



General Certificate of Secondary Education

**Applied Performing Arts 4820
48802**

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - June series

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General

There has been an excellent response to the first Brief of the new Specification. Many centres fully embraced the theme of 'Heroes and Villains' and produced work that was both entertaining and great fun.

The theme has been explored and the constraints of the Brief acknowledged. The constraints were that three performances needed to be held in a local venue for a community audience. Although some evaluations discussed the security and personnel issues this would create, not all centres considered the implications of performing on three occasions in a local venue.

This is the first year that the areas of Front of House and Marketing and Publicity have been included, and those candidates who chose these options embraced the opportunities fully.

Please remember that all the work generated while working on the Showcase Brief *must* go into the Unit 1 portfolio, as it is part of a candidate's skills development.

Administration preparation for the moderation visit

The majority of centres complied with administration procedures as outlined both at standardisation meetings and in the information letters sent to schools after moderation dates have been agreed.

Centres are once again reminded that form PAF 1 should be returned to the moderator at least two weeks prior to the moderation visit. This form helps prepare the moderator for the visit and can alert him or her to any potential problems such as candidates being prepared for the wrong performing arts brief.

Arrangements for moderation day were generally well-organised and efficient with most centres showing a touching sense of hospitality, especially to those who had travelled some distance to attend. This was much appreciated. Quiet rooms were available for the moderation of evaluations and discussion with staff, and candidates were well prepared.

The majority of centres had the Skills Development Record Forms completed for the candidates in the sample and Candidate Record Forms signed and completed with the skills development and professional conduct mark appropriately recorded. It is recommended that teachers obtain candidates' signatures on the Candidate Record Forms at the beginning of the course. These can then be stored safely to avoid the situation where some candidates leave school or college without having signed a Candidate Record Form.

Evaluation of own work

In the majority of centres the evaluations were marked and available for the moderators on arrival. It was however, disappointing to note that some candidates offered no evaluations to be marked. Centres should be encouraged to build this written element into the time constraints of the course and think of imaginative ways to engage candidates with this written element to the course.

The evaluation is not of the final performance but of the planning and research, preparation and skills development during the process of developing the work for the Showcase. It is also different to that of the Unit1 portfolio which asks for an 'evaluation of own and others' work'. There must be a clear indication of the vocational influence on the candidate with correct technical language used related to their chosen skill.

Unfortunately, some candidates' evaluations were weak because they assessed the work of their group as a whole instead of concentrating on their own specific performance. The use of the first person singular, 'I' is vital when writing an evaluation of a candidate's own work.

The evaluations and the three observations of working practices give the moderator an indication of the contribution of the candidate and helps put the performance into perspective.

Skills Development and Professional conduct

Please remember that the teacher is the commissioner of the Showcase Brief and so must ensure that the final piece of work conforms to its constraints and demands.

The mark for this component is recorded prior to the visit and most centres understood this. Marks were generally very fair and accurate with the statements on the Candidate Record Forms matching the marks awarded.

Teachers must ensure that time is built into the busy schedule working up to the Showcase performance to analyse and evaluate the work candidates are producing and to consider their conduct and skill development. The skills development and professional conduct mark should accurately reflect the achievements of the candidate during the period of working on the Brief.

The activities required for fulfilling the Brief should offer candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their professional conduct and develop their skills towards a professional standard. The mark must take into consideration attendance, attitude to the working processes, co-operating with the rest of the group, and sticking to deadlines as well as the development of performance skills. There should be a willingness to take on responsibilities and a sense of application to the tasks demanded for the completion of the project. Teachers must ensure that statements written on the forms about the individual candidates match the marks allocated to the candidate during the assessment process. There will be candidates who do not take these opportunities and are not committed to the process and the mark must reflect this. If they perform effectively during moderation then this will be shown in the performance mark.

Final Performance/designs

The Final performance or design mark is only entered on the day of the moderation, so it is vital that Examinations Officers ensure that the Centre Mark Sheets are not sent to AQA until after the moderation day.

It is always heartening to see highly competent, creative and imaginative responses to the launch of a new examination and it is pleasing to report that many performances fitted these descriptions. The responses to the theme of 'Heroes and Villains' ranged from short plays like *The Perils of Pauline*, involving effective physical theatre, Keystone style cops and robbers adventures and creative dance interpretations to large scale battles between groups of comic book superheroes and villains. Some centres had chosen to portray traditional legends pertinent to their locality, such as Finn McCool, and others looked at heroic stories of the Second World War, such as the diaries of Anne Frank or the Underground railway. Of particular note were performances from gifted and talented Year 9 candidates who were able to make up for a lack of maturity in years by demonstrating a most effective mixture of talent and imagination.

The piece must be prepared as if it was to be performed in the chosen community venue. The teacher, as commissioner, can help advise candidates on appropriate ways of portraying changes of location and time during a performance. Many of the best productions avoided the pitfalls of moving furniture on and off stage or using blackouts by the use of projected images or adopting physical theatre skills. Candidates involved in the most effective performances had obviously seen

or been involved in Theatre in Education projects where furniture, props and costume are kept to a minimum and very skilfully used. Less effective productions gave the impression that most rehearsal time had been spent on the content of the performance rather than on how it would appear to an audience. Time needs to be found for both technical and dress-rehearsals.

Post examination administration

Moderators reported delays in receiving all the post-moderation documentation from several centres. Moderation checks cannot be completed until all documents have been received by the moderator.

The following documentation should be sent to the moderator by 31st May (preferably by first class post):

- Candidate Record forms for **all** candidates signed by candidates
- Pink copies of the Centre Mark sheets or EDI printouts showing the total component marks as submitted to the AQA office
- Summary Record Sheets
- Centre Declaration Sheet: confirmation that where there is more than one teacher assessing, internal standardisation has taken place, or that the work has been assessed by one teacher only. This must be signed by the Head of Centre.

Where moderations take place at the beginning of the moderation period, paperwork can be sent as soon as it is ready, without waiting for the May 31st deadline.

Conclusions

The best performances were based on ensemble work, as candidates embraced the idea of working as a company where the full range of skills was offered for assessment. The Showcase performance should provide candidates with the opportunity to show what they have achieved. It is important to consider how to provide a narrative for the Showcase which fulfils the theme of the Brief, particularly if dancing, singing or music is the single key skill on offer. Some of the most disappointing performances were those based on the 'X Factor' style of presentation which generally failed to enable candidates to show their skills effectively.

The presence of an audience enhanced the performances seen and very few centres had no audience except the moderator. This is to be acknowledged as good practice.

This is an excellent start for a new qualification with the best performances showing a degree of self-discipline, creativity and high levels of accomplishment.