



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2011**

Performing Arts

48802

(Specification 4880)

Unit 2: Showcase performance

Report on the Examination

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Unit 2 – 48802: Showcase Performance

General

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 Skills Development.

There has been an excellent response to the Brief. The work produced in many centres this year was entertaining and great fun with the theme of 'Reflections' fully embraced. The theme has been explored and the constraints of the Brief acknowledged. Most centres considered the implications of performing in an Arts Festival for a family audience and the contents were suitable for the theme.

Administration

When contacting centres to fix times and dates for moderation, it is helpful if the teacher and moderator shared mobile phone numbers and email addresses. It is then possible to respond quickly to last minute problems such as the need for a change of date due to unforeseen circumstances.

The majority of centres have complied with administration procedures as outlined both at standardisation meetings and in the information letters sent to schools after moderation dates have been fixed. Most centres submit form PAF1 before the visit as requested. This helps prepare moderators for the visit and in some cases can alert them to potential problems, for example, responses to the wrong Brief.

The moderation day was 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 skills development and professional conduct marks out of fifteen. 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 and so avoid the situation where some candidates leave without signing them.

All documents for each candidate should be collated and fastened together. Valuable time is lost when the moderator has to hunt through piles of paper for the relevant candidate information.

Skills Development and Professional Conduct

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. 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 and skills of the candidates. The skills development and professional conduct mark should accurately reflect the achievements of the candidate during the period of working on the Brief. This mark is an important source of

discussion with the teacher because it allows moderators to have an overview of the candidates' progress. The use of the Skills Development Record form provides evidence of how teachers have arrived at their Skills Development marks. The best examples appear to have worked on the principle that the higher the mark, the more evidence included to support it.

The activities required for fulfilling the Brief should offer candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their professional conduct and skills towards a professional standard. The mark must take into consideration attendance, attitude to the working processes, co-operation with the rest of the group, sticking to deadlines and 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 about the individual candidates match the marks allocated to the candidate during the assessment process.

There will be candidates who do not take opportunities offered and are not committed to the process and their 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/designs mark is only entered on the day, so it is vital that Examinations Officers check that the Centre Mark Forms are not sent to AQA until after the moderation day.

Recommended timings were mostly adhered to, but there were centres where the performance was too long (please refer to page 20 of Specification). This is unfair on the candidates as it is difficult to sustain a performance for an hour and candidates lose focus and concentration.

Many performances were highly competent, creative and imaginative responses to the Brief. The strongest performances were ensemble presentations with a strong narrative thread, allowing all candidates the opportunity to shine in their individual skill, while remaining committed to the company.

Weaker performances were often short, unrelated pieces with little regard for the design or technical elements. The least successful were television related talent or interview style 'shows' with related histrionics and performers who spent the whole time sitting down. These offered little evidence of teacher input or control as the commissioner.

It was evident that the theme "Reflections" was popular with centres. Most responses considered the abstract aspects effectively rather than the more literal interpretation. However, one centre used the framework of Alice through the Looking Glass to present a very entertaining piece showcasing the skills of the group. Another centre had used events in History from 20th century to the present day to present an ensemble piece which was of professional standard. The family audience was very appreciative and in some instances visibly moved.

There were fewer instances of the pace of performances being interrupted by using closing curtains or noisy blackouts. The piece had to be prepared as if it was to be performed in the chosen community venue so, as commissioner, the teacher had to remind the candidates that it would be difficult to transport vast quantities of furniture and props. Many of the best productions used projected images or physical theatre skills. The most effective had obviously seen or been involved in projects where furniture, props and costume were at a minimum and very skilfully used. Less effective productions gave the impression that most of

the time had been spent on the content with little or no time on how it would appear to an audience. Time needs to be found for both technical and dress-rehearsals.

Audiences in most cases enhanced the performances except when members arrived and left when the school bell rang. Where the audience consisted of family and friends, or students who would be taking the course next year, it provided a supportive atmosphere. Parents must be discouraged from taking flash photographs as it can be distracting to the performers. Some centres offer copies of the DVDs for sale as a way of raising funds.

Centres are reminded that all practical work must be recorded and available in the form of a DVD.

Evaluation of own work

The evaluations for **all** candidates must be marked before the arrival of the moderator and handed to them to mark before seeing the showcase.

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 the written element. It is a vital component of the unit and can be the difference between a good and an excellent grade.

This is an evaluation of the candidate's own contribution to planning, preparation and skills development and not to the performance, which takes place on the day the moderator visits. It is also different to that of the Unit 1 portfolio which asks for an 'evaluation of own and others' work'. The use of first person singular is vital here as the candidate is evaluating their own contribution to planning and research and their own skill development and not that of the group.

Where Front of House and Marketing and Publicity had been chosen as options candidates had considered their role as integral to the planning and research. The design of tickets and posters were carefully thought through and well presented.

Post examination administration

It must be remembered that when the date of moderation is confirmed moderators send a letter, PAF1/INST headed *Instructions on the completion of form PAF1*. This gives details of what is required on the day of moderation including size of group for the sample and also all the materials which must be sent afterwards.

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. It is an Ofqual requirement that all Candidate Record Forms must be submitted and signed by the candidate if an award is to be made.
- 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 early in the moderation period paperwork can be sent to the moderator as soon as it is ready, without waiting for the May 31st deadline. Remember to send all documents by first class post and not by any means which require a signature.

Thank you to all centres that do fully comply every year with the administration requirements. Your efficiency is very much appreciated.

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.

It is important to consider how to provide a narrative for the Showcase which fulfils the theme of the Brief, particularly if Dance or Singing or Music is the single key skill on offer. The presence of a supportive audience can enhance the performance. Very few centres had only the moderator as audience so that is to be acknowledged as good practice.

The best performances showed high levels of accomplishment and were worthy of a place in an Arts Festival. Even the weakest candidates showed a feeling for performance and enjoyment in their achievements. Well done.