



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2012**

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 during 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 schools this year was entertaining and great fun with the theme of 'Send in the Clowns' fully embraced.

The theme has been explored and the constraints of the brief acknowledged. Most schools considered the implications of performing as part of a Schools' Celebration of the performing arts for Key Stage 4 pupils and their parents. Only in one instance did a moderator feel the contents were not suitable for the target audience.

Administration

In preparation for the moderation visit it is very helpful if the teacher and moderator share mobile phone numbers and e-mail addresses. It is then possible to respond quickly to last minute problems, such as the need for a change of moderation date due to unforeseen circumstances. Schools need to be aware that the majority of moderators are teachers and work to a very tight schedule. They must book time off with their schools and so are subject to times that must be kept. Where a date cannot be arranged the Exams Officer must contact AQA to ensure that moderation by DVD is organised.

The majority of schools have complied with administration procedures as outlined in the information letters sent to schools after moderation dates have been fixed.

Most schools now submit form PAF1 before the visit as requested. These forms help prepare the moderator for the visit and in some cases can alert them to potential problems; for example, where the wrong brief has been used, which can create real problems.

The moderation day was generally efficient and well-organised, with most schools 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 students were well prepared.

The majority of schools had the Skills Development Record Forms completed for the students in the sample and Candidate Record Forms signed and completed with the skills development and professional conduct mark out of fifteen. It is still recommended that teachers obtain all the students signatures on the Candidate Record Forms at the beginning of the course. These can then be stored safely and thus avoid the situation where some students leave without signing them.

It is important that all documents for each student are removed from folders, collated and fastened together as valuable time can be lost when the moderator has to search through papers to find the correct student information.

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 moderation visit, and most schools 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 students are producing and how their skills and conduct are considered.

The skills development and professional conduct mark should accurately reflect the achievements of the student during the period of working on the Brief. This mark is a very important source of discussion with the teacher because it allows moderators to have an overview of the students' progress. The use of the Skills Development Record Form allowed teachers to demonstrate how they had arrived at their skills development marks, as they provide more robust evidence and accountability. The best examples appear to have worked on the principle of the higher the mark, the more evidence included to support this mark.

The activities required for fulfilling the brief should offer students the opportunity to demonstrate their professional conduct and develop their skills towards a professional standard. As in previous years, the mark must take into consideration attendance, attitude to the working processes and co-operating with the rest of the group, 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 students match the marks allocated to each student during the assessment process. There will be students 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/designs mark is only entered on the day of moderation, so it is vital that Examination Officers check that the Centre Mark Forms are not sent to AQA until after the moderation has taken place.

The recommended presentation timings were mostly adhered to, but there were schools where the presentations were over lengthy. This can be disadvantageous to the students as it is difficult to sustain a performance for an hour and they often lose focus and concentration. Information related to the recommended presentation length can be found on page 20 of the GCSE Performing Arts specification.

It is always heartening to see highly competent, creative and imaginative responses, and it is pleasing to report that many performances fitted those descriptions. The strongest performances were ensemble presentations with a strong narrative thread, allowing all students the opportunity to shine in their individual skill while remaining committed to the company.

Weaker performances tended to be as a result of students with limited performing arts skills trying their best to succeed, but not yet having those skills to complete a performance to a high level. In the main these were year 9 students or year 10 students doing the Double Award in one year. The skills development that occurs in students during the final two years of the course must be acknowledged. In other unsuccessful performances there was very little evidence of teacher input or control as the commissioner of the Brief.

It was evident that the theme 'Send in the Clowns' was popular with schools. It is important to consider how to provide a narrative for the Showcase which fulfils the theme. One school had used swathes of brightly coloured material and transformed the performance space into a Big Top. The circus theme was used as a structure for showcasing a well-chosen series of sketches and scenes supporting the theme. All students had learned circus skills at a workshop which included juggling and diabolo, and these were used to link each section. Other schools had considered the abstract aspects effectively rather than the more literal interpretation, with relationships and dysfunctional family situations used to convey a moral message related to Key stage 4 issues.

As this is an examination in performing arts it is particularly important to consider presentation. There were few instances of the pace of performances being interrupted by using closing curtains or noisy blackouts. The piece must be prepared as if it was to be performed in the chosen community venue. The most effective performances were where the students had seen or been involved in projects where furniture, props and costume were at a minimum. This experience was outlined in the evaluation as part of the research. Less effective productions gave the impression that most of the time had been spent on the content and little or no time on how it would appear to an audience. Time needs to be found for both technical and dress-rehearsals. Basically it comes down to tight preparation and self-discipline.

Audiences in most cases enhanced the performances. There were instances where it was obvious that teachers were under pressure to have the audience made up of classes they usually teach, as the audience would come and go when the lesson bell rang. This is distracting and unfair on the performers and puts undue pressure on the teachers. There was one particular instance when the audience behaviour was detrimental to the students trying to perform their exam piece. Where the audience consisted of family and friends, or students who would be taking the course next year, it provided a supportive atmosphere. Flash photography during the performance must be discouraged as it can be distracting. Some schools offer copies of the DVDs for sale as a way of raising funds.

Schools are reminded that a DVD recording of all practical work used for assessment purposes is a requirement of the course. Some still send tapes which need the original camera in order to view them.

Evaluation of own work

It is important that the Evaluations, which are 4 sides of A4 or equivalent, for all students are completed and marked out of fifteen before the moderator arrives. They do not need to be entered on the Candidate Record Form as they may be adjusted. The evaluations and the three witness statements of working practices give the moderator an indication of the contribution of the student and helps put the performance into perspective.

The evaluations must be marked before the arrival of the moderator and handed to them to moderate before seeing the showcase. This was usually the case, but in one instance the moderator was handed the whole Unit 1 portfolio and expected to find the relevant comments. Schools should be encouraged to build this written element into the time constraints of the course and think of imaginative ways to engage students with this written element to the course. At fifteen marks it is a vital component of the unit and can be the difference between a good or a very good mark.

This is an evaluation of the student's own contribution to planning, preparation and skills development and not to the performance, which takes place on the day of the moderator visit. It is also different to that of the Unit 1 portfolio which asks for an 'evaluation of own and

others' work'. Some students wrote of what 'we' did and assessed the work of the rest of the group, instead of concentrating on what 'I' did. The use of first person singular is vital here.

There is now a very specific demand in the assessment criteria for a student to evaluate their particular contribution to planning and research, and secondly to evaluate their skills development, using work-related language related to the chosen skill.

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

Post examination administration

Post-moderation submission of materials to moderators is still a cause for concern. When schools leave this to the last minute it imposes a burden on moderators who have to complete their work to a deadline. It also creates problems if schools have omitted documents and moderators have to wait for these to be sent before completing their moderation checks. Where moderations take place at the beginning of the moderation period from 1 February to 31 May, paperwork can be sent as soon as it is ready, without waiting for the end of May deadline. Please send all documents by first class post and not by means which requires a signature.

Please remember that when the moderation date is confirmed moderators send the school a letter, **PAF1/INST** headed **Instructions on the completion of form PAF1**. This provides details of what is required on the day of moderation, including size of group for the sample and also details of all documentation which must be sent to the moderator for checking. Most schools refer to this sheet sent by the moderator, which details the paperwork to be sent to them as follows:

- Candidate Record forms for **all** students (for Units 2 and/or 4) signed by students
- Pink copies of the Centre Mark Forms 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.

Ofqual require that all Candidate Record Forms must be submitted and signed by the student if an award is to be made.

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

Conclusions

The best performances were based on ensemble work. Where the teacher had control as the commissioner of the Brief, students embraced the idea of working as a company where the full range of skills was offered for assessment.

The showcase performance should be just that, an opportunity for students 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 Dance or Singing or Music is the single key skill on offer. The presence of a supportive audience can enhance the performance. Very

few schools had only the moderator as audience so that is to be acknowledged as good practice.

Again, the best performances showed high levels of accomplishment and were worthy of a place in a school's celebration of the performing arts. Even the weakest students showed a feeling for performance and enjoyment in their achievements. Well done.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion