



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2011**

**Expressive Arts**

**42601**

**(Specification 4260)**

**Unit 1: Examination Presentation: Practical  
work in response to set stimuli**

***Report on the Examination***

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## **Examination Presentation (42601)**

The Examination Presentation is still new to Expressive Arts. This is the first year where all centres have entered their candidates for the new specification.

### ***Question Paper***

This year's examination paper has been received very well, with all three questions generating some original and interesting responses. Centres clearly researched the areas of study that best suited their students. Pirates seemed to capture students' imagination particularly well but so did Silence and Ancient Egypt. It seems that there was something for everyone. More able candidates were able to develop innovative ideas and they were inspired to work beyond expectations. Lower ability candidates were also able to respond well. The new 'Record Sheet for working processes material' when used well, provided a good framework for all candidates, particularly as the guidelines section steered candidates towards the areas they needed to provide evidence for in any of the suggested formats. Centres seem to have used the preparation time in the main very well, however, work carried out during that time cannot be marked, and therefore needs to be carefully labelled and organised into a different section. Some candidates still generate a lot of research pages straight from the internet without evidence that they have been used in any way. These should not be included unless the candidate provides notes to explain how they relate to their work.

### ***Recording and Preparing work for Posting***

Centres generally have made an excellent effort to ensure that each candidate was easily identifiable and that work submitted was prepared well for marking. Where the new 'Record Sheet for working processes material' was completed fully by each candidate it made the marking process for the examiner easier. It was also very helpful where centres put candidates together who had worked together for the Examination Presentation. Where centres adhered to the instructions sent out by AQA about recording a candidate's work, the sound quality and camera angle used was generally good. It is in the interests of the candidate to ensure that the sound quality is good, and that a candidate's work can be clearly seen on the media selected by the centre. Constant zooming in and out is very distracting and does not enable the examiner to see the full picture and each candidate. Some centres did not check if sound had recorded and if it was audible. This is clearly a step that needs to be included before sending the work off to the allocated examiner. It was good to see that centres decided to use alternative media to writing continuous prose for recording working processes. It is however, essential to ensure the examiner knows how the work has been created, and not just have various sound tracks without any explanation. The idea of recording the working processes is new to the new specification, and centres that familiarised themselves with the detail of the guidance given in the new specification ensured that all necessary development work for a candidate was included, and clearly labelled.

### ***Combination of Art Forms***

There was also a good distribution of art forms this year. Drama and Original Writing, Music and Original Writing, Dance and Drama were as most years very popular. This year we have seen an increase in Visual Arts and Original Writing. Moving Images is used in centres where specialist equipment is more readily available. It was very pleasing to see that the spread of art forms is increasing and that centres are looking for more unusual combinations

that suit their students. In the majority of centres candidates completed their Examination Presentation unit with their two strongest art forms. There are however still some centres that let students choose an art form that is completely new for their Examination unit. This leads in the majority of cases to the candidate achieving a lower grade, as they are not as competent in the chosen art form.

Centres offering Dance and Drama, especially those that have specialist teaching, produced work of a good standard applying skills and techniques learned from the study of specific styles. Weaker candidates often produced immature pieces which did not allow them to demonstrate the full range of Dance and Drama skills. The documentation of the working processes varied greatly. Some centres favouring the candidates talking about their progress and recorded it on a DVD, other's had candidates write up their progress. Various means of showing Drama and Dance skills and their application in their pieces were used, which included: photographs, short recorded sequences on DVD, storyboards, diagrams and stickmen. All of them a valuable means of documenting progress.

Drama and Original Writing was another popular combination of art forms. Strong candidates were able to write a good script, provide several drafts and explanations for changes, and applied strong performance skills to show good quality drama. Candidates should be reminded that there is a time limit for their performance, and that shorter snappy pieces of drama tend to be better than long drawn out pieces that go over the 15 minute time limit. When recording the development process it is important that Original Writing is treated as an art form. Often a script appeared from nowhere, without a draft or an idea of how it had been created. This did have an effect on the mark awarded for working processes as it clearly states that 'Candidates should provide evidence, as appropriate to their chosen combination of art forms' (page 12 of the specification).

Music and Original Writing was popular this year, too. There seemed to be the whole palette of styles explored by candidates from rapping to classical pieces. Centres need reminding at this point that the description of music in the specification has changed, and is now defined as 'any genre of musical expression to be an original composition and performed or played back in a recording'. This means that just singing an existing song is no longer permissible as music unless it is included as a small contribution to largely original work; **only original work can be marked**. Examiners have seen a great variety of responses here as well as very varying quality. The Original Writing as the second art form often proved to be an add-on rather than a separate art form. In centres with lower ability candidates Original Writing was not really explored. Song-lyrics appeared without any explanation of ideas or development. Some centre's tried very hard to show the musical progress by including pictures from the software used, with the candidates then analysing the page. Others included chord sequences and reasoning for it. The accomplished musician usually scored higher than the novice. Music is an art form that is not recommended to be used for the first time in the Examination Presentation.

The Visual Arts and Original Writing seemed to suit some centres really well. Explorations were often documented in large art folders or supplemented through photographs taken throughout the examination period showing different stages of the work. Centres made excellent efforts to ensure that the examiner can see the candidates work from all angles by producing DVD's that pan along the work slowly, and supplementing this with clear photographs. A variety of responses was seen, including posters, museum artefacts, pictures, props and costumes. Original Writing in this combination was again a problem as final outcomes just appeared and were not documented. This in turn, had an effect on the marks awarded for working processes.

For Visual Arts and Moving Images some very good work was seen. The quality of film making has improved and creating animation was popular with some centres. Costume and props for the use in film was also seen. This combination of art forms is not yet as popular as some of the others, but clearly candidates are getting better at using the skills involved. This year has seen fewer power-point presentations and more film. Storyboards were not always included as evidence, although they are a good way of identifying changes to the planned project.

All art forms in this year's Examination Presentation were present in their manifold combinations. It was both pleasing and enjoyable for examiners to see such variety.

### ***Requirements of the New Specification***

One thing that did become apparent during this examination period is that teachers that attended standardisation meetings had a better understanding of the new specification and its changes including the new terminology. Some centres still used the old terminology (Verbal Arts) or even the old booklets for candidates to write evaluations, although it should be noted that **evaluations are not required in the Examination Presentation unit**.

One other aspect that is very different to the old specification is that candidates have to do more in the 15 hours of examination time than before. The time now needs to be carefully divided into creating a presentation as well as documenting the working processes. Where this has been done successfully candidates were rewarded for their efforts, where this was not the case, candidates in the main lost marks for the working processes if they were not documented as requested in the specification and accompanying booklet.

Other issues examiners encountered from some centres were that candidates working in groups did not always clearly identify which parts they were responsible for. Also, a teacher can help their candidates during the preparation time, but once the 15 hours of the examination begins, candidates need to work without teacher assistance. This means that where a video diary is used, there must be careful preparation to ensure that teachers are not seen asking leading questions as was encountered this year. In some instances, candidates only submitted evidence of one art form, although two were listed on the Record Sheet. This resulted in a loss of marks due to the assessment criteria focusing on the integration of two art forms.

It will take some time to adjust to the new specification, but it was a delight to see how many centres have embraced the new specification and that candidates produced a real range of responses, some of excellent quality. It is good to know, that the possibilities this specification offers to candidates have been identified by all existing centres.

Centres are to be congratulated for the care taken when collating and preparing the work for marking. This was hugely appreciated by all examiners.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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