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Examiners' Report/
Lead Examiner Feedback
Summer 2018

BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Performing
Arts

Unit 7: Employment Opportunities in the
Performing Arts (31561H)



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Grade Boundaries

What is a grade boundary?

A grade boundary is where we set the level of achievement required to obtain a certain grade for the externally assessed unit. We set grade boundaries for each grade, Distinction, Merit and Pass.

Setting grade boundaries

When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the external assessment. When we can see the full picture of performance, our experts are then able to decide where best to place the grade boundaries – this means that they decide what the lowest possible mark should be for a particular grade.

When our experts set the grade boundaries, they make sure that learners receive grades which reflect their ability. Awarding grade boundaries is conducted to ensure learners achieve the grade they deserve to achieve, irrespective of variation in the external assessment.

Variations in external assessments

Each external assessment we set asks different questions and may assess different parts of the unit content outlined in the specification. It would be unfair to learners if we set the same grade boundaries for each test, because then it would not take into account that a test might be slightly easier or more difficult than any other.

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, are on the website via this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

Unit 7: Employment Opportunities in the Performing Arts (31561H)

Grade	Unclassified	Level 3			
		N	P	M	D
Boundary Mark	0	9	19	30	42

Introduction

Unit 7: Employment Opportunities in Performing Arts is a mandatory externally assessed task on the Extended Diploma of the BTEC Nationals in Performing Arts. The first assessment opportunity for this task is May/June 2018.

This unit requires learners to respond to a set task in the form of a response to an employment opportunity, this employment opportunity changes each series.

Learners must respond to the employment opportunity provided in the set task. They need to fully consider the employment opportunity, including the organisational profile, the performance project and the workshop requirement and complete a written response and a digital promotional portfolio.

The written response should be up to 2000 words and the digital promotional portfolio should be up to 10 minutes of video /audio material and can include up to 10 photographs/images and written supporting materials of up to 750 words.

The set task is marked out of 60. The written response is marked out of 36 and the digital promotional portfolio out of 24.

Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

Overall, examiners experienced a mixture of responses covering the range of marks available. The best work seen was the result of a full appreciation of the employment opportunity, supported by an understanding of organisation types and structures, awareness of different types of performance projects and a practical understanding of workshop activities.

In the most successful work, the written response was underpinned with research and both the written response and the digital promotional portfolio offered critically selected and relevant examples throughout.

Employment opportunity

The employment opportunity for this first examination series was to join Vale Performing Arts centre for their Cohesion project.

This employment opportunity provided learners with the opportunity to respond as a potential applicant and to demonstrate their understanding of the organisation and the performance project and to suggest ideas for the workshop. Learners could apply as a practitioner from across the performing arts disciplines and demonstrate their understanding of how to promote themselves.

Task

The set task assesses learners across the following assessment outcomes:

AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the purpose, structure and work of performing arts organisations

AO2: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of professional practice in relation to employment opportunities in the performing arts

AO3: Apply knowledge and understanding of professional practice to meet the needs of performing arts organisations

AO4: Be able to respond to an employment opportunity in a performing arts context with appropriate justification

Activity 1: Written Response

The written response acts as an application for the given employment opportunity. This should be written in such a way it will persuade Vale Performing Arts Centre to consider the applicant for the job and that they are a suitable candidate for the Cohesion project.

During this activity the learner will need to demonstrate their understanding of Vale Performing Arts centre as an organisation, their understanding of the Cohesion performance project and their understanding of the workshop requirements. They will also need to demonstrate they have suitable skills and experience for the employment opportunity overall.

Learners should include details of their skills and experience, evidence of their suitability to join the organisation and participate in the performance project and include ideas for the workshop.

Learners will need to produce the written response in a manner and tone that demonstrates persuasive promotional intent.

The best written responses were completed after learners had had the opportunity to undertake relevant research in order to complete the task with an underpinning knowledge of the type of organisation offering the employment opportunity.

In order to access the higher marks for this activity learners are required to take an in-depth, analytical approach to interpreting the necessary considerations of this type of organisation.

Learners should make a critical selection of the ideas they will present, and the examples of their work they will include, so they are consistently relevant to the organisation and performance project as well as for the workshop requirement. Likewise, the skills and experience a learner selects to share with the potential employer should be selected in order to fully engage the employer.

Several learners appeared to write a 'generic application' that did not make specific links

between the skills and experience being outlined and the given employment opportunity. Some learners did not make sufficient or relevant reference to the organisation and simply responded to the Cohesion project in a way that took 'Cohesion' as a general theme or initial stimulus. Some ideas for the workshops were not appropriate for the scenario given in the employment opportunity.

Examples of learner work that did well gave a clear analysis of all the key aspects of the employment opportunity. Ideas and comments were consistently relevant and linked to the scenario. There was clear promotional intent and the response overall was likely to engage the employer. The contents of the response were clearly communicated with effective and relevant use of technical language.

Understanding of the organisation being demonstrated using relevant information sources included examples such as:

Example 1

As a registered charity with National Portfolio Organisation status, I understand Vale Performing Arts Centre must work within the Arts Council's policy to create work that is culturally diverse. (relevant quote given and referenced). You must also develop and implement an equality action plan. Making arts for everyone must be at the heart of your Cohesion project in line with your NPO responsibilities.

Example 2

I understand that your organisation has NPO status, which according to the Arts Council website represents 'some of the best practice in the world' and I would welcome the opportunity to join such an organisation. I understand Vale Performing Arts centre has a commitment to encouraging equality and diversity in the wider community.

Understanding of the performance project being demonstrated included examples such as:

Example 1

I am particularly interested in being a part of Vale's Cohesion performance project as I am a great advocate for arts being valuable in today's society, we need to promote togetherness through the arts. I will discuss the skills and experience I have that will show you what I will bring to this role.

Example 2

I am experienced in working in community arts, I have taken part in community theatre projects and seen first-hand the positive impact the arts can have when working with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The arts give people a voice, raises ambitions and builds confidence.

Understanding of the workshop requirements being demonstrated included examples such as:

Example 1

I believe the workshop aspect of the Cohesion performance project will be very effective, as you will be working directly with the community. I have an idea to use music and songs to engage members of the community and bring them together, as equals. I have previous training in musical theatre and I have included examples of both my performance work and workshop leading in my digital portfolio.

Example 2

I have several ideas for the dance workshop, exploring dance styles from around the world, so we can explore and appreciate each other's cultures. For example, I would like to run a Bhangra workshop as part of the workshop programme, as this is a style I have experience of teaching. This is an effective dance style for the workshop as it is accessible to all levels of ability and all ages.

Activity 2: Digital Promotional Portfolio

The Digital Promotional Portfolio is an opportunity for learners to demonstrate their skills and experience as part of their response to the employment opportunity.

Learners should select and include relevant extracts of their practical work that will persuade Vale Performing Arts Centre to include them in the Cohesion performance project and workshops.

Learners should consider specific requirements of the organisation, the performance project and the workshop. They should show examples that clearly link skills and experience to the key factors of the employment opportunity.

Better responses presented work where there was consistent relevance and a clear appreciation of promotional intent. These responses included short clips of video, covering relevant areas of work, where the focus was on the learner. Where learners had limited clips to select from, more successful responses used voice over, or sub titles to make connections between the work being watched and the employment opportunity.

In some cases, we saw generic showreels that could fit with any type of work, and they lacked links to the organisation, the project and/or to the workshop.

Some of the less successful responses included long extracts from productions where it was difficult to appreciate the link with the employment opportunity. In these cases, it was often also difficult to identify the learner.

Examples of learner work that did very well were entirely consistent with the ideas, skills and experience outlined in the written response and formed a coherent and persuasive response. They were fully refined and provided potentially successful 'applications' to the employment opportunity overall.

Administration

Most centres presented the work as required. Centres should fully adhere to the demands of both the task for the specific examination series and the requirements as detailed in the instructions within the Set Task Brief and as outlined in the Administrative Support Guide.

Centres are reminded that work must be submitted by the deadline in the correct format in terms of recordings and pdf files. Each learner's work must be presented in its own folder, on a new, undamaged, DVD or memory stick that will play on any commonly used laptop. Each learner's folder should include the written response and the digital promotional portfolio with any supporting material. Where DVDs were sent without any protection, it often caused delays, as replacements were usually needed because the DVD had arrived broken or damaged in the post. Where encryption software has been used, a password must be provided.

Centres are reminded that they must complete the essential documents relating to each learner and the centre itself. These are required by the examiner for marking. It is essential that this paperwork is printed out and provided as a hard copy, which the examiner can write on and not just sent digitally.

Once the written response has been completed it should be converted and saved as a pdf document. Recordings were generally of a good quality however it is essential a learner can be identified in the practical work included in the digital portfolio.

Summary

Based on the performance seen during this series the following should be considered:

- Centres should prepare learners to respond to the employment opportunity as a whole, considering the organisational profile, the project outline and the workshop requirements.
- Centres should support learners so they have access to relevant examples of their performance work to include in their digital portfolio.
- In their written response and the digital promotional portfolio, learners should demonstrate their understanding of promotional intent.
- There should be evidence of the learner's critical selection of material for the portfolio.
- Learners should analyse the relevance of their skills and experience in line with the specific employment opportunity.
- Additional optional evidence for the portfolio (images and written materials) should be organised in the learner's folder/portfolio in such a way it can be viewed and considered as additional promotional materials.
- Ensure learners can be clearly identified in their digital portfolio.
- The centre must ensure the task being responded to is for the correct series and learners are not responding to one of the Sample Assessment Materials or, for future series, are not responding to a previous year's paper.

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