

# Chief Examiner's Report

## Summer 2010

GCE

### GCE Performing Arts

Cash-in: AS 8781 and A2 9781

Units: 6980, 6981, 6982, 6983, 6984, 6985 and 6986

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# Contents

1. General comments .....	pg 4
1. Key messages .....	pg 4
2. REPORT ON THE 2010 SERIES	
a. Moderation arrangements .....	pg 5
b. OPTEMS forms .....	pg 5
c. Recording of practical units .....	pg 6
d. Portfolios.....	pg 6
e. Practical units three and seven .....	pg 6
3. UNIT DETAILS FOR THE 2010 SERIES	
a. Unit one .....	pg 7
b. Unit two .....	pg 8
c. Unit three .....	pg9
d. Unit four .....	pg 11
e. Units five and six .....	pg 12
f. Unit six .....	pg 14
g. Unit seven .....	pg 15
5. Grade boundaries .....	pg 18

## GENERAL COMMENTS

This was the first year for the revised specification involving assessment of all units against the four band mark scheme rather than the former three band model. It was anticipated that the wider range of marks, linked more directly to the Assessment Objectives, and evidence requirement would result in a broader spread of marks across the specification nationally. This would appear to have not been the case and it was apparent that many centre assessors were marking against the previous years' cohort and in some cases against the published grade boundaries. Despite this the moderation process corrected the assessments to ensure that more realistic grade boundaries were achieved.

Enthusiasm for the specification has not been affected by the revisions, despite the inclusion of process documentation to accompany practical units three and seven. Although the written components resulted in more work for candidates and tutors they provided valuable evidence to differentiate between candidates and presented moderators with a more detailed insight into the nature of the practical work that they would be watching.

The content free nature of the specification continues to produce a very wide range of course programmes offered across the country. There are still some centres that have not recognised that the specification is not a syllabus but an assessment structure for the essential skills required in the performing arts industry.

## KEY MESSAGES

The following are repeated problems that continue to occur and need addressing in some centres.

1. Candidates should NOT create portfolios in any other format than A4 [unless they are offering design skills] and NOT decorate their work [this type of approach is not indicative of AS/A level study - it is ONLY the content that matters].
2. OPTEMS forms should be completed for all Portfolio units [1, 2, 4, 5 and 6] and sent off to Edexcel at least one week prior to the moderation visit. Yellow copies should be retained with the work for the moderator.
3. All written components for units 3 and 7 should be marked prior to the moderation visit and all candidate work available for moderators.
4. Practical performances [3, 5 and 7] MUST be recorded and candidates MUST be identified at the start of performances.
5. The unit 5 recording [in the correct format] MUST be available for the moderator and sent to the Principal Moderator for the unit immediately after the visit.
6. Recordings of units 3 and 7 must be sent to the Principal Moderator no later than ONE WEEK after the visit in the correct format.
7. Centres assessors should not apply only the grading criteria within the grid but also refer to the assessment guidance following each grid. Annotation on

candidate work should indicate where marks have been credited against the criteria.

8. For units 3 and 7 centres should adhere to the rubric concerning the running time of the performances.
9. When more than one teacher in a centre marks candidates it is important to carry out internal standardisation/cross marking.
10. Moderation visit dates **MUST** be **NEGOTIATED** with centres.
11. Moderators must be provided with a private space in which to sample candidate work.
12. Candidates should avoid web downloads unless they are absolutely essential to specific points they wish to discuss.

## REPORT ON THE 2010 SERIES

Much of the following is identical to the previous series but is worth repeating.

### MODERATION ARRANGEMENTS

The moderation process was again straightforward this year with very few centres using the old assessment grids. The moderation window was again April 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> June with the majority of centres opting for late May early June. Very few centres had organised dates without consultation with moderators but it is worth re-iterating that the moderation date is to be agreed with their moderator through **negotiation** and that centres should **not** decide on dates and assume that the moderator will be available. Similarly when dates and times have been agreed they **must not** be altered unless the moderator agrees.

It should also be noted that whilst it is very beneficial to have an audience for the practical work, units 3 and 7 are examinations and the requirements of the specification **MUST** take precedence over audience considerations.

### OPTEMS FORMS

Most centres understood the OPTEMS forms this year apart from the continued failure by many to include the yellow copies for units 3 and 7 with the recording of the practical work.

The procedure remains as follows: Centres must complete OPTEMS forms for units 1, 2, 4 and 5/6 **prior** to the moderation visit and **send the white top copy to Edexcel at least a week** before the agreed visit date. The **yellow copies** of the OPTEMS forms should be **with the candidates' portfolios** to enable the moderator to select an appropriate sample. **Yellow copies** of the completed OPTEMS forms for units **three and seven** must be sent **with the recording** of the practical work to the Chief Examiner **within seven days** of the candidates' final performance.

## RECORDING OF PRACTICAL UNITS

After the practical examination centres **MUST** send within seven working days a copy of the recording for units 3 and 7 to the Chief Examiner together with their marked yellow copy of the OPTEMS for each unit. The recording of unit 5 performances must be sent to the Principal Moderator immediately after the moderation visit.

Many centres still failed to identify candidates at the start of the performances and there were also still a number of centres submitting candidate work on digital tape which cannot be used. Given the frequency of poor recordings it is worth repeating the key factors that must be adhered to.

Firstly the recording must be on an **appropriate format**. The most suitable is on DVD in a **Windows Media Player** format. If centres only have access to video tape recorders then **standard VHS** format is essential. It is important that candidates are wearing the same costume that they use in the performance and that they state their name and candidate number and preferably the role/roles that they are playing at the start. Since candidate's concentration and performance preparation could be disrupted it is advisable that the identification process is carried out prior to the actual performance but obviously at the beginning of the tape that will be used to record the work.

It is likely that in future, failure to comply with this very clear instruction will be considered an infringement of the examination rubric and treated accordingly.

## PORTFOLIOS

All portfolios must be available for the visiting moderator and these must be marked by the centres assessor[s] and internally validated where necessary. The centre marking should indicate where candidate's work has been credited against the criteria through **suitable annotation**. Moderators again reported that many centres had managed this very effectively using the appropriate front sheet [available on-line] and noted that the moderation process was as efficient as last year. In most centres a **private area** had been arranged for the portfolio moderation and it should be stressed that this is an **essential** requirement.

For units five and six it is important to remind centres that the recorded evidence of the advanced performance/production product must be available with the portfolios and suitable technology available to view the work.

Candidates should be discouraged from submitting work in any other format than A4 and **must not use plastic envelopes**. The content is the only material that moderators will consider and candidate decoration of folders and **unfiltered internet down-loads add nothing** to the final mark.

The only candidates who need to work outside this framework are those offering design skills where plans and/or design sketches might be larger than A4 format.

## PRACTICAL UNITS THREE AND SEVEN

Once again moderators reported that they had viewed a wide range and diversity of performance work both in the application of performance styles and techniques and the creative responses to the commission briefs. No style of performance was dominant and

every conceivable skill appeared to be demonstrated within a very balanced choice of commission brief.

For unit seven most centres seem to now understand the focus of the unit but it is worth stating once again that this is **not a devising unit** and candidates should focus on developing their own interpretation of an existing piece from the performance repertoire.

## UNIT DETAILS FOR THE 2010 SERIES

### UNIT ONE (6980) : - EXPLORING SKILLS FOR PERFORMANCE

This is a process unit and not about what candidates do in their particular course of study. This point has been emphasised in every Chief Examiner's report since the specification was launched yet many centres still fail to appreciate the focus that is required.

The portfolio of evidence must demonstrate that candidates can create a relevant programme for developing clearly defined and individually focused skills through regular application; monitor their own progress and determine the next stages in the process. The skills audit has more prominence in the revised specification and given that this will reveal different individual needs it is expected that candidates will be working independently of whatever teaching programme is being delivered; this will normally require a degree of time allocated to monitor candidates' progress through a tutorial programme.

In this unit, moderators noted that they saw the full range of work from very secure responses detailing programmes created for developing specific skills to very weak portfolios that simply described a series of lessons.

Candidates need to approach the unit as potential professionals with appropriate behaviour and attitudes; these should then relate to their own working practice within the programme of development. Throughout this unit, candidates need to assess the improvement of their skills and enhance their awareness of the process.

There was again an increased use of video recording by candidates to evidence their practical application but it should be noted that these should not be 'snapshots' of ability but evidence of regular application, reflection and development. The most effective recordings were those in which candidates spoke directly to the camera to explain what they were attempting and then demonstrated practical application.

There was again more evidence of individual and personal focus from each learner along with a sense of ownership once skills had been clearly defined and a realistic programme devised.

The strongest candidates demonstrated how research had been used to inform their practical development programme but weaker candidates still submitted masses of unfiltered downloads and, often inappropriate, theoretical facts. Strong responses included reference to personal health and safety as well as risk assessment in the work place that demonstrated the relevant professional approach.

Most centres appreciated the essential requirement to produce an initial skills audit and these often revealed the skills deficit that the candidate intended to explore. Some audits were still presented as simplistic tick boxes that were of very limited value, to those that required candidates to examine in detail how good they were in specific areas and by definition what they needed to improve. Many of the strongest audits were created showing examples of a diagnostic phase implemented by the centre during the induction period at the start of the course which allowed them to set personal targets for the candidates.

In the weaker portfolios there was still a tendency to produce evidence that focused on knowledge of the industry or practitioners, accompanied by academic research, rather than the documentation of individual candidate's acquisition and application of skills. Candidates with marks in the top band showed excellent working practices and rigorous self management often including witness statements as supportive evidence. Weaker candidates also still described lesson content revealing very limited self management.

Within the evaluations weaker candidates discussed performances, lessons or workshops they had been involved in, often evaluating learning outcomes, rather than how skills had been developed. Stronger candidates developed highly personal evaluations showing independent thought and analysis of the process which referred back to the initial audit and revealing an understanding of the process and how it could extend to other skill areas.

## **UNIT TWO (6981) : - PLANNING FOR A CREATIVE EVENT**

The inclusion of the word 'creative' in the unit title resulted in some very imaginative internal and external events which made the project a real and relevant learning experience for candidates whilst creating opportunities to map the delivery against the demands of the specification. There were, however, still a few centres reported where candidates took part in their own event; their involvement generated no marks and should be discouraged as the essential focus on planning was often diluted.

Moderators reported that most responses presented the report section of the portfolio in the correct format i.e. retrospectively rather than as a statement of intentions. The marks awarded for this element were dependent on the degree of detail that each report provided. Again, when candidates had organized the document into the three distinct sections of report, action plan and evaluation of process the portfolios were most successful.

Since the individual action plan constituted 50% of the marks for the unit it was important that candidates ensured that this was sufficiently thorough and detailed. The best responses demonstrated clearly the roles and responsibilities of the group, provided an over-arching action plan with target dates and review points and then showed how their own action plan integrated with the main strategy.

The strongest responses were once again those where candidates had been given a clearly defined event that required planning and were able to focus on the demands of the process and subsequently report effectively on their work. The choice of event remains crucial in terms of engaging candidates and providing the range of planning opportunities and relevant roles.



The strongest action plans were those in which individual projections were based on the over-arching group plan. There were still a significant number of candidates who failed to define clearly their projected timescales for the task they had been allocated.

In most portfolios candidates had made reference to the areas of performance, production and administration and where links were then made to an individual candidate's role this facilitated action planning, review and evaluation.

The evaluation element of the unit was more focused this year by many candidates and there were fewer that discussed the success of the event rather than the effectiveness of the planning process.

The stronger centres again incorporated a fully realised vocational context including reference to health and safety legislation and sound professional practice.

Few centres presented candidates' work without appropriate annotation and there was less evidence of candidates decorating folders. At this level work should be presented in an A4 format in a formal and professional manner.

### **UNIT THREE (6982) : - PERFORMING TO A COMMISSION**

Moderators reported the usual range of responses across all disciplines to the commission briefs and the corresponding range of ability evident. Where candidates had worked closely in an ensemble and had approached the commission in an imaginative and inventive manner the quality of the product was often totally engaging displaying skills beyond those expected at the AS level.

Responses to the commission briefs were very comparable to the previous series but centres had again benefited from previous moderation discussions, centre feedback and the Chief Examiners report. Consequently the approach adopted by centres, with a similar cohort of candidates, was again more focused and effective. Most centres ensured that the realisation of the brief was approached in a professional manner to create a polished performance targeted at a specific audience and with a clearly defined intended impact. There were some highly inventive and at times provocative works created that had been clearly challenging for the candidates.

Very few centres presented the work without appropriate audiences and this often helped candidates to raise the level of their individual performances. A few centres, however, did not pay sufficient attention to production values and there were reports of some very 'messy' starts, and ends, to the work and some inappropriate audiences.

More centres opted for commission two, the TIE style brief, than in previous years and many of the performances were highly effective and employed the key features of the genre such as an excellent in-the-round, physical theatre, piece that explored the dangers of addiction to internet gaming technology. Musical theatre and dance productions were again very popular and the number of pure dance productions continued to increase.

There were still a significant number of centres that had not monitored the maximum and minimum time limits for the work and this was usually to the detriment of the candidates. In pieces that were too short candidates were not always able to demonstrate fully their abilities whilst over long productions often failed to engage the audience throughout. Centres should ensure that the productions are between 15

minutes and one hour; with smaller groups [three and four] adhering to the shorter time and groups above ten using the full sixty minutes.

Most performances were effective responses to the commissions but weaker groups again often created performances that were simplistic in concept and lacked adequate research into the subject matter. Naturalistic material again depended more on the abilities of the candidates as script writers rather than performers. It was also reported again that less successful candidates often attempted to create realistic characters outside their playing range, such as parents to older children, and this is rarely successful apart from the most talented performers.

As in previous years the work was presented in a very wide range of spaces and venues depending upon the style or purpose of the performance. Venues ranged from centres' own studios to site specific performances; the use of local theatres, performances in primary schools and outdoor spaces were also seen. Similarly every conceivable performance layout from 'promenade' to 'space staging' was again experienced by moderators and candidates' creative use of resources was very impressive.

With very few exceptions moderators were impressed with the commitment of candidates and the work they produced. They were equally complimentary about the professional approach of centre assessors and the accuracy of the marking that was achieved, in the majority of centres, through a clear focus on the revised criteria.

This was the first time that the written component was an essential requirement and without the availability of any real examples prior to the series there was inevitably a wide range of responses submitted. These ranged from a few sides of A4 simply describing 'what we did in this lesson' to a 72 page document that included detailed research into content and style together with a thorough log that revealed the practical creative process and evaluated what was being developed.

Most documents were somewhere between the two extremes and the final mark relied upon the degree of detail that candidates included. In general centre assessors had differentiated between candidates very effectively but had rewarded the component too highly. There was a mixed response from teachers; some valued the document and claimed that it helped the candidates to remain focused and evaluative while others regretted its inclusion claiming that it was a tiresome chore.

Moderator reports confirmed that the documents were very useful in preparing them for the performances and contextualising the work.

The pro-forma designed to provide the moderator with the origin of the piece, identify candidates and roles and confirm the performance style and target audience was still a requirement but in some centres the staff assumed that the written log had replaced this.

Identification of candidates remained an issue in some centres when candidates were part of a large group and dressed in similar costumes. Whilst it is recognised that the integrity of the performance is important centres must also remember that it is an examination and the moderator must be able to distinguish individuals within the group. Similarly, though it is very valuable to have an audience for candidates, any arrangements must not hinder the examination process.

Most centres responded effectively to the requirement to send a recording of the performances to the Chief Examiner but too often this was not done within the specified time frame. Many recordings this year were once again of poor quality and centres should note that it is in the interests of candidates to ensure the clearest vision and sound possible. Many centres also failed to identify candidates clearly at the beginning of the recordings and are reminded that this is essential. This identification should state the centre name and number then allow each candidate to introduce themselves in costume, if appropriate, and state their candidate number and role within the piece; centres are advised to do this prior to the performance but ensure that candidates are dressed as they are in the performance. The recording **MUST** be in an appropriate format, preferably DVD for Windows Media Player or standard VHS tape **NOT** digital tape.

Candidates who offered technical support as their role within the group often demonstrated great creativity and expertise in their technical accomplishments. The ten minute presentation to the examiner and moderator to contextualise their work was again either excellent or very poor.

There were very few candidates who elected to work in administrative roles but when this did occur they used the presentation time to demonstrate to the moderator the range and quality of their input to marketing and promotion or front of house activities. Moderators again relied more heavily on the centre assessor's knowledge of the candidates input into these areas and despite the potential difficulties moderators were happy with the reliability of the marks awarded.

There were very few instances of rubric infringements and with the advent of 'Ask the Expert' centres can no longer claim to have been given advice or approval from 'anonymous' individuals at Edexcel.

It is also important to confirm again that **unit three must not be used to deliver unit two 'Planning for an Event'**.

#### **UNIT FOUR (6983) : - EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PERFORMING ARTS**

In this unit candidates must demonstrate an awareness of the range of jobs available in the industry, select a potential career route and submit a portfolio of evidence of their application to the chosen role in a form that would promote them effectively to an employer or interviewer.

In the revised specification candidates only had to examine and report on three jobs in the industry one from each area of performance, administration and technical support but the format of the unit remained constant with an evidence requirement of a report, a portfolio and an evaluation. The re-distribution of marks also ensured that the report element was adequately rewarded.

Changes in assessment criteria has gone some way in encouraging centres to be more rational and clearer in their management of the evidence needed. However issues remained over the content submitted against AO3 with candidates in some centres failing to understand the need to include substantial evidence of practical work structured to create effective promotional intention.

Most centres understood that the bulk of the unit must focus on the candidate pursuing experience for a selected job role in the industry through practical application and reflection. There were fewer portfolios this year where the bulk of the material was generic information about the selected role or downloaded research into the industry without using the material in relation to any practical experience or the chosen progression route.

Again the strongest work was carefully selected and edited, and then presented in an appropriate form. The best responses were thoroughly focused on the chosen role and often evidenced innovative and exciting practical accounts clearly related to potential progression. At this level the candidates presented highly organised and marketable material profiling and 'selling' them in a focused way. These portfolios not only included accounts and diaries of workshops but also CVs, show-reels and other creative material that sought to highlight the vocational skills of a potential employee. In these submissions the work was carefully edited and shaped using appropriate appendices for supporting evidence.

Weaker responses often included considerable detail of candidate's practical involvement in a range of activities but either failed to evaluate how they would contribute to the selected career path or be presented as a promotional tool. In one centre a candidate had attended several drama school auditions but had then not evaluated each to discuss subsequent interviews or confirmed the outcomes. Similarly a common failing was the lack of focus on the presentation of the document for prospective employers or training providers. The portfolio should be viewed as a document that 'sells' the candidate.

With the weighting given to the portfolio, centres should support candidates to include detail on a range of practical experience, rather than only drama school auditions or a centre performance event. Some centres approached this unit with industry specific websites for each candidate. Where this was successfully realised, it was an effective and innovative way of meeting the assessment criteria.

Centres are reminded that candidates should be clearly identified in recorded self-promotional material such as performance and voice over show reels. Such material should be personalised and included in the individual's portfolio.

For the evaluation candidates should analyse how their skills, knowledge and understanding have been developed and informed by both their own work and the vocational context.

Moderation of the work was very straightforward with all material available on the day and centres clear about their part in the examination process. A few moderators however still noted that they were sometimes obliged to mark work because of the lack of annotation and assessment direction provided by centre assessors.

## **UNITS FIVE (6984) and SIX (6985) : - ADVANCED PERFORMANCE/PRODUCTION PRACTICE**

These units prepare candidates for unit seven as they are required to demonstrate that they can investigate existing material, research the appropriate performance style[s] and apply advanced skills as a performer or technician to create a viable performance.

The selection of the material to be performed is critical; it should be sufficiently challenging for A2 level candidates and allow for the exploration and application of skills at an advanced level. The working notebook should document in a very organic manner how the production was developed in the creative and rehearsal stage and what advanced skills were employed. The unit is about demonstrating that candidates can work creatively and in a professional manner on material that demands the application of new and/or advanced techniques.

Most centres appreciated that this unit is about candidates selecting an existing play, score or dance piece that they could research and perform to demonstrate the application of advanced skills. Half the available marks were awarded for the candidate's research and documentation of the creative process and half for their practical performance or technical application.

The most effective candidate research into the performance included not only academic research into the chosen piece, but also an exploration of the chosen style and genre of the candidates' interpretation of their source material.

Candidates were best supported by their centres when their assessed performance was supported by appropriate production values and performed in front of an audience.

It appeared that some centres provided handouts relating to specific practitioners and that this was not always understood by candidates in terms of how it could inform their practical development of a performance.

There was the same range of working logs presented this year from the organic versions that are often most informative to the more formalised, edited and sanitised versions that are not necessary. Portfolios, which were really used during the creative process to record candidates' experimentation and decisions about performance, were often stronger in meeting the assessment criteria as they were more personal and gave a sense of the candidate's voice.

Once again too many candidates included vast quantities of theoretical material often downloaded from the Internet, which had been included without annotation or reference to any of the candidates' own work and failed to evidence the creative process of the performer or the selection and application of performance techniques. A few centres still allowed the notebooks to address the general planning for the performance or details of practitioners without any explanation of which ideas were used. The log must record in detail the creative journey of the performer and their group. The inclusion of scripts is valid only if they are annotated to demonstrate the candidate's approach to elements of performance or production.

Candidates awarded marks in the higher ranges had produced excellent visual evidence supported by detailed and interesting portfolios. The work was presented in clear sections and contained valuable teacher comments providing detailed observations, statements and records of the students' work and progression. There was some critical analysis which was clearly the candidates' own work - identifying weaknesses, progression, improvements and evaluation.

Candidates awarded marks in the lower ranges did not demonstrate a great deal of research in developing their piece for performance. These candidates were less focused on their own contribution than on the generalities of the performance.

The recorded quality of work presented for moderation varied greatly. A significant number of the recordings were of poor quality in terms of clearly being able to identify candidates and/or see the quality of their performance skills. Where individual candidates were easily identifiable and the sound and picture quality good the moderation process was greatly aided. Similarly, too many centres had provided recordings which were of poor technical quality, or recorded from too great a distance and these often failed to convey the success of the productions. Since this element constitutes half the available marks centres should try to achieve the highest quality possible. In a minority of centres the equipment provided for playback of recordings was inadequate or unsuitable.

Few centres still allowed candidates to devise material for this unit and clearly since the focus should be on the application of skills at an advanced level in response to an exploration of the source material this approach hampered the candidates' ability to address some of the essential criteria such as research into the source material and performance style. Devising new material also expends time that should be devoted to the exploration and application of skills and the essential polishing of the work.

The evaluation of the work should have focused on the effectiveness of the selection, application and refining of the skills used to create the performance together with an overview of the individual and group success. In most centres the performances took place in front of the intended target audience, and the performance skills used were appropriate. When candidates had explored character work, techniques and skills in depth and linked the processes to specific performance demands the work clearly demonstrated how skills had been applied. When evaluation was strong, candidates had demonstrated how they had taken account of feedback from peers, tutors and others and had indicated their ability to evaluate their own practice together with that of the group.

## **UNIT SIX (6985) : - ADVANCED PERFORMANCE/PRODUCTION PRACTICE**

As an optional unit the demands of unit six were commensurate with unit five and the criteria were very similar. The only distinction was that the candidates who selected this option were required to demonstrate an advanced application of technical skills rather than performance.

As in previous years, a very small number of candidates took this unit [slightly over 80 nationally] and consequently some moderators did not see any unit six and many only saw work offered by one or two candidates. Impressions of standards are therefore again less reliable. It remains the case that technical candidates often have a real passion for their area of expertise and once again, there was evidence that a great deal of thought and 'hands on' experimentation had gone into the creation of the work. Similarly, there was evidence of a detailed understanding of the material, the technical aesthetic and production demands of the performance and their practical application within their chosen role. In some cases, the production demands tended to dominate initial research and technical candidates should be encouraged to consider their role in

realising the overall creative intent of the piece. The range of technical areas was again seen with candidates entered for sound, lighting, costume and set design and there were generally high production values in front of target audiences.

It appeared that candidates awarded marks in the lower ranges did not always have ownership of the task and were sometimes candidates that could not work supportively in an ensemble and were given a technical role. Some lighting candidates for example brought the lights up to create a single state that remained throughout and then dimmed them at the end. In such circumstances, though valid for the production, the choice of material did not provide enough scope to show range and control of the equipment. Costume design was often the weakest area, often chosen by art and design candidates, where the realization in performance and many key aspects of stage costuming was not considered.

Most centres provided clear annotation in the candidate workbooks which facilitated the moderation process and presented materials in an accessible manner, in an appropriate space and without disturbance. As with unit five, recordings that were of poor technical quality, or recorded from too great a distance failed to show the abilities of technical candidates, particularly lighting and sound submissions.

As in previous years many candidates selecting unit six were very experienced in the selected role and often carried out technical work across several specifications and productions within the centre. Similarly many were involved in theatre production outside the curriculum and often brought considerable expertise to the work. It is important to stress again that the other evidence demanded by the unit must also be submitted and practical ability alone cannot earn the highest marks. It is also important to stress that centres must ensure that candidates opting for unit six have suitable resources in order to demonstrate their skills at A2 level.

In a few centres candidates choosing this unit were very unclear about the demands of the selected role and presented work that was incomplete and/or unfit for purpose. The research section of the unit is as important as it is for performers and candidates needed to investigate the essential processes involved in their skill area; talk to practitioners and ensure that their planning and application was detailed and professional. For example, stage management candidates often submitted only the prompt copy and omitted their rehearsal notebook, and rarely completed post show reports.

## **UNIT SEVEN (6986) : - PRODUCTION DELIVERY**

With the change in the commission brief that now focuses on candidates developing their own interpretation of material from the performance repertoire it appeared that most centres understood that the unit was not about devising new material but the process of selecting appropriate exiting material and through investigation and exploration creating their own interpretation of the work.

The usual range of material and quality of performance was evident encompassing styles and genres that covered the spectrum of performing arts.

The most successful centres presented their own interpretation of an existing play, dance work or musical score[s] but with a clearly defined intention for a modern audience; for example a musical set that presented well known popular music in a

variety of styles. Similarly there were excellent interpretations of 'Revelations' and very different versions of modern translations of 'Grimm's Tales'.

The most effective responses to the commission had a clearly outlined creative intent and interrogated original sources as varied as 'Equus' 'Waiting for Godot', a very surrealistic version of 'An Inspector Calls' and dance work from Rambert, Davies, Bourne and so forth. Because of the recent film version 'Alice in Wonderland' was again a very popular source, with many inventive and challenging interpretations.

Unit seven allowed candidates to engage with the subject in a totally practical manner but demanded a very sophisticated and polished level of performance. To score highly candidates needed to be completely secure in the skills they employed and demonstrate them through a fully developed and polished performance.

As it is primarily the most committed and capable candidates who progress into the A2 part of the specification most performances were well rehearsed, imaginative and engaging. There was again considerable evidence of a professional approach and full commitment to the performances and attempts to reflect industry demands and standards. There was also evidence of understanding and appreciation of the creative decisions made at the advanced level. Much of the work displayed the professional sophistication that the specification required with excellent levels of concentration, imagination and accuracy that revealed a thorough understanding of techniques and an excellent sense of pace and delivery.

In most cases the work was performed in front of the intended target audience and proved to be a suitable platform for a range of skills to be demonstrated. Most centres provided suitable front of house and technical support and moderators reported work that encompassed the full range of performing arts including acting, singing, dancing and playing instruments. Candidates again performed in a wide range of venues and there were some strong examples of promenade theatre, site-specific pieces as well as studio and theatre based productions. Communication between the cast and audience was clearly evident and in stronger pieces there was clarity of intent and relevance and meaning were conveyed assuredly. There was a tendency for weaker cohorts to focus on devising new dialogue to the detriment of their performances.

The strongest candidates produced consistently accomplished performances, demonstrating full mastery of a range of performance styles and techniques. Moderators noted a real development in candidates' work and secure progression from AS to A2 standard. Many candidates scored highly in this part of the specification but centre assessors were also very realistic about the application of marks against the criteria.

This was the first time that the written component was an essential requirement and without the availability of any real examples prior to the series there was inevitably a wide range of responses submitted. These ranged from half a side of A4, simply describing the product and the candidate's role within the piece, to very extensive documents. These included detailed research into the source material and the groups intentions for the work, accompanied by explorations into performance style together with detailed logs that revealed the practical creative process and evaluated the product in depth.

Most documents were somewhere between the two extremes and the final mark relied upon the degree of detail that candidates included together with an A2 level of



sophistication and analysis. In general centre assessors had differentiated between candidates very effectively but had rewarded the component too highly. Many assessors included AO1 within their marks for this element as they interpreted 'working with others' as being only possible in performance. Clearly this is not the case as any evaluation of ensemble process must examine how the group is communicating and working as a cohesive unit. Moderators confirmed that where this element had been effectively conducted, the moderation process was aided as it clarified the interpretation and intended impact of the work.

As with unit 3 there was a mixed response from teachers; some valued the document and claimed that it helped the candidates to remain focused and evaluative while others regretted its inclusion claiming that it was a tiresome chore.

There were very few rubric infringements and in some cases very imaginative and resourceful responses to the problem of single candidates where centres had used other students within the production.

It is also worth repeating that whilst an audience is essential for this unit they must be made aware that the performance is primarily an examination and that the normal audience considerations might not apply.

All performances must be recorded clearly with good sound quality [a digital DVD format is specified] and candidates identified on the recording at the start in costume.

The majority of candidates elected to be assessed on performance skills as actors, dancers and musicians but there was the usual range of design and technical support candidates. Presentations by stage managers or designers were most effective when they told the moderator what to look out for in performance and highlighted the contribution that their input had made to the realisation of the group's creative interpretation in performance. Some very illuminating and well-prepared presentations were given but centres are reminded to ensure candidates select the most relevant material and adhere to the ten minute time limit.

## Grade Boundaries

### AS Units and Overall AS Cash-in

#### Unit 1 - 6980

Grade	Max mark	A	B	C	D	E	N	U
Raw boundary mark	60	50	43	37	31	25	19	0
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40	30	0

#### Unit 2 - 6981

Grade	Max mark	A	B	C	D	E	N	U
Raw boundary mark	60	50	43	36	29	23	17	0
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40	30	0

#### Unit 3 - 6982

Grade	Max mark	A	B	C	D	E	N	U
Raw boundary mark	60	51	44	37	30	23	16	0
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40	30	0

#### AS cash-in - 8781

Grade	Max mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
Uniform boundary mark	300	240	210	180	150	120	0

## A2 Units and Overall GCE Cash-in

### Unit 4 - 6983

Grade	Max mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U	N
Raw boundary mark	60	56	52	45	38	31	24	17	0
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	0

### Unit 5 - 6984

Grade	Max mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U	N
Raw boundary mark	60	55	50	44	38	33	28	23	0
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	0

### Unit 6 - 6985

Grade	Max mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U	N
Raw boundary mark	60	55	50	44	38	33	28	23	0
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	0

### Unit 7 - 6986

Grade	Max mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U	N
Raw boundary mark	60	56	53	46	39	32	25	18	0
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	0

### A2 cash-in - 9771

Grade	Max mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
Uniform boundary mark	600	480	420	360	300	240	0

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