed in The Instructions for The Conduct 2011. It is pleasing to report that the vast majority of centres put this in place this year.

Design Candidates

There were fewer design candidates this year than in any previous series. All skills were seen. It was felt that again this year both lighting and sound were the most challenging for candidates. There was in general a positive response to the 500 word design concept; examiners felt this may be due to the requirement to also have the documentation. It was clear that the majority of design candidates that did well in Section A had engaged with the complete play text.

The 10 minute presentation should be the candidate talking about their written design concept and documentation not reading them to the examiner. Centres must ensure all the documentation can clearly be seen in the recording. This can be done outside the actual candidate presentation. This is to ensure it can be seen as part of the monitoring process and in the case of an enquiry after results.

It was clear that choosing this option had been a positive choice for the relatively few candidates who took this option.

Section B

Overall it was felt that the standard of work seen in previous series of Section B performances was maintained in 2011.

Overall the examining team reported that the choice of material used in previous series was seen again this year. It is clear that the majority of centres entering candidates have teacher/directors who have prepared candidates for the group performance in previous series. However many examiners report very positively on work seen where the teacher had informed them that this was the first time they had prepared students for a group performance.

Examiners report there was good level of understanding of the requirements of group performance and the majority of candidates were very well prepared to both achieve in the examination and enjoy the experience of creating live theatre performance for an audience.

Again this year examiners report that there were some candidates being poorly prepared by centres for this unit and producing work that did not meet AS standards. There was evidence of candidates not making the individual effort needed to achieve at a higher level. This was usually evidenced by lack of security with the text and the overall interpretation.

Often it was clear in the performance that there was little evidence of these candidates having been taught the required skills. Often the choice of text had not been chosen to support the skill level and interest of the students.

It is disappointing to report again that some centres continue to ignore the requirements of the specification in terms of group size and length of performance. These are clearly stated in both the specification and The Instructions for Conduct 2011. Examiners reported again this year that they could not understand why centres had potentially disadvantaged their candidates by not ensuring that the specification was adhered to for group performance.

This was most often seen in small groups for example a group of 3 performing for well over 30 minutes.

Whatever the group size examiners felt candidates could achieve by performing towards the lower time limit as it enabled performances to have sustained energy and focus.

Centres must understand that all examiners are instructed to stop examining at the maximum time limit as stated in the ICE. This is also true for any monitoring of performances and marks by the senior team before marks are entered and for any remarking in the EARs procedures.

Group Size and Performance Time

This is now clearly stated in the specification, ICE and on the group performance front sheets that must be signed by the teacher. Many examiners report that this was signed by the teacher but the estimated performance time given well exceeded this. If centres did not comply with this requirement it disadvantaged candidates.

Centres are reminded that examiners are not required to remain in the examination room after the maximum time for each performance.

The main concern was when performances were clearly overlong and some candidates had not appeared at all until sometime after the maximum time limit. There were examples where strong performances could not be awarded marks for work that was outside the maximum time.

Centres are reminded once again that this is an examination and that very short and overlong performances do not meet the requirements of the group performance examination.

There were a very few non examination candidates taking part in examination performances. There is concern where centres do this as it clearly disadvantages candidates as these students take up time and examiner focus that must be for examination candidates.

The Text as Performed

It is a requirement to provide a copy of the text as performed. It is perfectly acceptable to send the published text with cuts clearly indicated. Some centres sent the text within a collection and this is also acceptable. A few centres requested the return of the text from the examiner. This is not possible as the texts must be enclosed with all other material for this

section to be sent to Edexcel to support any subsequent senior examiner who may need to view the work.

It is disappointing to report again this year that there were performances that did not meet the requirements of Section B. There were cases where a copy of the text as performed was sent in advance to the examiner but it was not the text as published but included extra dialogue including scenes and roles that were not in the original.

Of considerably greater concern was when in performance there was devised work that the examiner had not expected. These could be 'pre-shows' or improvised dialogue inserted in the performance. This created considerable extra work for examiners and members of the senior team in monitoring these performances. No marks will be awarded to any devised work.

In the 2010 report there was concern where the original text had been considerably rearranged so the narrative and form of the original were not seen in performance.

This was not seen this year.

Audiences

Centres must ensure that an audience that will support the group performance is present as all candidates are awarded 25% of the marks on communication with other cast and audience members. Again this year there were some examples of audience members using mobile phones, calling out inappropriate remarks, moving about the performance space or not understanding the nature of the performance. Some audience members were sat too close to examiners and when this occurred it was usually because the audience numbers were greater than expected.

Centres are reminded that this is an examination and that the candidates and examination process must be the focus of the Section B performance. Some examiners report that the needs of the audience took precedence over the examination and this did not support candidates.

Centres are reminded that any performance other than the examination performance will have copyright implications.

However the majority of audiences engaged with the performances and their positive and focused response clearly enhanced the whole experience.

Choice of Texts

It is good to report again this year that many examiners report very positively about the variety and suitability of texts. The choice of text to enable candidates to meet the requirements of the examination and their skills and interests is the foundation for achievement in this section. It is clear there are a number of texts that work very well and centres are using them again but giving them new and unique interpretations. Examiners also report again this year that much new and exciting contemporary work both written in English and in translation was seen.

Plays that have the episodic form worked particularly well giving the teacher director the flexibility to choose episodes that supported all candidates.

Examiners report that stylised and physical approaches to performance work was felt to advantage candidates at this level. More naturalistic performances often started well but could lack pace and dynamism. This may be due to candidates not rising to the challenge of this style of performance within a live theatre context.

However many examiners report that there are some texts, often those written with no designated roles, that did not always support candidates in achieving in the examination.

They could be effective productions enjoyed and appreciated by the audiences. However, examiners must be able to clearly identify each candidate's contribution to the performance.

Centres must ensure that all candidates have the opportunity to demonstrate in performance their skills of characterisation.

Centres are reminded that the choice of text is their responsibility. Centres must consider very carefully the suitability of the content or the language of the text.

Again this year there were some examples of a full length text being divided into 2 or more performance groups. Examiners who saw this work report that this does disadvantage candidates.

A few centres performed a complete text or extract from a full length play but asked examiners to award marks to candidates in only a section of the performance. This does not meet the requirements of the specification. This presented an enormous challenge for examiners to have the correct focus on the examined candidates. It also makes too great a demand on candidates to be involved in performance work for which they cannot be awarded marks. These performances often included non examination candidates.

The Teacher Director's Interpretation Notes

Most examiners report that the majority of centres understand that along with the choice of text this is an important aspect of success in this unit. Centres are reminded that in the group performance candidates are not marked on their understanding of the director's concept but on their individual characterisation in performance.

It was reported in last year's report that examiners found the most supportive notes had a focus on the individual roles. Many examiners report there was an increase in this approach this year and that it was very supportive to their preparation for the examination.

As reported last year the most successful performances demonstrated that candidates had been engaged in the overall director's interpretation and their roles within it. Less successful performances often seemed not to go much beyond cutting the text and candidates learning the lines and delivering them.

The most useful notes were written collaboratively by the candidates and director.

Centres should consider that the notes are used by the examiner to look for the key elements in each performance. An extract does not meet the requirements of the unit.

There is not the requirement of the text being at least 60 minutes in performance length that is a requirement of Section A. It must meet all other requirements of being professionally published, substantial and written for theatre performance

Performance Candidates

This was the option taken by the majority of candidates. Work was seen across the complete mark range. There were again this year candidates who work with such skill, enthusiasm and commitment that performances were seen that fully deserved marks in the top bands.

It was clear centres have given the majority of candidates a well-structured preparation period and a final examination that had a real sense of both occasion and theatre.

Examiners report again this year that there was a great deal of evidence of the acquisition of both movement and vocal skills that were then seen in performance.

Centres are reminded that examiners can only award marks for the criteria printed in the specification. Performances that enabled examiners to concentrate on these were most suitable for examination success. The use of costume, make up and effects whether there were design candidates or not often enhanced the group performances. In other centres it was felt there was too high a reliance on these and it detracted from the candidates focus on their performance.

There were again a very few instances where candidates were not present at the examination performance due to ill health or personal circumstances. Other candidates, students from other year groups, ex students and teachers all stood in to support candidates. Most centres contacted the examiner as soon as possible in advance to give details of the situation prior to the performance

Design Candidates

There were very few design candidates again this year. The vast majority of centres had none. In some centres there was only one. In larger centres often with Performing Arts status and/or the input of theatre technicians there was evidence that candidates had had the opportunity to work creatively with individual groups.

Examiners reported that it had clearly been a positive choice for these candidates. There was some excellent work which clearly demonstrated that the candidates had been given opportunities to have a real creative input working with the director on realising the production ideas. Some candidates took on more than one skill and showed an understanding of the whole production values of the performance. Many were very good examples of how to achieve much on a limited budget.

There were again some candidates who had not understood the requirements of this option and produced poorly considered and executed work that failed to add anything to the overall performance.

There were also some design candidates who chose a single skill. It was felt that there was no advantage in either approach.

Those performance groups with more than one design candidate usually demonstrated they had worked creatively together and with the director and performers. There were a very few instances where examiners felt the candidates were the director's technicians rather than having the opportunity to design the work for their chosen skill[s].

The presentations to the examiner varied in quality. Some candidates gave poor presentations but their work was effective in performance. Some gave confident presentations but the ideas were not seen in performance

Centres had the option of pre-recording the presentations which the examiner must view prior to the performance. This may also advantage candidates who are actively involved with the performance e.g. lighting or costume. Some presentations took place in the performance space prior to the audience coming in, others in another room. This is entirely centre choice and it was felt there was no advantage in either approach.

The vast majority of performance groups have no design candidates but worked with the teacher director to ensure that the performance values enhance the work.

All options are fairly equally represented with the exception of masks/makeup. Many candidates used technology to provide often very impressive projection and sound work.

Administration of 6DR02

Requirements

Centres must ensure they put in place the requirements for this unit as detailed in the Instructions for Conduct. This essential document is only available on the Edexcel website for this specification. No hard copies will be sent. The ICE is revised each year in the light of both examiners and teachers suggestions to ensure that the administration of the unit is clear to all centres. It also includes all the documentation needed for this unit.

Centres are reminded that it is wholly the centre's responsibility to ensure that any Edexcel representatives are accompanied at all times when with candidates.

Timing of the Examination

Most centres were contacted by their examiners at the beginning of the spring term. Most dates and times were swiftly and efficiently arranged. Some centres failed to respond to examiners contacting them and this often led to the first choice of date or time for the centre not being possible. Edexcel cannot give out examiner details to centres. There were several cases of centres losing examiner details and not arranging dates as soon as possible.

There were fewer centres which did not fix all dates at the same time. In a few cases this did result in either different examiners conducting the examination session or no examiner was available so work was examined on the DVD recording.

Centres must have some flexibility in arranging the examination date and time. Edexcel cannot find alternative examiners for centres who insist on rigid times and dates.

Centres must not contact Edexcel directly as it results in unnecessary work for the examiners and the Edexcel Deployment Team.

There were cases this year where examiners were unable to fulfil all their arranged visits but in most cases another examiner was able to attend.

The examination period is between the 1st of February to the last Friday before the late May Bank Holiday Monday. No extensions can be granted.

The very late Easter break plus the extra bank holiday meant that this year exam sessions took place every week from the first week in February to the evening of the 27th May.

There was an increase in centres requesting the last 2 weeks of May. This was often small centres who only had one session so both Sections A and B were examined together.

In fewer centres this year was Section A the first to be examined. Examiners report that there seemed to be an increase in centres doing Section B first.

As the timing of the exam sessions is entirely a centre issue there was felt to be no advantage in when centres completed each section.

Again the vast majority of performances took place in the evenings giving a sense of occasion and enabling an appropriate audience to attend. This is an examination that happens to be a performance but it is the examination requirements that must be the focus. When arrangements are made with the examiner the timings of performances and time to identify candidates and consider marks must be agreed in advance and adhered to on the visit. Examiners report being kept waiting due to late arrival of audience members or being rushed by centres between performances. This must be addressed by centres. The vast majority of centres ensured that both the examination was well run and performers and audience had a very positive experience.

Centre Administration

It seems that every year examiners report that the standard of administration of this paper before, during and after the examination visit was poor by many centres. The centres which completed the documentation were often exemplary and understood this cannot be done in a rush at the last minute.

Again a great deal of the required paperwork was incomplete, inaccurate, late or non-existent until the examiner's arrival in the centre. Examiners are required to come well prepared for the examination and cannot do so without this vital information. This was particularly true for Section A.

Every Section A performance candidate must have completed the following; an examiner mark sheet completed with all the details required, the written rationale, a copy of the text as performed with any annotations. Centres were instructed to have available the complete text prior to the performances in the centre. Many centres did not have all the texts available. Several examiners had to request that the texts be sent to them after the exam session. Centres must ensure that all candidates understand it is their individual responsibility to have the complete text they have studied available at the exam session.

Examiners were instructed to arrive 30 minutes prior to the first performance/presentation so texts can be looked at during this time.

Some centres did not send maps expecting examiners to find the centre directions on the Internet. This was unhelpful as particularly in the evening examiners could not easily locate the actual venue of the examination on the site. Again several centres held the exam at another venue but had not informed the examiner. Again this year examiners report wandering around sites attempting to find someone who can direct them to the examination venue within the centre.

There was again this year concern that the time management of the examination by the centres was poor at times. There is flexibility in how centres organise the sessions but the total number of sessions as detailed in the Instructions for Conduct must be adhered to and cannot be extended.

Some examiners arrived at the centre at the agreed time and were waiting for a considerable time before meeting the candidates. Overlong performances and late running again meant that some examiners and candidates were completing an examination very late. There was equal concern that some examiners were given very little time to consider their marking between performances.

Having agreed timings with the examiner prior to the visit these must be adhered to by both the centre and the examiner.

It is acknowledged that at times examiners are unable to do this by arriving late or taking longer than agreed between performances. Should centres have concerns in this respect they should inform Edexcel as soon as possible after the examination and their concerns will be addressed. Examiners should be provided with a contact number for the examination visit should they be unavoidably delayed. In this case the examination should not be delayed but the examiner will review the work in the recorded format.

Again this year it would be unfair to give the impression that this lack of thought applied to the majority of centres. Most completed all administration very well and the examination was run with professionalism throughout.

As part of the monitoring of examiners and maintenance of the national standard all examiners had an accompanied visit with their Team Leader. Some centres also had visits from members of the senior team. This is an important part of the ongoing monitoring of examiners for the practical performance units. This extra requirement was dealt with by most centres with understanding and a high level of professionalism. Although these visits should not have affected the running time of the examination in some cases it did occur and Edexcel apologises for this.

The Importance of the Recording of the Performances/Presentations

It was made clear in the Instructions for Conduct 2011 that it is a requirement that an unobstructed view of both section A and B

performances is in place so just the performances and not the examiner and audience are seen in the recording. This was not achieved in the recordings from many centres.

It is felt that some centres still do not understand the importance of the very best possible recording being made of all performances and presentations. In order to maintain the standard of the examination and to monitor examiner's work throughout the process, many centres' work is viewed by the senior team. Centres should be aware that the senior team will make checks on centre's work both during and after the examination period.

Section A work was overall the best recorded again this year. However some centres tended to use too many close up shots of candidates faces. Centres are reminded that the recording should capture as far as possible the experience of the examiner viewing the live performance

Section B all too often the camera was not placed close to the examiner and was frequently so far back from the performance that the candidates could not be identified. Another common mistake was the examiner and audience heads taking up most of the frame. If there is a large performance space and scenes are performed in different areas the camera should pan in order to record the complete performance.

If the person operating the camera knows the piece some judicious use of close ups can be useful in capturing individual performances. It is vital that the camera operator monitors the complete performances as there were examples where some of the performances were not captured in the recordings.

Design presentations must be made to the camera and the examiner will sit next to it. Some examiners felt that candidates expected them to ask them questions as they looked at the documentation. Examiners will look at this evidence after the presentation but will not question candidates. Design presentations can be pre recorded and will be viewed by the examiner prior to the performance along with the documentation.

All documentation must also be recorded. This can be done before or after the presentation to the examiner.

Centres must also keep a copy of the recorded examination work. The recording sent to Edexcel via the examiner is the basis of any Enquiries after Results procedures and is used in the monitoring of all examiner's marking.

There was a considerable difference in the completion of the time sheets. Many centres had completed this task meticulously but there were others who had clearly not checked the recordings or completed a time sheet when sending the recordings to the examiner.

It is of importance that centres check the quality of the recordings and make comments on the quality of the recording. Examiners are not required to check the quality of the recording.

Centres must check all performances/presentations in their entirety for the correct timings and the quality of the recording. This was clearly not done by many centres. Missing or poor quality recordings of performances mean that work cannot be checked prior to marks being entered or reviewed as part of the Post Results service.

Centres must ensure that the DVD can be played on a standard domestic player.

When DVDs would not play it was often due to the fact that the DVD had not been finalised.

Examiners will not use computers to view the work. Centres must ensure each presentation/performance is given a chapter. However the time sheet must also be completed to document the actual timings on the recordings.

It is a requirement that all DVDs must be sent in a hard protective case. This was frequently not done so DVDs were damaged in transit.

Good practice was when centres sent each group performance on a separate DVD.

The time to send the recording to the visiting examiner was extended this year to being within ten working days. It is disappointing to report that

again this year many centres did not meet this new deadline. Examiners are not required to chase up recordings but must send all documentation to Edexcel after each examination as the breakdown of the total mark needs to be entered so that they can be put into the system for the ResultsPlus service.

Recordings that were not received within the time limit were either returned to the Examinations Officer at the centre or Edexcel was informed that an EAR or monitoring check will not be possible.

However many centres sent excellent recordings and these often were produced either by professional companies or highly skilled operators within centres, both staff and students.

It could be disappointing when examiners reported seeing exciting and interesting performances of high quality where the quality of the recording failed to capture the performance.

All centres should consider the value of having a permanent record of this work and ensure that the best quality recording is made.

Identification of Candidates on the Recordings

The following information is in line with that in previous series.

Section A

This was completed very well by the majority of centres who clearly understood that it was the equivalent of completing the front sheet of an examination paper.

Immediately before each monologue/duologue the candidate(s) must give their name, candidate number, role, title of play text and author.

Design candidates must give their name, number, design skill, text and author.

A colour full length photograph in costume of each candidate is particularly helpful. Both together for duologues.

There were still some centres which recorded all introductions in a line up before the first candidate. This was not helpful in identifying individuals in

the recordings particularly when they were not recorded in what they wore in performance. This must not be done in future.

Some centres recorded the introductions in small groups of 4 and 5. Again this must not be done in the future.

The examiner will not need to speak with any Section A candidates so the formal introduction to camera is also the identification for the examiner.

Section B

This was done well by many centres.

Identification as in Section A plus description of any costume changes with the additional costumes being shown in the recording was the best way to complete the introductions.

Without exception examiners commented on how less stressful it was for all involved if candidate identification was swift to complete. It also greatly aided the viewing of work later in the process when in the recorded format. Some candidates introduced themselves and posed in character for the final group identification long shot. This was seen as good practice.

Centres must ensure that all candidates introduce themselves immediately before their performance or presentation, as it will appear on the recording. This can be pre-recorded and edited in by the centre ensuring candidates appear as they will in performance and seen from top to toe not head and shoulders.

Examiners for section B may also wish to identify candidates informally just before the performance.

Design candidates must state clearly and slowly the centre name and number followed by their name, candidate number, chosen skill(s), and the performance title and group number. It can be helpful if they have the centre name and number, their name and candidate number written clearly on paper and held up to camera.

Performance candidates must line up in their performance group. It can be helpful when this is done in order of appearance. The first candidate must state clearly and slowly the centre name and number, the date of the performance followed by the performance title and group number.

All candidates must then state clearly and slowly their name and candidate number, role(s) played and give verbal description of all costumes worn in the performance. It is helpful if there are costume changes if any costumes worn later are shown to the camera. It can be helpful if their name and candidate number and role(s) played are written clearly on paper and held up to the camera.

The camera must then record them as a group in long shot. It can be helpful if they repeat their name and roles played. The group shot must be held for enough time for someone watching the recording to clearly identify them all. This is the equivalent of completing the front sheet of a written paper.

Centres are strongly encouraged to provide the visiting examiner with a group colour photograph for each performance on arrival prior to the examination.

On the examiner candidate mark sheets candidates should give detailed written descriptions of how they will appear in the performance, both physical appearance and costume. Small head and shoulder shots must not be attached to the form as they have proved to be of limited use in aiding identification and can be time consuming and expensive for centres.

Consortium Centres

Again this year there were some difficulties with centres, which had not completed the Consortium Information Forms available in the ICE document. The completed forms must be sent to Edexcel as early as possible in the academic year. For all candidates being examined not in their registered centre the examiner must be informed beforehand and 2 copies of separate register must be provided giving full details of 'home' centre name, number, candidate name and number.

This information must also be detailed on the DVD or videotape.

However most consortium centres completed this well this year.

Conclusion

Centres will recognise much of this report in that it details concerns in relation to administration issues that were reported in previous series. However most examiners reported back in detail that the same concerns are still in evidence and are not being addressed by some centres.

Centres are reminded of the importance of following the specification and also The Instructions for Conduct document. The 2012 Instructions for Conduct will be on the website in the autumn term.

Training from Edexcel

There will be face to face inset meetings to support Unit 2 again this year. Edexcel can also provide customised inset for individual centres or groups of centres.

Ask the Expert

This service has proved to be very busy and popular with queries regarding many aspects of the specification. Many for unit 2 asked for suggestions or approval for texts for both sections. It is Edexcel policy to neither recommend nor approve texts although the choice of text is important, many other factors are involved in successful performance work. Much depends on the skills and interests of both the teachers and candidates.

Enquiries after Results Service

This is completed by members of the senior examining team using all materials available from the examiners and centres as sent to Edexcel shortly after the examination. It is requested and completed on a single candidate by candidate basis. There is a charge for this service. Centres are reminded that marks can be adjusted down as well as up so candidate permission must be gained before requesting this service.

Copies of examiner mark sheets can also be requested. There is also a charge for this service.

Examinations officers will have all the details.

It is very positive to report that overwhelmingly the reports from the large and experienced examining team confirm that the standard seen in Unit 2 was much in line with that of 2010.

It was felt that the highly successful group performance standard in Section B has continued. Examiners felt it still achieved a great deal beyond its requirements as the AS Text in Performance.

There was felt to be an improvement in the achievement by candidates in the higher mark bands for Section A. Candidates seemed better prepared, perhaps reflecting a change in the amount of time centres gave to teaching Section A skills. It seemed more candidates had made positive and teacher guided choices in the texts and roles chosen.

Overall this produced for most candidates a better balance in their achievement across the complete unit.

Examiners report that again they have found engaging in the wide range of work presented for both sections of Unit 2 highly enjoyable.

It must be reported again this year that much of the credit for this is due to the continuing commitment and understanding of this unit by the teacher directors in their centres. All over the United Kingdom and overseas they have enabled a very wide range of candidates to not only achieve in this AS GCE examination but also give these young people a very real sense of achievement engaging in the creative group process to create vibrant and stimulating theatre for the twenty first century.

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