

CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS LEVEL 3 (2016)

Moderators' report

PERFORMING ARTS



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2019 series

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Introduction

Our Moderators' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on centres' assessment of moderated work, based on what has been observed by our moderation team. These reports include a general commentary of accuracy of internal assessment judgements; identify good practice in relation to evidence collation and presentation and comments on the quality of centre assessment decisions against individual Learning Outcomes. This report also highlights areas where requirements have been misinterpreted and provides guidance to centre assessors on requirements for accessing higher mark bands. Where appropriate, the report will also signpost to other sources of information that centre assessors will find helpful.

General overview

The scope of this report covers the qualification overall but the external units of the 2016 suite also have separate reports to centres generated as part of the Awarding process.

Centres continue to build in numbers citing increased professional judgement, flexibility of delivery and freedom from excessive administration. As the qualification consolidates centres are becoming more creative in their delivery approaches while maintaining the standard of evidence and the coverage of the Learning Outcomes. In this respect the programme has established its own ethos and teaching and learning contexts rather than being a reaction or a counter to other more established vocational qualifications.

As in previous years there was a range of cohort sizes across centres with some relatively small groups mostly in schools and registered on the Extended Certificate programme through to large FE cohorts on Diplomas where one or more pathways were offered with a subsequent mix of units submitted for moderation.

The choices on the 2016 suite are more restricted given the external units that are required to be delivered and generally schools are opting for the Extended Certificate which means only 2 units are moderated. In any event, centres should think carefully in terms of a moderation and examination assessment plan to enable moderation to be scheduled realistically across the two allowed visits, remembering that all non-examined units must be moderated.

Both optional and mandatory units performed well on all pathways with a wide range of evidence reflective of the centre and learner art-form choices. Centres were generally adaptive in their use of recorded evidence and produced some innovative formats given the opportunity to do so by the more flexible and dynamic approaches encouraged by the Cambridge Technicals.

As part of the move to a wider range of recorded evidence centres could develop a wider range of recorded evidence, specifically more student-generated capture to include:

- Filmed annotations and evaluations of key moments and practice.
- Explanation videos.
- Workshops/devising processes with student voice-over/narrative.
- To camera moments when something creatively significant happens.
- Peer to peer discussions and evaluations.
- Group discussions (led by student or tutor).
- Annotated regular video updates of skills/technique development.
- Professional interviews.

Moderators will continue to give guidance on the nature and range of evidence possible on all suites.

The centres that used the opportunities within the qualification for maximum integration of units and project approaches to delivery were able to fully customise programmes to meet the needs of students, the resources of the centre and the professional contexts and creative experience of teachers.

The range of units taken by students depends on the suite being delivered as indicated above; however, on the Extended Certificate, the qualification size most favoured by schools as it represents a nominal single A Level choice, there is essentially only one optional unit (Unit 4: *Combined arts* although internally assessed and externally moderated, is mandatory). Unit 8: *Performing repertoire* dominated as the choice here, with some centres opting for 6: *Improvisation*.

The larger size qualifications (Diplomas) are based on art-form pathways and so choices are wider and vary but clearly the technique units can carry most of the evidence and should form the basis for performance projects that may integrate other more specialist units. Centres should also be aware that an integrated project approach can include the developmental work needed for the external units. For instance centres could integrate Unit 4: *Combined arts* with Unit 2: *Proposal for commissioning brief*.

Pathways threw up some anomalies on the 2016 suite where because of the external units and the subsequent limiting of choice some centres were not able to include some specific units in their offer. To counter this there continues to be discussions on whether units from other pathways could be 'migrated' across; this would create some further flexibility in delivery if carried through.

There continues to be some movement and 'churn' in the vocational sector and centres will be continuing to make choices over the next year with regard to programmes and the Cambridge Technicals will continue to expand in this context, retaining as they do the clear advantages of visiting moderation and streamlined unit design and assessment platforms.

The 2016 suite includes externally assessed units designed to test learner's knowledge and understanding of real professional contexts such as proposal writing and auditioning. The Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs) for these externally assessed units are on the OCR website and centres are encouraged to refer to these at the earliest opportunity.

Common misconceptions

Most early misunderstandings of the Cambridge Technicals occur when centres become overly attached to a unit-by-unit approach and subsequently fail to see the possibilities in adapting the unit demands and Learning Outcomes to their own creative programme of performance and skills development.

Centres are encouraged to design their programmes to suit their students – please see the Project approach guides online for further inspiration here.

A further misunderstanding can occur when centres assume a plethora of documentation and regulations that simply do not feature on the suites.

Helpful resources

As well as the resources available on the website (Model Assignments, Delivery Guides and Integrated Project Approach models) centres should consider their moderator as a helpful resource. Moderators are allocated to centres for the academic year and they can and should be able to deal with any questions, or they in turn will consult the Lead Moderator.

Centres can also email vocational.qualifications@ocr.org.uk for support and clarification from the Performing Arts Subject Advisor.

Unit 2 General overview

Overall there has been a good response with centres ensuring candidates are utilising the appendices to show their research, depth of working and articulation of knowledge. The text is being used to 'sell' their product in response to the brief and commission choices.

By far the most common choice was the Accountants Gala Dinner where we read ideas, some of which were very sophisticated, with lots of detail around the fundamental planning, rehearsals, budget, licences and insurance. Candidates really got to grips with the type of event that would be suitable for the client and the examination team now feel like they are expert on how to set up a 1920's speakeasy, James Bond or Casino/ Showgirl event.

Magicians were also popular as were fire eaters, aerial hoop and silk work. This is an area that centres could work on to improve a candidate's response when they include the use aerial/ fire work in their submission. To involve the use of dangerous activity, candidates need to tie in the relevant technical and risk assessment detail. For example; a qualified rig technician to test the strain and set up of aerial hoops, silks, ceiling strength/ height. This would then need to be accounted for as an extra consideration in the budget, risk assessment and introduce mechanical licencing. This sophistication gains top band marks as it is thoroughly considered.

The next most popular commission was the Rodeo. There was a range of ideas and activities that were carefully considered over the whole event. The Fly Tipling commission for the Mayor was less popular but those that did tackle it did well in their responses as they were able to apply synoptic knowledge of funding and community delivery from other units.

Points to be flagged to improve marks:

- **Scratch performances and evaluations-** some centres put too much emphasis on this and there are very few marks that can be given for the depth given. This is a great research idea but unfortunately for some candidates the depth of the scratch research overtook the project itself.
- **Encourage candidates to show their knowledge-** avoid payment in kind, the owning of venues so that there is no cost for rehearsal or required hired space, ducking out by already having licences so no research or cost is shown. It is hard for examiners to give a good mark to considerations without the knowledge detail. A good approach is for candidates to treat examiners as the customer who is 'buying in' their knowledge and skill of their product and therefore, marks are given to what is explained and detailed and not assumed.
- **Take care with funding applications-** Arts Council or local grant funding is used a lot by candidates and is totally unnecessary for some commission briefs. A private event will not achieve or need a grant. There has to be a real community or arts benefit to achieve this sort of funding. For example; a room full of highly paid accountants, paying £250 for a Gala Dinner ticket do not need subsidising. Some candidates felt that they needed to show this knowledge which is admirable but if used it should be an explanation of why it is not required/ or required as relevant to the circumstance of the commission.
- **Relevance of public and grant funding applications-** if a candidate uses this to support their project an explanation of why it is relevant, how and when they should apply and the suitable planning time should be allocated within their planning schedules. The reality needs to be taught as many candidates include grants as a 'given' which is not how it works in the real world for them to take forward. Knowledge of how to achieve funding is a useful tool in the workplace and a meaningful employment skill. The best place to cover this knowledge is when centres focus on arts administrator or Fundraiser roles in the workplace.

Overall, this has been a successful examination session for most centres. The centre style or following of the layout of the exam paper is acceptable to make sure vital knowledge is not missed. There is a lot of coverage in this task and a set format approach is encouraged to make sure the submissions are thorough.

While not marked, it was pleasing to see a good standard of grammar and spelling in this session. There were some really sophisticated submissions where candidates were achieving top band marks and showing real entrepreneurship in their responses. An exciting year of 'go getting' young people, with realistic and innovative ideas to continue to boost the Creative Industries Sector.

Most common causes of centres not passing

Candidates do not include enough detail or depth. Thorough use of the appendices for budget planners, risk assessments and schedules is required. The text describes the product and 'sells' it, the appendices contain all the finer workings, research and detail.

Sometimes there is a lack of understanding to tie in all the considerations to run an event or project.

Common misconceptions

The Arts Council do not give away funding readily. A funding application takes time and needs careful consideration and time to be successful. Rationale and explanation of why and how a grant is relevant and achieved is required.

Avoiding potential malpractice

Do not allow candidates to work in groups or pairs.

Centre style must not be confused with giving candidates research lists, thorough breakdowns so that their submissions are near identical with just a different project idea. Encourage candidates to follow the exam paper structure and they will not miss areas where marks can be given.

Plagiarism of information is easy to spot and must be cited.

Helpful resources

The OCR resource book, synoptic projects and toolkits that are available to centres

Additional comments

Candidates require a thorough knowledge of different roles within the arts sector. There is so much meaningful employment in this sector that young people are not aware of. This unit highlights one small sector of the Creative Industries.

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