

Examiners' Report Summer 2007

GCE

GCE Performing Arts (8781/ 9781)

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Contents

1. General Comments	4
2. Unit Detail, Unit One.....	7
3. Unit Two	9
4. Unit three	11
5. Unit four	13
6. Unit five	15
7. Unit six	17
8. Unit Seven	18
9. Statistics	20

General Comments

In this second year of the specification the number of centres has increased dramatically and the majority from last year entered candidates for the A2 components. Enthusiasm for the specification continues to grow as centres realise that its content free format allows them to teach to their strengths and interests. This approach has resulted in a very wide range of course programmes being offered and this can only be beneficial for candidates.

The moderation process has been more difficult this year but teachers still appreciated the discussion of the candidates' work with their moderator and welcomed the chance to consider the performance and confirm that their marks and rank order were in line with the nationally agreed standard.

MODERATION ARRANGEMENTS

The delays with allocations to moderators caused by changes in personnel at Edexcel meant that centres were again contacted very late and too close to the moderation window to enable moderators to encourage full use of the available time. This resulted in many centres requesting moderation dates in the last two weeks of June. This 'bunching' clearly caused problems for moderators who were trying to accommodate all their centres' requests.

It is very important for centres to note that the moderation date is to be agreed with their moderator through **negotiation** and that they 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. Several cases this year, where centres changed times, created very real problems for the moderator as they had other centres arranged and had calculated carefully travelling times and so forth.

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

OPTEM FORMS

Because of incorrect information printed on the OPTEM forms there was confusion once again with centres unclear about when these should be returned. The procedure is for centres to complete OPTEM forms for units 1,2,4 and 5 or 6 prior to the moderation visit and send the top copy to Edexcel at least a week before the agreed visit date. The yellow copies of the OPTEM forms should be with the candidates' portfolios to enable the moderator to select an appropriate sample. Yellow copies of the completed OPTEM 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.

MARKING CRITERIA

Centres are advised that when assessing candidate evidence they should not apply only the grading criteria within the grid but also refer to the assessment guidance following each grid. For example for unit one the grid is on page 10 in the specification and the expanded interpretation of the criteria follows on pages 11 to 14. Centre assessors should also refer to the Assessment Objectives descriptors in Appendix D. Ensuring familiarity with the full implications of the criteria will enable centre assessors to apply them effectively and minimize moderation adjustments.

CANDIDATE RECOGNITION

It is essential that practical work produced for Units three, five, six and seven is recorded effectively and that candidates state clearly their name, candidate number and role[s]. This does not have to be done immediately before the performance provided that the candidates are wearing the same costume/clothes that they will be performing in. Since candidate's concentration and performance preparation could be disrupted it is advisable that the identification process is carried out at the beginning of their 'dress/technical' rehearsal.

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 OPTEM for each unit.

PORTFOLIOS

All portfolios must be available for the visiting moderator and these should have been 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 reported that many centres had managed this very effectively using the appropriate front sheet [available on-line] and noted that the moderation process was much more efficient as a result. 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 or A4 ring binders. 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

Moderators reported that they had viewed a vast 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.

Similarly the choice of Commission Brief appeared very even with perhaps a slight preference for commissions one and three [Song Lyrics/Music and 'Under Pressure'].

A few centres failed to read the specification and/or centre guidance carefully and had therefore guided candidates incorrectly. Similarly some centre assessors were not aware of the changes to the moderation procedure and expected to agree marks with the moderator.

For unit seven most centres managed to interpret the brief effectively but it should be noted that this is not a devising unit and candidates should focus on re-working an existing piece of performance work.

UNIT DETAILS

UNIT ONE - EXPLORING SKILLS FOR PERFORMANCE

This unit continued to be problematic for some centres as they had not appreciated the need for the individual candidate to take ownership of the development of skills and moderators reported that they are still being presented with very detailed accounts of lessons that candidates have experienced. It is useful to repeat the section from last year's report that stated:-

This type of approach often failed to take account of the exploratory nature of the unit and resulted in portfolios that contained accounts of the lessons, often in diary form, with statements to the effect that they had enabled candidates to develop. Some centres produced full portfolios of a high standard that frequently replicated taught material across the whole group, ignoring the vital need for the learner's voice and for the clear ownership of the material by the learner/artist. This approach often missed some aspects of the criteria as well as the vocational focus of the specification.

Many candidates/centres ensured that initial skills audits were carried out but candidates needed to demonstrate how the content of their lessons or training schedule was assisting progress. Similarly audits needed to be regular and linked to practical work undertaken either in class, workshop or privately.

Moderators reported some excellent practice in the creation by centres of monitoring and tracking sheets that enabled candidates to record their progress. As with last year the effectiveness of these depended on the amount of detail provided by individual candidates and how they linked to the next stage in the process.

There were more examples reported of candidates submitting DVD evidence of work on the selected skills in workshop conditions, often solo outside the scheduled lesson times, and where this approach had been regular and clearly explained it was very effective in revealing the process. It should be stressed that recording of candidates performing was not valuable unless the candidates were able to comment on the skills being extended or demonstrated.

Many of the portfolios were very attractive but too frequently the content, whilst useful to their studies, did not focus on skill development and centres should recognise the difference between a general course file and a focused portfolio detailing personal skill development. Diaries were often too generalised and failed to detail what practical work had been undertaken towards individual development.

For centres that had adopted the recommended induction process and explored a range of art forms and skills before counselling learners to make decisions about their proposed area of development the work was often more focused and detailed. Many centres continued to make valid decisions about the art-form to be explored and developed but this often resulted in a formulaic and generalised approach. Some centres still delivered a precise programme of skills, in which learners found few opportunities to respond to the demands of the specification in terms of their own exploration and engagement. It is possible to use the work of practitioners if the candidate is clear about what aspects they have explored and applied in order to focus on their own skill area. Biographical notes and/or dramatic theory alone failed to demonstrate skill development. This approach was sometimes replicated in other art forms such as Dance and Music. The multi-art-form approach was more apparent in

centres with a high number of production learners as they could approach lighting, stage management, box office and so forth on a carousel basis before becoming fully focussed on one production area for their presentation. However the disadvantage here was that these centres did not always produce the range and depth of evidence sufficient to meet some of the higher mark bands. Candidates selecting technical or support skills should focus on specific areas that can be developed and evidenced.

Many of the most successful centres submitted portfolios that revealed genuine personal focus, concrete exploration by candidates, ownership by learners, re-visited audit plans and a breadth of evaluative opportunities.

Once again it is valuable to repeat the recommendation from last year as follows:

There needed to be a stronger focus on specific skills, the methods by which individuals intended to develop them and a series of audit points through which they tracked their progress and defined the next stages. The process must be:

this is where I am at the beginning [clearly evidenced]

these are the skills I hope to develop

these are the methods/techniques/people and resources I will use [in detail]

this is evidence of my application

this is how I know I am progressing [or not]

these are the proposed next stages.

The methodology for tracking and ensuring clear evidence to support this programme can be as varied as the number of centres delivering the specification. Similarly the approaches adopted can include normal teaching sessions or entirely individualised processes but whatever format is adopted the individual candidate must ensure that the above content is securely evidenced.

Generally the moderation process went well with respect to the Unit, with most centres clearly understanding the sampling process and what was expected of them in terms of the production of evidence and documentation. Most centres presented the portfolios using the appropriate candidate identification/authentication sheet [available on-line]. Where centres also included a completed copy of the marking criteria grid the moderation process was much easier to manage. When moderators had considerable difficulty in finding evidence or struggled to determine how marks had been awarded the process sometimes came very close to re-marking. To avoid this in future it is important for centres to note the importance of the requirement to annotate work clearly.

Strengthening of the structures on which evidence is hung, clearer annotation and tracking procedures and a fuller understanding of the exploratory and individual ownership ethos of the unit will ensure efficient moderation.

Once again most centres were clear on the need for standardisation and where a number of specialist teachers were involved in delivering and/or assessing the unit standardisation was seen to be essential to the process and a useful pre-requisite to a comprehensive and informed delivery of the course.

UNIT 2 - PLANNING FOR AN EVENT

It appeared from moderator reports that centres had assimilated the advice from the 2006 feedback and Chief Examiner's report and had managed the unit very effectively.

There were some very imaginative internal and external events planned which fulfilled the intention of the unit and made it a real and relevant learning experience for candidates. When candidates had decided, or were given, a clearly defined event that required planning they were able to focus on the demands of the process and subsequently report effectively on their work.

Again when candidates had organized the document into the three sections of report, action plan and evaluation of process the portfolios were most successful. It is worth repeating the comment from last year's report concerning the format for the report as there were still too many candidates who did not understand how this should have been structured.

Essentially the format for the report should be reflective and provide a coherent, detailed account of what was done by the group throughout the process in an objective and business-like manner.

The significance of assessment objective two was again not always recognized by candidates, and action plans were consequently not detailed enough and became the weaker section of the portfolios.

Action plans are central to the process and should indicate clearly the roles and responsibilities within the team, realistic timelines and intervals when progress would be assessed. Interim monitoring of the action plan throughout the project should also be an essential part of the process.

Many portfolios demonstrated evidence of candidate's individual understanding of the process as well as their role within the group. Stronger candidates included evaluation of their own role and responsibilities together with a detailed assessment of the entire process.

Most candidates' work was well presented and in an appropriate format although in some centres this could have been further developed to provide a more concise and coherent 'fit for purpose' report style. The addition of a contents page and effective pagination of the document together with an appendix for supporting evidence was not widespread but clearly earned high marks when it was apparent. When centres had encouraged clear record keeping as a way to register the process, coupled with clear instruction on how to compile a report candidates had been able to document their experience in a formal and concise manner; making effective links between performance, production and administration.

The format of the report was sometimes too informal and took on the style of a log book; when this happened candidates often included irrelevant information and lost their 'overview' of the planning process. There were still a few centres where moderators reported a tendency to describe the role of planning in general rather than in relation to the chosen event.

Where candidates took a performance role in the event there was often a tendency to report on the creation of the performance material, rather than remain focused on the planning. Similarly this remained the case with the evaluation aspect of the unit

where candidates often focused on the success of the event rather than the effectiveness of the teams' organization. This was less evident than last year however, which suggested that centres were mapping the unit against more appropriate and effective events.

Teacher assessors seemed to be more accurate this year in applying the assessment criteria to the planning report, rather than rewarding the input to the event in general. This suggested greater awareness of the focus of the unit and the weightings of the assessment objectives. As a result the moderation of unit two was on the whole without problems and was moderated within the tolerance agreed by the board. Moderators reported that samples were provided from across the mark range, and it appeared that most assessment criteria were able to be applied and differentiated effectively.

Centre administration was fairly consistent in that centre assessor feedback was linked to the assessment objectives and to the assessment criteria effectively, but candidates' work was too frequently without annotation to indicate against which criteria marks had been awarded. This was perhaps because the work had been through several drafts prior to the portfolio being put completed to achieve the formal style of the report.

Internal standardisation in centres was not consistent, with evidence of good practice in some and no internal standardisation in others. Several centres had not attended standardisation training events but where this had taken place there was a better understanding of the demands of the unit and how the criteria should be applied.

As last year the correct 'vehicle' allowed candidates to engage fully with the project and ensured that creative elements within the assessment criteria could be successfully addressed. A few centres still allowed candidates to plan and manage a large event such as the school production with clearly defined individual roles. This approach often marginalised candidates from the decision making process and inhibited the ability to work as a team. Deciding upon a manageable project was clearly the most influential factor in enabling candidates to address all the criteria; it needed to be real, interesting and challenging but at the same time manageable for the group. Moderators reported that there were some very effective briefs created by centres ranging from creating and managing 'X Factor' events to hosting visiting professional work at their centre.

Only a very small minority of centres allowed candidates to use unit two to plan their unit three response to a commission despite the fact that it was quite clearly stated in the Commission Brief for unit three that **'It is not acceptable to use unit 3 to fulfil the requirements of unit 2; the content for the latter must be defined by the centre'**.

Most centres ensured that an event took place, so planning could be practical and real and the nature of the internal brief given to candidates was central to candidate success. It is still the advice that centres should define the scope of the event very clearly for candidates to avoid a protracted decision making process that uses valuable time to little effect. An example might be as direct as 'You must organise a cabaret interlude for the awards evening' or 'plan a lower school drama festival' or organise a visiting company to perform at our venue' and so forth. The parameters are established in such briefs but do not prevent candidates from making many creative and logistical decisions.

UNIT THREE - PERFORMING TO A COMMISSION

Once again this unit was the most straightforward for centres as it focused essentially on the process of practical performance - the reason why most candidates initially selected the programme of study. Responses to the commission briefs were very comparable to the previous series but centres had benefited from last year's moderation discussions and centre feedback together with the recommendations in the Chief Examiner's report. Consequently the approach adopted by centres, with a similar cohort of candidates, was more focused and effective this year.

A wide range of work was seen by moderators in terms of the quality of the finished product and the creative responses to the Commission briefs. The two most popular choices were Commission One [Song Lyrics or Tune] and Commission Three [Under Pressure] and candidates were very imaginative and inventive in their selection of source material and the manner in which they responded to it. Fewer centres opted for the TIE style brief but those that did were very often very effective and understood the principles involved. Musical theatre and dance productions were again as popular as drama work and moderators were clearly excited by much of the work on display. Moderators reported seeing both very strong and very weak candidate productions. At the top end the work was often at A2 standard and at the lower end poorer than GCSE efforts. There was again evidence of centres adopting a 'house style' but this was perfectly acceptable and enabled them to work to their strengths. The 'content free' nature of the specification and the breadth of interpretation possible in unit three is the real asset of the specification.

There was little evidence of candidates being left to their own devices but in some cases they attempted to create effective performance work based on the assimilation of a very limited range of skills and techniques. As in the previous series weaker work was often naturalistic in nature and depended on the abilities of the candidates as script writers rather than performers.

It appeared that centres had absorbed much of the advice from the last series and approached the response to the commission brief in a very coherent manner that focused very clearly on the desired impact for the audience. Most centres ensured that the realisation of the commission brief was considered in terms of the overall performance quality and not merely a platform for individual candidate's skills. Fewer centres presented the work without appropriate audiences and this often helped candidates to raise the level of their individual performances. Similarly to last year 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.

Centre assessor marking was rarely over inflated though sometimes the rank order reflected the assessor's response to the candidates' input during the creative process and a natural desire to 'reward' enthusiasm and productivity rather than performance ability. It remained difficult for some tutors to maintain a completely objective view based only on the performance.

The one area that was not as secure was the centres reference to the 'Centre Advice' document and I assume this is because it is now on-line and not sent as hard copy to

the Performing Arts staff. There were several instances of minor rubric infringements being made that could have been avoided. Similarly there were a few centres that had, apparently, been given approval from Edexcel for procedures that were incorrect. Moderators allowed these infringements and advised centres about the correct procedures but inevitably candidate performance was affected.

Again it must be stressed that it is important for centre assessors to attend standardisation meetings prior to the assessment window. It is also important to confirm again that unit three must not be used to deliver unit two 'Planning for an Event'.

Most centres used the pro-forma designed to provide the moderator with the genesis of the piece, identify candidates and roles and confirm the performance style and target audience. Moderators were clear that this document was very helpful when determining the success of the work against the candidates' stated intentions for the piece and it should be stressed that this procedure should be followed by all centres.

Identification of candidates remained an issue in many centres; identifying individuals particularly when candidates were part of a large group, dressed in similar costumes was difficult! 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.

The performance must be recorded by each centre, as required in the specification [page 40 second paragraph], ensuring the clearest vision and sound possible. It is also essential that candidates are identified clearly at the beginning of the Video/DVD. 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.

Candidates who offered technical support as their role within the group often demonstrated great creativity and expertise in their technical accomplishments but also often failed to use the ten minute presentation to the examiner and moderator effectively to contextualise their work. When candidates did make good use of this time it enabled moderators to assess the outcomes against the stated aims.

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.

With very few exceptions moderators were impressed with the commitment of candidates and the work they produced. They were equally pleased with the professionalism of centre assessors and the ease with which a level of agreement was achieved.

UNIT FOUR -EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PERFORMING ARTS

Unit four placed candidates' work within the context of the Performing Arts industries. It asked learners to research into employment contexts, jobs and roles, industry standards and conditions and progression routes and opportunities and then make connections between what they had analysed and their own artistic practice. This combination should have informed their acquisition of skills, understanding and knowledge.

The unit however caused problems for many centres in this first year of its assessment. The report should have outlined employment opportunities generally in the performing arts industry and go on to describe six jobs specifically, two from the performance range, two from technical support and two from administration. There should have been a range of roles, i.e. not two actors. Many centres also provided evidence of research into two arts organisations and although this was further useful data, given the actual marks awarded for this section, it would have been better for candidates to have introduced their research on the six roles within an overall industry context.

The main issue related to the imbalance in the weighting of the assessment criteria. The report section of the unit often resulted in very detailed and impressive documents from candidates in which they carried out exhaustive investigations into the required six job roles. They often included interviews with practicing professionals and linked their findings to potential career pathways within the industry. However the report section of the unit could only earn six marks and candidates' efforts were too often focused on the report to the detriment of the portfolio.

The portfolio section of the unit required candidates to decide upon a personal area of expertise that they wished to pursue, gain practical experience in the selected role and evaluate how the knowledge and understanding they gained might inform their subsequent decisions about a selected progression route. This should have been underpinned by knowledge of professional practice, strong use of vocational language and clear references to how the role had contributed to skills development. The assessment criteria included presentation and indicated that aspects of the portfolio should address a specific market or audience.

The three bands of assessment criteria relating to this practical application and evaluation could earn 39 marks and clearly needed to be the main focus of the unit.

The general responses from centres and teachers was good and the unit was perceived by many to be innovative and exciting, covering vocational areas not previously addressed; in particular the dynamic relationships between the range of jobs and roles in the arts and the learner's own practice, artistic choices and progression routes. The evidence supported this as a demanding unit but one testing appropriate skills and understanding for this level. The range of portfolio evidence was very wide. At one extreme a centre merely included copies of the work that had been produced for unit five and at the other some centres provided highly organised and marketable material profiling and 'selling' candidates' practical work in a very focused way. These portfolios not only included accounts and diaries of workshops but also pamphlets, CVs, show-reels and other creative material that sought to highlight the vocational

skills of a potential employee and artist. Most centres were a mixture of the two and gave the impression of trying to cover all bases.

The strongest candidates used the initial investigation into the industry and subsequent report to inform their decision about which job role they wished to pursue. These candidates then evidenced their practical application of the job and evaluated their experiences within a vocational context.

Moderators reported the following range of activities for candidates who wanted to explore the role of an actor:

Interview of a performer to ascertain their career route.

Exploration of audition requirements at universities and drama schools.

Preparation of audition material and attendance at auditions.

Attendance at drama school and university open days.

Involvement in a range of acting workshops.

Visits to performances and post show discussions.

Performances in a range of roles to determine their own strengths and weaknesses.

Investigation of support for actors through Equity.

Investigate how performers CV's are structured.

Research into the numerous trade papers and on-line resources for advertising acting jobs.

Once they had experienced a range of activities they presented their findings in a coherent manner that revealed a secure appreciation of how actors function from initial training to professional performance.

Centres were generally efficient with the presentation of material during moderation and, when the demands of the unit were fully understood, centres were accurate in their assessment of candidates against the national standards. In some centres however moderators reported very 'erratic' marking that failed to distinguish between the report and the portfolio and in these instances significant adjustments were necessary.

In its first series moderators had to focus fully on making sure the standard of the evidence was commensurate with national standards at this level while giving some leeway where the structure and format of the work did not fully address the demands of the specification. However it was apparent that in some cases very good candidates produced a great deal of evidence in areas where marks could not be awarded. Conversely, marks that were available for presentation within the context of the specification were not always applied appropriately.

UNIT FIVE -ADVANCED PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

Moderators reported that most candidates work was presented clearly for moderation, and nearly all centres had the performance work available for viewing with the portfolios. The video evidence represented fifty percent of the available marks and is an essential evidence requirement. It would be helpful in the future if all candidates could be clearly identified at the beginning of the recording of the unit five production.

Similarly the working notebook that demonstrated how candidates had engaged with the performance material was also an essential component.

The work was very varied in the way it met the assessment criteria. Many centres revealed a secure understanding of the unit with portfolios directly relating to and showing engagement with the performance material. However in many centres there seemed to be a lack of understanding of what evidence was needed for the unit.

Many centres allowed candidates to devise material for this unit and clearly since the focus should be on the demonstration of the application of skills at an advanced level this approach hinders the candidates' ability to address some of the essential criteria.

For example it is difficult to envisage how candidates can effectively engage with AO1 that requires them to demonstrate an understanding of their performance material if they have not constructed it. Centres should ensure that the material selected to demonstrate candidates' application of their advanced skills is substantial and sufficiently demanding.

Together with the recording of the candidates' skills 'in action' the unit demanded a working diary/log to evidence the creative journey of the performer and the appropriate selection and application of performance techniques. In some centres the portfolio notebooks sometimes focused on general planning for the performance or copious theoretical notes on practitioners without any explanation of which elements of their ideas were used; this approach detracted from the creative journey of the performer and failed to address AO2.

The working notebook should have included a diary/log that explained in detail the rehearsal programme, the individual candidate's research and preparation for the role[s] and recorded the ongoing process of rehearsal from inception to final performance. Some candidates submitted working notebooks which included well thumbed annotated scripts, which indicated a real experience of performance preparation.

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. 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.

In most centres the performances took place in front of the intended target audience, and the performance skills used were fitting.

In many centres the performance evidence was of a high standard and candidates had communicated their experiences effectively within their working notebook. The practical work for this unit included music, dance, drama singing and musical theatre together with a few more unusual skills in cross art form pieces. Many styles and genres of performance were presented and there was evidence of some useful formative assessment and candidates' ongoing involvement throughout the working process. Similarly there was clear evidence of teachers' involvement in the process and as a result the centre assessment for this paper was much more accurate than for unit four.

UNIT SIX - ADVANCED 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 skills.

There were far fewer candidates who opted for this unit in preference to unit five but generally those candidates who did choose a technical/design/administrative pathway were very enthusiastic about their role and often had decided on a specific career route in the field.

Moderators were presented with a very wide range of quality from very effective professional approaches to design, technical and administration roles to work that failed to realize the demands in any secure manner.

Generally candidates work was well prepared for moderation with box sets, costumes, properties and programme/ticket designs displayed alongside portfolio work and recorded evidence of the skills in performance. It should be noted that all the design and technical roles such as lighting, sound, set-design costume and so forth should be demonstrated 'in action' on an appropriate recording, preferably in the 'live' situation i.e. supporting performers.

Most of the work presented was appropriate for the unit and linked clearly to the assessment objectives. Evidence of performance and production work must be submitted and candidates must be clearly identified at the beginning of the recording. In many centres the working notebooks were effective but because there was no video evidence to demonstrate the realisation of the work undertaken the marks were lower than they could have been.

In many centres 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 technical candidates were involved in theatre production outside the curriculum and often brought considerable expertise to the work. It is important to stress however 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. For example in one centre a candidate had chosen lighting but was not allowed to go up the lighting tower and so he could not rig or focus the lanterns.

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 failed to include their rehearsal notebook, correctly annotated prompt copy and almost never completed post show reports.

UNIT SEVEN - PRODUCTION DELIVERY

Because of the manner in which the specification is constructed the phrasing of the brief for unit seven may change but the basic demands will require the same response from candidates. In the first series for this unit most centres managed to respond to the demands of the brief with a varied range of inventive and creative productions.

However there were many performances that related only marginally to the original text and this is the aspect of the unit that needed to be more focused. Unit seven is not primarily a devising unit and though the line between devising and textual interpretation is often very uncertain the response should aim to present an existing work in an alternative manner in terms of focus, treatment, style or genre.

The most successful centres presented their own interpretation of an existing play or dance work but with a clearly defined intention for a modern audience. For example a classic Greek play such as Oedipus was set in a contemporary housing project, retaining the dialogue, using physical theatre techniques and creating live sound effects in a 'Stomp' manner [not a definitive suggestion merely an example of what was done].

In this first series of the unit moderators were instructed to accept the widest interpretation of the brief and this allowed centres to feel confident that whatever approach they adopted candidates would not be penalised. In future years it is hoped that centres will take note of this report and moderator feedback to interpret the brief with the correct perspective.

Unit seven allowed candidates to engage with the subject in a totally practical manner and therefore was very popular but at the same time demanded a very sophisticated and polished level of performance. To score highly candidates needed to be completely secure in the skills they were employing and the vehicle used to demonstrate those skills needed to be fully developed and polished to performance standards.

Most centres presented well rehearsed, imaginative and coherent responses to the production brief. There was considerable evidence of a professional approach and full commitment to the performances and attempts to reflect industry demands and standards. There was clear evidence of understanding and appreciation of the creative decisions made with appropriate A2 focus.

In most cases the work was performed in front of the intended target audience and the work 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. Similarly all styles of performance were reported from very classical approaches through musical theatre to Commedia dell'Arte and many physical theatre/dance works. Candidates performed their work in a wide range of venues and there were some strong examples of promenade theatre, site-specific dance pieces as well as studio and theatre based productions.

The following is a quote from one moderator and encapsulates the experiences of the team:

This was a delight! There were some interesting re-workings as follows:

- *A modern day re-working of Faust*
- *Blood Brothers into a comedy genre*
- *Little Red in da' Hood - the nursery rhyme turned into musical theatre, very funny!*
- *Where Angels Fear to Tread [VTOL Dance] -changed genre*
- *The Crucible - brought it up to date and placed in a school context, whereby false allegations were made about a teacher - an excellent & very poignant piece.*

Moderators noted a real development in candidates' work and secure progression from AS to A2 standard as a result 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. Again it was usually only the centre assessors' rank order of candidates that were different to the moderator and this normally reflected the candidate's contributions to the rehearsal process. Centre assessors must make judgements ONLY on the individual performances during the production.

A few centres did not adhere to the requirements for the unit and as a result moderators were presented with fewer than the minimum number of candidates; in one case it was a solo! Similarly some centres failed to note the times allocated for the work and moderators were faced with far too lengthy productions that often detracted from the candidates' abilities. Over long performances can often become self-penalising.

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.

Also it is essential that all performances are recorded clearly with good sound quality [a digital DVD format is the ideal] and that candidates are identified on the recording.

Grade Boundaries

Unit 1 (6980/01) EXPLORING SKILLS FOR PERFORMING

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N
Raw boundary mark	60	55	48	41	34	28	22
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40	30

Unit 2 (6981/01) PLANNING FOR AN EVENT

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N
Raw boundary mark	60	54	47	40	33	27	21
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40	30

Unit 3 (6982/01) PERFORMING TO COMMISSION

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N
Raw boundary mark	60	55	48	41	35	29	23
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40	30

Unit 4 (6983/01) EMPLOYMENT OPPS IN PERFORMING ARTS

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N
Raw boundary mark	60	55	47	40	33	26	19
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40	30

Unit 5 (6984/01) ADVANCED PERF.PRACTICE

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N
Raw boundary mark	60	56	49	42	35	28	21
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40	30

Unit 6 (6985/01) ADVANCED PROD.PRACTICE

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N
Raw boundary mark	60	56	49	42	35	28	21
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40	30

Unit 7 (6986/01) PRODUCTION DELIVERY

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N
Raw boundary mark	60	56	48	41	34	27	20
Uniform boundary mark	100	80	70	60	50	40	30

Notes

Maximum Mark (Raw): the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme.

Boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

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