

Performing Arts

Advanced GCE A2 H546

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H146

Report on the Units

January 2009

H146/H546/MS/R/09J

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

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

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

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

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

© OCR 2009

Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622
Facsimile: 01223 552610
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

CONTENTS

Advanced GCE Performing Arts (H546)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE Performing Arts (H146)

REPORT ON THE UNITS

Unit/Content	Page
Chief Examiner's Introduction	1
G380 Investigating Performing Arts Organisations	4
G381: Professional Practice/Skills Development	6
G382: Professional Practice: Performance and G383: Professional practice: production	8
G384: Getting Work	10
G386 Producing your own Showcase	12
Grade Thresholds	18
How to Calculate a UMS (Uniform Mark Scale) conversion	20

Chief Examiner's Introduction

January 2009 proved to be a relatively small session. There appears to be a preference to submit work in the June session for the majority of units, which is in line with the expectation of the specification. Despite a small cohort there was evidence of good practice in all units and varied work across the spectrum. Candidates are approaching the units with enthusiasm and centres are providing opportunities for candidates to develop greater knowledge and understanding of The Performing Arts Industry. This is encouraging as these opportunities fulfil the vocational aspects of the course.

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

Unit G380 Investigating Performing Arts Organisations

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

Unit G381 Skills Development

A very small entry as expected, preference to submit work in the summer session gives candidates more time to develop skills. The limited evidence of work does make it difficult to comment on but despite this there was clearly some improvement in the structure of candidate portfolios. Centres are clearly starting to organise the evidence needed. The unit gives the candidates the opportunity to develop professional practice and explore new skills in specialist areas of the performing arts. Candidates need to evaluate the level and range of their technical skills and identify suitable activities and exercises through practical exploration to develop and extend their abilities. It was pleasing to see candidates able to take advantage of the range of expertise available and the level of resources that exist in centres. Candidates quite clearly had the freedom to choose appropriate contexts for their skills development. All centres need to concentrate on the process of acquiring skills through practical involvement in pieces taken from repertoire. The Principal Moderator's Report catalogues a range of procedures that are essential for candidates and centres to follow. The Skills Development Plan (SDP) is the framework for the unit and highlights the development made. Centres must ensure that all candidates have included their SDP as well as commentaries and observation reports.

Unit G382 and G383 Performance and Production

This session saw eight performances at various centres, quite a small entry suggesting that most centres prefer to enter in the summer session. Some centres displayed a strong sense of excellent professional practice in their work with impressive theatrical performances. The key factor was undoubtedly teamwork. Good centres demonstrated appropriate and effective interaction with everyone involved giving a feeling of unity and coherence. Centres should note the comments made by the Principal Examiner about large cohorts with regard to exposure time and organisation.

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

There were very few G383 entries. Centres are reminded that good practice includes candidates presenting various aspects of their work to cameras creating 'DVD diaries.' This shows the examiner the preparation work that production candidates are involved in as well as what is going on before, during and after a performance. Portfolio work should contain further evidence to support the candidates' work.

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

Performance

Good practice saw candidates performing with accuracy and control. They showed good performance technique, created as an appropriate approach to the type of audience selected. There was no doubt that for the majority of candidates the practical aspects of a performance piece were both exciting and challenging and definitely motivational. Centres must ensure that candidates are prepared as there were clearly candidates who needed further guidance with singing in the correct key and tonal qualities.

Performance Diaries

Centres must take note of the new guidelines with regard to the diaries. There was an improvement from the last session; but there was still evidence of poorly produced diaries, done almost as an afterthought. Centres must pick up on this as candidates are losing vital marks that will affect their overall grade. Centres may not have realised that there was a slight change in the criteria with marks awarded for health and safety through the diary and not in performance. This meant that many candidates missed out on several marks. Good practice saw some very good diary/portfolio work where candidates had detailed and extensive work that showed the production process from start to finish.

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

Unit G384 Getting Work

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

Centres are reminded that there is a Coursework Consultancy. A few centres have used this facility and found it to be both helpful and of benefit to the candidates.

Unit G386 and G387 Producing Your Showcase/Production

As expected there was only a small entry for this unit. Candidates were required to perform three pieces of work – two solos and one duet/duologue/ pas de deux. Nevertheless, there were some good examples of accomplished and dynamic performances. Good candidates were able to display complete mastery of their selected material. They were able to shape and mould their material to display a sophisticated understanding of the interpretative skills required. Performance work was impressive, candidates had made a real effort to perform their pieces using effective lighting, sound, live music, costume and make up. It was extremely impressive to see candidates achieving such high levels of skill as well as a perceptive understanding of the professional context of the work. Centres must ensure that candidates are adhering to the specification with regard to the selection of material as there is still too much devised work, particularly in dance as well as candidates making a poor selection of material that inhibits their performance due to lack of skills and techniques.

Centres did appear to be more confident with this unit. Candidates were performing to audiences with the focus very much on performance techniques and technical effects. Centres responded well to the unit requirements. The best work saw aspects of professionalism and outstanding practice. Where there was evidence of teacher guidance candidates were better prepared in both their selection of material and in the performance of the work. All centres should read the Principal Examiner's Report with particular note of comments about selection of material and the impact of selecting inappropriate pieces.

Centres were showing evidence of greater understanding of the unit requirements. There was better organisation with regard to each candidate having a 'fifteen minute' slot in which to showcase his or her skills. There were no centres producing variety shows.

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

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

G380 Investigating Performing Arts Organisations

General Comments

Most of the work arrived on time and was complete with administration in order. However some Centres were still very late in their submissions, with the moderator having to contact them several times. Even then, some of the work arrived incomplete, without CCS160s and even MS1s. Occasionally important pieces of information, such as candidate names, numbers and mark totals, were left off the URS.

Almost all Centres complied with the new requirements to provide DVD rather than Video evidence.

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

There was a wide-range of responses from candidates. Some of the portfolio work was of a high standard showing a considerable amount of research and often expressed clearly with good use of performing arts terminology. Even so, some of the organisations were still far too big. On the other hand, selecting a one-person company can prove self-limiting. Candidates need to choose organisations that offer them the opportunity to cover all the Assessment Objectives in some depth.

A history of each organisation dominated the studies of weaker candidates. Although this may helpfully put the organisation in context and describe its development, it is an understanding of its current purpose, structure operations and markets that is sought.

Although audiences were often mentioned there was rarely any analysis of the target groups in terms of age, socio economic grouping.

Few candidates were able to describe the organisation in terms of its job structure. Is it flat, vertical, hierarchical or pyramidal? The stronger candidates included organisational charts that were explained in these terms. Some candidates clearly thought structure was about the building and spent too much time describing the physical nature of the venue.

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

Only a few portfolios were presented in tabular form this time. The expectation for this unit is that work should be presented as an essay. Centres should be aware that that they should avoid overlapping material in the portfolio with the job role chosen for the presentation. For example, to focus on the role of sound engineer in the portfolio and then reproduce the same person and material in the presentation is not advisable, as two sets of marks cannot be awarded for essentially one piece of work.

Some Centres used colour-coded systems to highlight where the Assessment Objectives were met - this was generally helpful, though it is still important to complete the URS comments section fully to clearly identify the location of evidence. This is an aid to marking as well as to moderation. It is *not* useful for the moderator to know that the location of the evidence is "in the Portfolio" or "on the DVD" - a page reference or a timing is essential. There were still instances

Report on the Units taken in January 2009

where annotation was still minimal or even non-existent. This made moderation much more difficult.

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

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

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

The job presentation was done less well. Some Centres seemed unaware that this should be based on a single job within one of the chosen organisations. It is helpful to see the work actually happening - a DVD of a talk or PowerPoint presentation is the most common format. Paper copies of notes or slides are also extremely useful. Please ensure that DVDs are labelled with all the relevant information and have a list of contents with timings. It is important that the sound and picture quality as good as possible and that the recording has been taken at a reasonable sound level. Candidates need to announce their names and candidate numbers clearly at the beginning of the talk.

Candidates should not be penalised for poor delivery skills - the content is what is marked.

Some of the presentations were knowledgeable and demonstrated high levels of understanding of the chosen job role. However, some candidates only gave a very generalised talk on a type of job - a "stage manager" was a favourite. This choice limits the amount of marks available under the mark scheme. It is essential to set the role thoroughly within the context of one of the organisations. To access the highest marks in AO4 it is vital to discuss working practices, such as appraisal, progression, health and safety, contracts, unions etc.

G381: Professional Practice/Skills Development

Most aspects of the moderation process went well. Centres generally understood the sampling process and enclosed the correct documentation. However, some centres did not include the Centre Authentication Form (CCS 160). This led to moderators chasing centres for those documents. It is important that centres send all documentation promptly.

If a centre has ten or less candidates, they must send **all** the coursework promptly to the moderator. If the centre has more than ten candidates, they should send the MS1 and wait for the moderator to send them a letter stating which candidates' coursework should be sent as a sample. DVDs must be sent with the portfolios and centres should not wait for moderators to request recorded evidence. Videos are no longer acceptable.

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

It would be helpful if centres included a front sheet as page one of the portfolio clearly stating the skills chosen for development and the three pieces of repertoire with details of titles of work and the names of the playwrights, composers and choreographers eg "Hamlet" by Shakespeare, "Swansong" by Christopher Bruce (1987). Candidates should have researched the repertoire and be able to give detailed notes relating to when the piece was written, who performed it and where. There should be an explanation about which version of the repertoire they are using and how they have adapted it for performance. This is particularly important for dance pieces and physical theatre.

Centres must identify the candidates on the DVDs. Candidates should introduce themselves to camera by name and number. There should be a recent photograph of the candidate and details concerning their appearance on the DVD such as a brief description of their costume so that the moderator can identify them. DVDs should be chaptered with a clear indication of where the candidate appears on the DVD for example John Smith 0234 enters stage left at 10 mins 30 seconds. A substantial amount of moderator's time is spent searching for candidates' performances on the DVD.

The position of the camera in relation to the stage needs careful consideration. Sometimes moderators could not see the candidates at close range and could not assess the performances. The most helpful recordings showed work in progress at close range so that the facial expressions and eye focus were obvious to the viewer. For final performances with live audience, the camera is naturally placed further away. Some of the best DVDs showed a development of the piece from first attempt through rehearsal to the final performance. Some final performances appeared to take place in a rehearsal area and have no live audience. This does not give the candidates the necessary experience for their best performance.

The pages in the portfolios should be numbered and centres should use these numbers when referring to the location of evidence. Centres should apply the assessment criteria rigorously and provide detailed annotation on the pages of the portfolio and on the URS to justify the marks awarded. Reference should be made to the DVD to help locate the evidence.

Portfolios should be unique to the candidate and art form and relevant to the skills chosen for development. Internet research and studies of practitioners must be relevant to the repertoire chosen for performance and annotation of research should make this clear.

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

Report on the Units taken in January 2009

progresses. The SDP is the framework for the unit and should include notes on workshops and lessons.

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

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

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

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

G382: Professional Practice: Performance and G383: Professional practice: production

General Comments

The centres were well organised and there was evidence of good interpretation of the specification with examples of excellent professional practice.

Centres where good practice was evident saw candidates achieving well into the top range of the marking criteria. Performance work showed professionalism and in some cases outstanding practice. Although a small cohort, there was still a variety of performance types, musical theatre, drama and music represented. Large groups coped very well, ensuring opportunity for all candidates across the performance pieces. Although there was still some anomalies in the organisation of large groups with one centre running a performance twice just to give an opportunity for two of the principal parts to be performed with different candidates. Co-incidentally the same show was run by another centre with the cast swapping at the interval which seemed much more manageable and did not result in exposure issues for the candidates involved. There were a few exposure issues with some very short individual performances providing little evidence for assessment.

Centres are advised to use existing material taken from repertoire. Centres are advised to contact OCR for further guidance if they are in any doubt over the selection of material for future submissions. There were no major infringements on the repertoire requirements although centres that perform music exclusively need to be very clear on issues of interpretation especially when the original largely becomes unrecognisable. Although it is reasonable for candidates to have some interpretive freedom the whole point of using repertoire is that the demands, challenges and artistic integrity of the original should remain intact.

There were very few G383 (Production) candidates this year.

Administration

Centres where good practice was evident had ensured that all paperwork had been completed and sent in advance to the examiner with the candidates' diaries. Examiners were seated in an appropriate place with tables and suitable table lights. Most centres had considered the examiner and ensured that the audience were also seated appropriately. Interview/discussion rooms were provided as required.

The Performance

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

Report on the Units taken in January 2009

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

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

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

All centres met the requirement of recording the performance and generally quality of DVDs was good. All centres provided DVDs very close to the 3-day deadline.

The Company Meeting/Interview

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

Candidates did vary in their approach to the meeting/interview. Some were knowledgeable and able to discuss various production aspects showing good understanding of the material. They were able to comment on the playwright/composer's intentions as well as the themes, historical, social and cultural aspects.

The Working Diaries

The change in the assessment demands of the diary with Health and Safety (H&S) becoming an integral part of its development meant that marks were awarded more rationally and in proportion to the number of marks available. Candidates often failed to give the full range of H&S considerations, both technical and personal but some centres produced good risk assessment material. There was a continuing improvement on the last session. Centres are now becoming more aware of the significance of marks lost when candidates have not produced a performance diary.

Centres are advised to refer to the unit specification and teacher guidelines where the requirements for the diary are clearly outlined.

G384: Getting Work

General comments

Administration of the examination

The process of submitting moderation samples for these centres ran smoothly, only 2 centres did not submit portfolios having registered candidates.

Advance documentation

All centres returned MS1s and Centre Authentication Forms.

Professional Context

Generally there was a real awareness of the professional context of the work, although the most noticeable hindrance to this remains where candidates relied on their school or college experience to provide all of the details for their pack. There was also a tendency this year to focus on companies rather than on freelance careers, this does not provide the range and depth of evidence necessary to meet the requirements of the specification. There is a need for portfolios to be based on research into the demands of the industry, focused to a large extent by the interviews conducted with freelance professionals. In the best work these interviews were explicitly reproduced as appendices and also clearly permeated and informed all of their work. There were still some portfolios that contained no evidence of having undertaken any interviews whatsoever.

Promotional pack

The quality of the production of the packs varied significantly. At best, they were professionally produced with well-crafted text and imagery that drew the reader's attention. These packs had a clear reference to a specific artistic audience. They knew their target market and what those companies or professionals wanted. At worst, it was difficult to disentangle the promotional materials from the plethora of print-outs of internet pages, photocopied handouts and extraneous working notes, all of which severely reduced the impact of the work. These portfolios remained unedited and contained general course notes that did not respond to the specific demands of the specification. A number of portfolios still remain unstructured and the full use of appendices to take unused material and notes does not appear to be fully employed.

Résumés and CVs were not always well thought out and did not demonstrate a good professional progression together with a strong sense of professional aspiration in particular artistic vocational areas. There were often anomalies between what was claimed in the CV and what the plan actually contained.

Sample letters were generally of an acceptable standard but there was considerable scope for adopting a more professional – and hence more persuasive – tone. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar sometimes undermined the quality of what was being said. It is vital that candidates adopt high professional standards in their use of written English – this is clearly in the assessment criteria. Some letters were not addressed to anyone and therefore their power to influence was severely restricted. Letters can either be in response to a specific advertisement but can also be 'general' letters sent to agents or particular types of company. It is important that there is understanding of what is expected in the professional context.

Plan of first year of work

The Specification allows candidates to build their first year of work around a maximum of 50% contract work. This recognises the reality of the professional situation in providing a sustainable income during a period where getting work is difficult and where reputation is becoming established. It is a prerequisite, however, that such contract work should be in a related professional area. The majority of contracts were in teaching (either privately or in a College) and were appropriate in their scope and projected income. However, a minority of candidates identified work in supermarkets, restaurants and other retail work which had virtually no link with their professional aspirations.

The plans however are becoming much more credible but some candidates still do not understand the need to get current rates of pay from the relevant organisations and unions and therefore come up with realistic earnings. One or two centres continue to 'pack' the plan with over-detailed spreadsheets. The best plans were 'smart' and edited rigorously and provided figures that gave a clear indication of survival without providing multiple tables.

Most candidates related the range of freelance work identified to the research interviews they had conducted. Some centres provided plans for three or even five years – one detailed year is the demand, although it is quite acceptable as part of the analysis to look forward to subsequent years.

Analysis of the plan

This was often the weakest aspect of the portfolios and proved to be a good differentiator between standards of work. Most candidates were good at identifying the strengths of their plan since this was often closely related to the skills outlined in the résumé. Weaknesses were more difficult for candidates to identify. In terms of opportunities, the most able candidates could see that the nature of their work could grow in relation to their professional development and this provided a good source of discussion. Threats were more difficult to identify, but the strongest candidates were able to locate the work in a context that did identify such threats. Good candidates placed their analysis into a wider professional context and related it both to a specific professional area and their place in it.

Conclusion

There was a good range of work entered with around two thirds of centres needing some adjustments to marks during moderation. This was very similar to last year where perhaps an improvement in this rate may have been expected. It may be that this lack of progress is difficult to track in such a small cohort; some centres were new to this session and so made some basic errors in evidence and structure while some centres repeated the errors drawn to their attention last year. There were some centres revealing a lack of depth and range in evidence for this level and compounding this with annotated notes that indicated work of a much higher level in contradiction, clearly, to the demands of the assessment criteria.

G386 Producing your own Showcase

(Visiting Examination)

General Comments

There was only a small cohort for this session, however, centres responded well to its requirements with examples of good practice evident. The best work was at the top end of the marking scale showing professionalism and aspects of outstanding practice. There was evidence of teacher guidance in both selection and performance of the material. However, too many candidates were still selecting works that were unsuitable and far too difficult for them to cope with. For many of these prompting and cueing the candidate was expected, however, this meant that the candidates' could not show mastery of the material or produce dynamic performances. The Examiners observed examples in all the disciplines with drama, dance and singing as the most popular options.

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

Examiners reports generally commented on a session of variable standards of performance work. Selection of material is still an area that candidates need to give careful consideration to as many stronger candidates failed to score marks in key areas because they had selected pieces that were either too difficult or inappropriate for this examination.

Good practice saw candidates tackle the challenge of 'live' performance with increasing enthusiasm and skill technique. Centres who approached the work as a 'process to performance' encouraging candidates to create 'The Showcase' - developing and improving skills and performance techniques whilst tackling material that was both challenging and in some performances effective provided good platforms for the candidates to work from.

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

Administration in Centres was generally good. Good practice was seen in centres that ensured the paperwork arrived in plenty of time, provided a running order and details of candidates' performances. Preparatory notes were labelled. Provision of DVD-recorded evidence of the examination was acceptable during this session. Some centres are submitting work on CD and DVD. This is to be encouraged in terms of immediate availability and quality. However, centres should check carefully that this type of evidence could be played back on DVD players/ equipment, as in previous sessions some of the discs received were not compatible with other equipment making it difficult for the examiners to view the work. Centres should also check that they submit a DVD that actually has the session recorded on it as blank discs and performances with missing sections were received. Centres are not allowed to edit the performance pieces. Wide angle recordings are not really beneficial as it is difficult to pick up facial expression and gestures. All evidence should be clearly labelled/ marked with candidate names, numbers and a running order so that it is easier for the examiner to find the candidates required for sample or exemplar material.

Report on the Units taken in January 2009

Provision of a suitable performance space is important. Some centres are providing excellent facilities for both the Examiner and the candidates, with centres opting for a studio or theatre space. It was noted that too many centres in this session were not providing a suitable space with candidates performing in poorly lit studios and classrooms. This does not allow the candidates to maximise the performance aspect.

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

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

The Discussion

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

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

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

Dance

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

Drama

Drama candidates were generally well prepared. Good candidates displayed a thorough understanding of their chosen pieces as well as an appreciation of the playwrights' intentions. They were able to discuss their ideas for performance of the pieces, influences, style and context as well as characterisation, period, mood and atmosphere. Good candidates had excellent knowledge about the style of their pieces. This enabled them to inform the Examiner of their intended interpretation. Knowledge of the play and the period of history are fundamental to all aspects of preparation and development of the work. Many candidates are restricting their knowledge by not reading the play from which they have taken the piece.

Music

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

The Performance of the Showcase

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

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

Dance

The majority of candidates performed choreographed routines taken from repertoire. Good candidates showed the style through the appropriate movements and stylistic features achieving a good technical standard. Well-choreographed routines taken from repertoire included various dynamic elements such as tension, force, strength, speed, tempo and rhythm. The selected routines in contemporary, theatrical and ballet dance focused on form and structure. Good dance centres were able to provide the candidates with material from choreographers and a wealth of performance pieces. This gave the candidates the opportunity to perform works of a good standard. Weaker candidates had selected movements 'in the style' of a particular dance or choreographer, this is not really appropriate. Duets were not always taken from repertoire but performed as solo routines in a side by side performance.

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

Drama

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

Duologues were not always performed so well. Candidates who are not examined should still enter into the spirit of the examination and learn their words. Presenting a duologue with one candidate reading from a script restricts the development of the piece.

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

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

Music

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

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

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

Good practice saw candidates producing performances that really engaged with the audience.

Preparatory Notes

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

G387 Production Demonstration

(Visiting Examination)

There was only one entry for this session.

Guidelines for centres for the June session are detailed below:

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

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

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

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

Grade Thresholds

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

Coursework Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	a	b	c	d	e	u
G380	Raw	50	43	38	33	28	23	
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	
G381	Raw	50	43	38	33	28	24	
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	
G384	Raw	50	42	37	32	27	23	
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	

Examined Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	a	b	c	d	e	u
G382	Raw	50	42	37	32	27	23	
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	
G383	Raw	50	42	37	32	27	23	
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	
G386	Raw	50	42	37	32	28	24	
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	
G387	Raw	50	42	37	32	28	24	
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	

Specification Aggregation Results

Uniform marks correspond to overall grades as follows.

Advanced Subsidiary GCE (H146):

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

Cumulative Percentage in Grade

Advanced Subsidiary GCE (H146):

A	B	C	D	E	U
0	9.1	45.5	63.6	100	100
There were 11 candidates aggregating in January 2009.					

Advanced GCE (H546)

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

Cumulative Percentage in Grade

Advanced GCE (H546):

A	B	C	D	E	U
0	50	100	100	100	100
There were 2 candidates aggregating in January 2009.					

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

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

How to Calculate a UMS (Uniform Mark Scale) conversion

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

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

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

Example

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

The raw mark and UMS boundaries were determined as follows:

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

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

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

OCR Customer Contact Centre

14 – 19 Qualifications (General)

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

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

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

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

© OCR 2009

