

Pearson
BTEC
Performing
Arts



Lead Internal Verifier
Newsletter

Issue 2

In this edition:

Dear Colleagues,

This packed second edition of the BTEC Performing Arts Lead Internal Verifier Newsletter contains information that will be of importance and interest to assessors on BTEC Performing Arts programmes, both NQF and QCF suites at Levels 2 and 3.

As promised in the first edition, this newsletter will provide guidance toward approaches to delivery and assessment of mandatory unit 2 *Preparation, Performance and Production* for NQF BTEC Level 2 Performing Arts, and we will share some useful tips from centres on the use of software, apps and ICT in the production of online process blogs and v-logs.

As many centres delivering the new NQF BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Performing Arts are currently preparing for the external assessment of Unit 1 *Investigating Practitioners' Work* and Unit 3 *Group Performance Workshop*, we have included in this edition responses to some common questions centres have been asking in relation to these units.

We hope you find this newsletter helpful and recommend you keep, as a resource, a copy of each Lead IV Newsletter we publish, especially as many topics currently covered will also be useful in future planning, delivery and assessment of your BTEC Performing Arts and Production Arts programmes.

Contributors

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NQF Level 3 Performing Arts: Externally Assessed Units FAQs

Q: What do we do with the Learners' work once they have completed the set task assessment in Unit 1 Investigating Practitioners' Work and/or Unit 3 Group Performance Workshop?

It is essential that you have registered learners for the external examination in Unit 1 and/or Unit 3. All learners who are taking an external assessment this year in Unit 1 and/or Unit 3 should be registered by the 21st March 2017.

So long as learners have been registered for the examination, centres will be sent details of their external examiner for Unit 1 and/or Unit 3 and learners' work should be sent to your allocated Examiner by the 15th May 2017 at the latest.

It is important to remember that Standards Verifiers do not assess this work and the work must not be sent to your allocated Standards Verifier.



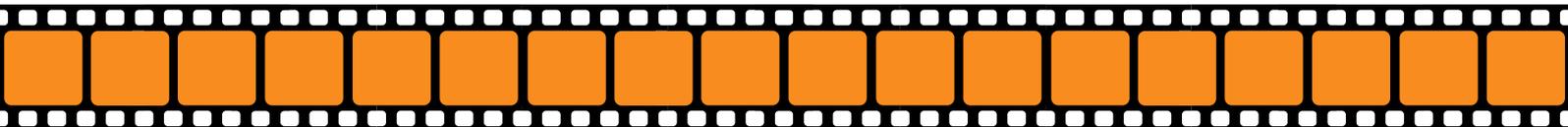
We are currently requesting details of centres completing these assessments early, in order to source materials for examiner training and standardisation. If your learners are due to complete the set task assessment for Unit 3 **before May 1st** please let us know (your centre name, centre number and unit with expected date of completion) at the following email address: katerina.christofides@pearson.com.

Q: How should we save learners work for Unit 1 and/or Unit 3 and in what format?

The 2017 Administrative Support Guide for each unit clearly explains the format in which learners' work should be saved, how work should be submitted and the documents and paperwork that need to be submitted with your learners work to your external examiner.

The 2017 Administrative Support Guide for Unit 3 is available on the website ([click here](#)).

The Guide for Unit 1 will be available as soon as the Unit 1 externally set task is released on the 20th March 2017.



Unit 1: Investigating Practitioners' Work

Q: Learners can bring up to four A4 sides of their research notes into the assessment period for Unit 1. Must the notes be hand written?

The notes can be hand written or word-processed. All research notes taken into the assessment period should be in 'note format' i.e. not in fully formed sentences other than for direct quotations. Bullet points of key words/points would be a useful approach for these notes.

Q: Will learners be penalised if they attempt to use a referencing system, e.g. Harvard, and make an error in the layout of that reference, for example, placing the author's name in the wrong place?

The content of the Unit 1 specification requires teaching of the 'use of referencing information, citation and bibliography'. A specific referencing system is not stipulated in the specification and so learners may choose the referencing system they use.

Learners are not assessed on whether they make an error or not in the layout of the information in the bibliography.

Q: Do learners have to put citations into the text? Will they be penalised if they don't, or should they just provide a list of sources on a separate document?

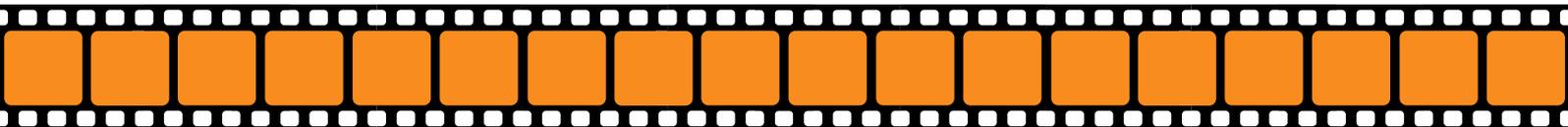
Learners are assessed on how they use their references to support the points being made about practitioners and their work. They are encouraged to put citations into the text and to refer to their sources. Learners should select and use information from their sources meaningfully to support and inform the points they make in their written response. As specified in the Marking Grid, they will be rewarded for 'use of referencing to support outcomes' and for the 'perceptive use of evidence to support conclusions'.

Unit 3: Group Performance Workshop

Q: Can learners take in as many notes as they like in to support them in completing each milestone entry of the digital process log?

Learners can take in as many notes as they wish for each milestone entry of the digital process log.

The set task instructions state 'learners may refer to their notes, records and recordings during this time; however, teachers/tutors must ensure that all materials learners refer to



are their own work’.

The notes can be hand written or word-processed. All notes taken into the assessment period should be in ‘note format’ i.e, not in fully formed sentences other than for direct quotations. Bullet points of key words/points would be a useful approach to take for these notes.

Q: Is there a limit to how many words learners can submit for each milestone entry of the digital process log? Is there a limit to how many files can be attached?

The additional Sample Assessment Materials and the live paper contain a clear list of the mandatory and optional evidence for the digital process log:

- Milestone 1: Mandatory evidence up to 800 words plus optional evidence of up to 4 images.
- Milestone 2: Mandatory evidence up to 800 words plus optional evidence of up to 4 images and up to 4 minutes of video and/or audio material.
- Milestone 3: Mandatory evidence up to 800 words plus optional evidence of up to 4 images and up to 4 minutes of video and/or audio material.
- Milestone 4: Mandatory evidence up to 800 words plus optional evidence of up to 4 images.

Q: Can learners use some of the video footage they can include with the Process Log for Milestones 2 and 3 to verbally explain their ideas, or must the 800 words be written?

Verbal commentary cannot be used in place of a milestone log entry in any instance. Centres should remember that the mandatory evidence is up to 800 written words for each milestone entry.

Q: Within the image allowance for each Milestone Log entry, can learners include photo images of their mind maps from their initial brainstorming sessions, which they can reference in their written log entries?

The image allowance can include photo images of the learners’ mind maps from their initial brainstorming sessions, which learners can then reference in the written content of their log.

Photographs can also be taken of research (articles, poems etc), rehearsal schedules and peer feedback forms if required.

It is worth remembering that images should be referenced and analysed/evaluated within the written content of the log unless the actual image speaks very clearly for itself.



Q: A bibliography is needed for Unit 1 but is a bibliography also needed for Unit 3? If a bibliography is needed for Unit 3, is this for all milestone entries separately or just one overall for the entire unit?

Learners do not have to include a bibliography with their digital log entries in Unit 3.

A learner's initial interpretation and practical exploration of the stimulus should include primary and secondary research, this research should be discussed in their Milestone 1 log entry. The research can be referenced within the milestone log entry itself and/or in a bibliography.

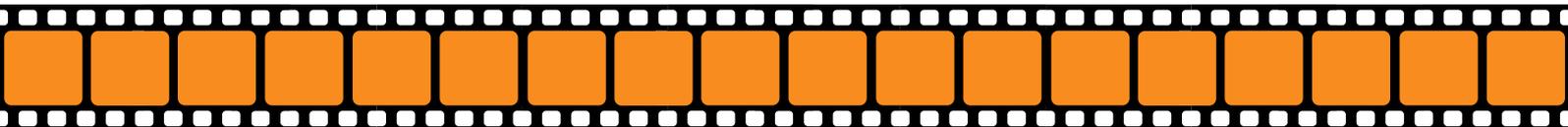
A bibliography could be completed separately for some or all of milestone entries and/or one bibliography for all milestone entries however a bibliography is not a requirement for Unit 3.

Q: Is there a template for the Digital Process Log?

There is a template for the Digital Process Log on the Pearson website. The template is a word document so it can be downloaded and used easily. Please download the template here ([click here](#)).

Q: Can learners use existing repertoire as part of their group performance workshop piece - e.g extracts from a published text, song, score or choreographic score?

Learners can use **some** existing repertoire as part of their group workshop performance. They can use **extracts** from a published text, song, music and/or choreographic score. However, it is also worth confirming that learners are assessed on their **own** creative ideas for an **original** piece of performance work. They are also assessed on the generation of their *own* ideas, and the development and refinement of their *own* ideas and material for performance.



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Assessing BTEC Dance Units: The “Showcase” Approach

A Dance Showcase is an opportunity for learners to perform a number of dances they have been working on in one or more units and provides a vocational experience of performing to a live audience. So how do we make it a useful assessment tool for BTEC Level 2 dance units?

Here are some useful tips:

1. Time is precious

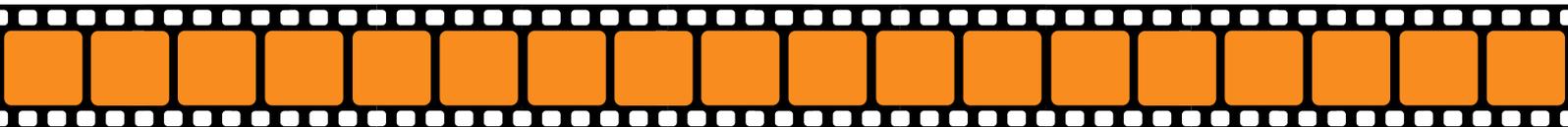
Check the unit specification for how many dances the unit requires and stick to it. Preparing more dances than is needed divides the amount of guided learning hours available and reduces the opportunity to fully prepare the learner for assessment. NQF Level 2 and 3 specifications usually identify one dance piece per unit is formally assessed.

2. Make informed decisions

Many dance units start with the development of skills and finish with the application of those skills in performance. Unit delivery requires time dedicated to Teaching and Learning before assessment begins. Use this time to determine where your learner’s strengths lie, and play to them. For example, Unit 4 Dance Skills from the NQF Level 2 specification requires one dance piece for Learning Aim B but this can be in any style. Discover the style best suited to your learners during the Teaching and Learning phase, or during the development of skills (Learning Aim A) if it is delivered prior to Learning Aim B. This approach will also apply to Learning Aim B (development), Learning Aim C (application) and Learning Aim D (review) for the NQF Level 3 dance units.

3. Ensure learners are aware of what is being assessed

When learners are working on several dances for a showcase, it is important that they are aware in advance of the assessment period of which piece is being assessed. This way the learners can focus their attention on refining the routine to be assessed. To fully support learners and to ensure assessment is valid, you should not select the best dance piece after the event. In addition, as learners are required to keep a log book of the rehearsal period, discussing and evaluating all the dance pieces when just one is being assessed can dilute self-evaluation in the rehearsal process.



4. The need for consistency

Check the assessment criteria and associated assessment guidance when planning a dance showcase for assessment. With some units, consistency in the application of skills is part of the assessment criteria distinguishing higher levels of achievement, for example, in NQF Level 2 Unit 2 Preparation, Performance and Production.

If learners prepare and perform a variety of different dance pieces in different styles it could disadvantage the learner who is proficient in just one style. For example, a learner who has excellent skills in Contemporary dance but is not confident with the Jazz dance style may be disadvantaged if assessed in different styles during the dance showcase. If the showcase requires learners to be assessed more than one piece in the same style, then it would be reasonable to expect consistent performance in that style. Consider how suitable the dance showcase is as a vehicle for assessment. Would learners benefit more from preparing an extended devised dance piece? The Authorised Assignment Brief on the Pearson website for NQF Level 2 Unit 2 provides a suitable project idea that would produce a standalone piece. It could be performed in the dance showcase alongside other dances, but learners would be aware that assessment is for the one substantial dance piece in the show, as opposed to the whole showcase.

5. And finally ...

If the majority of units are planned to be completed in an End of Year Showcase; avoid setting the performance date close to the actual end of the year. There needs to be time for assessment and internal verification as well as planning time for any resubmissions, and in the case of QCF and NQF Level 3, any retakes. Centres will also need to consider the standards verification window (first samples should be submitted by the end of May) if most units are to be completed in this way.

FAQ: How long do assessed performances have to be for units where a performance time is not specified?

This question applies to units such as NQF Level 3 Unit 2 *Developing Skills and Techniques for Live Performance*, NQF Level 2 Unit 2 Preparation, Performance and Production and NQF Level 2 Unit 3 *Acting Skills*.

Performance times have not been specified as we would like give centres flexibility and freedom in the choice of assessed performance project. However, in choosing material for assessment, it is important to consider that each learner must have sufficient opportunity, through the choice of material and the role(s) they undertake, to ensure they have the opportunity to access the full range of assessment criteria and grades through the development, rehearsal and performance of their role(s).

3

BTEC NQF Level 2 Performing Arts: Unit 2 Preparation, Performance and Production

Purposeful research activities and how to evidence them

Unit 2 is a mainly practical unit requiring learners to develop and produce a piece of theatre for performance to an audience.

As stated in the unit content learners can:

- rehearse and perform an existing work, e.g. a script, choreographic instruction or a musical score
- rehearse and perform a piece of repertoire from an existing theatre or dance company
- develop a devised piece of theatre from a stimulus or stimuli, e.g. textual, visual, aural or abstract.

Whichever is chosen, Learning Aim A requires learners to use exploration and research to develop and shape the performance material in relation to the demands of the work.

Exploration activities are often evidenced in recordings of practical activities where learners apply some of the techniques learned in other units, for example actors might draw upon content from Unit 3 Acting Skills such as freeze-frame, role-on-the-wall, role play, hot-seating, thought-tracking, improvising off-stage moments and exploring 'what if' situations.

As well as practical exploration, opportunities to undertake and apply research in a purposeful and meaningful manner must also be provided.

Here are some tips on approaches to using primary and secondary research for different forms of performance material. The guidance relates mainly to drama based performances but can readily be adapted to suit research and development in a dance context, for example, research into specific repertoire and choreographers when developing existing dance material.

1. Purposeful research for scripted or existing work

- Avoid research "for the sake of it" e.g. investigating the life story of the playwright, as it will have little impact of the creative decisions made by the learner.
- Secondary research could include an investigation into the original context and staging of the piece. Learners could undertake individual research before taking

part in a recorded discussion of their findings where they consider ideas for their own version of the piece and how it will compare/contrast with the original and why. The target audience and available resources should also be considered in the discussion.

- Secondary research into the period and/or place in which the piece is set may also be useful and could be applied to decisions made about characterisation. Learners could apply their findings to some in-role writing, such as a diary entry for the character or a hot-seating activity. They should also explain how the research has impacted on their interpretation of the role in their log/blog.
- Primary research could involve learners viewing a version of the piece on video and noting its key features and their reactions to the piece. A discussion could then be filmed in which learners consider how their version might compare or contrast with the version they have watched.

2. Purposeful research for devised performance work

- Devising involves a good deal of practical exploration, and this should be accompanied by research. Providing a clear purpose and specific target audience for the devised piece will provide a clear focus for research activities.
- The artistic intention and aim of the work being created will provide good opportunities for research activities. For example, a pantomime or musical which is primarily intended to entertain will have different features to a piece of theatre intended to educate or raise awareness. Investigating extracts from productions with similar artistic intentions will provide learners with an understanding of the required features of the work they are about to create and will provide opportunities to demonstrate how the research has impacted on their decisions.
- A client or commissioning body for the work can also provide research opportunities. For example, learners commissioned to create a piece of theatre linked with a topic from a curriculum area or school-based issue, could undertake primary research by interviewing a member of staff to investigate the topic/issue and the requirements of the 'client'.
- Secondary research should include an investigation of a given stimulus or theme. For example, if the stimulus is a gas mask from World War Two, learners could undertake research into the use of this artefact both on the home front and on the battlefield. This research should then be discussed and used to inform dramatic/creative ideas for the piece with decisions explained in the learner's log/blog.
- The needs of the target audience can also form the basis of some primary and secondary research. For example, if the piece is to be created for a group of Year 7 pupils, research could involve watching examples of drama created for that age group, noting the themes and key features. A discussion could then be filmed in which learners consider what they have discovered and present ideas for how the key features might be incorporated into their own work.

4

News from Centres: Online Process Blogs: Use of Online and Multimedia

In these exciting and fast-moving times of development in ICT and online social networking; more and more Performing Arts learners in our BTEC centres are making effective use of blogs, V-logs, multimedia presentations and social media platforms as part of their BTEC unit assessment portfolios.

The increased availability and accessibility of user-friendly software, apps and online storage has meant that for many learners, the traditional handwritten 'performance diary' or 'unit log' has become a thing of the past. Teachers and learners have been able to work imaginatively to produce valid assessment evidence using a variety of media, all acceptable for assessment and internal/standards verification purposes, providing of course the evidence can be readily accessed and has been authenticated.

The advantages to learners and to centres of the variety of software, platforms and apps out there (many of which are designed specifically for educational settings, thus addressing concerns about security) are numerous.

Added to this is that tasks can be accomplished more readily as learners are able to use their own portable devices both in-class and outside.

Good examples seen in centres over the past couple of years have included:

- Learners embedding videos of their own practical skills development into their blogs and online presentations.
- Learners have then commented on the video footage (through annotations / referencing or a live commentary using a 'video within a video' approach), as part of ongoing reviews and target setting. Learners are often able to more clearly articulate

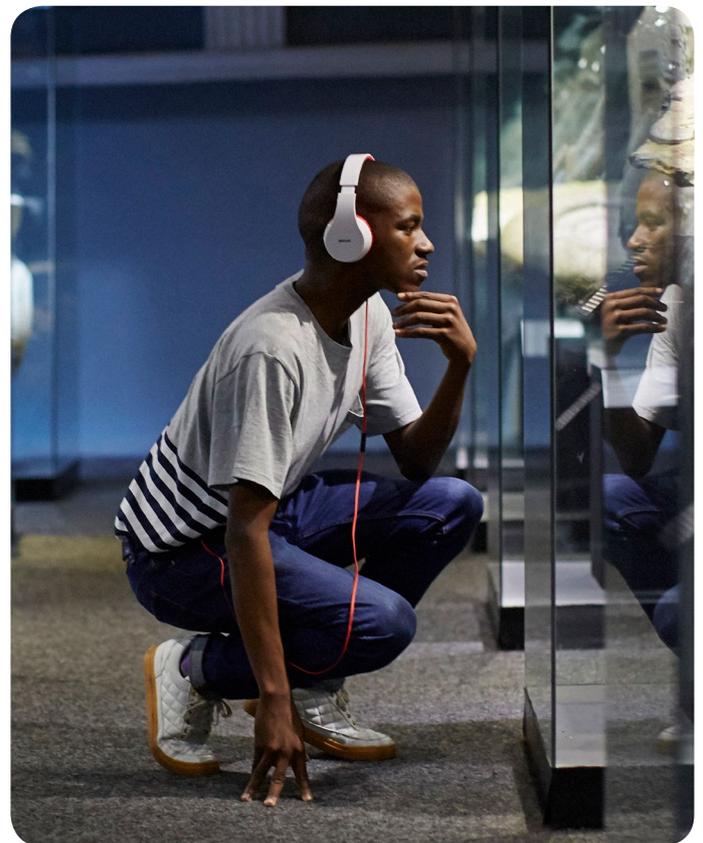


Image by Christof van der Walt

their creative thoughts with reference to digital photographs and filmed footage; and there have been good examples of recorded 'talking head' evaluations, edited extracts from group discussions, or slow-motion capture of physical work allowing for precise commentaries.

- Use of online platforms such as Prezi and Pinterest can prove effective, particularly in researchbased projects and assessments. Good examples have been noted in Production Arts units where learners can make use of Pinterest in collating sources and references for design projects. Presentation software such as Prezi provides some imaginative and creative tools for presenting research.
- Team and/or company communications during performance projects (for example stage management messages to production teams and actors) can be handled expediently and effectively through use of social media. Whilst the most popular social media platforms such as Facebook have been used in centres for some time now, alternative platforms such as Edmodo are proving popular.
- Whilst many centres are using well-known blogging software, such as Tumblr, platforms such as Weebly for Education offers a package for teachers and students using a straightforward and secure interface for producing web pages, including embedded multimedia content. Similarly, Blogger is an e-blog website which is linked to Google accounts, therefore only requiring a Google email account. Realsmart is also being used in some centres.
- Production students in some centres are being encouraged to take responsibility for capturing their own technical operations (such as rigging and desk operation) using GoPro head-mounted cameras whilst recording verbal reflective real-time commentaries on how their practical performance addressed target criteria (for example running commentaries explaining process, health and safety, etc).



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