



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Drama and Theatre (9DR0)
Component 1: Devising

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Summer 2024

Publications Code 9DR0_01_2406_ER

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9DR0/01 Devising

Introduction

This component is internally assessed /externally moderated.

In this component, students will develop their creative and exploratory skills to devise an original performance. The starting point for this devising process is an extract from a performance text and an influential theatre practitioner.

In their creative explorations, students will learn how text can be manipulated to communicate meaning to audiences and they will begin the process of interpretation. They will gain an understanding of how a new performance could be developed through the practical exploration of the theatrical style and use of conventions of the chosen practitioner.

Candidates will produce a **portfolio (AO1/AO4)** in response to their devising experience and performance outcomes. The portfolio can take a variety of forms including written/recorded or a combination of both. Time limits and recommended word counts are clearly outlined in the AL specification. See page 18 for further details.

The contents of the portfolio should respond to the following 6 statements:

- Outline your initial response to the key extract and practitioner and track how it developed throughout the devising process
- Connect your research material/s to key stages in the development process and to performance outcomes
- Evaluate how your chosen role/s emerged and developed from initial ideas through to the final performance
- Analyse how your contribution was influenced by the selected theatre practitioner and or/theatre makers, and the impact live theatre has had on your own practical work
- Discuss how social, historical and cultural contexts impacted on your work
- Evaluate the creative choices you made and whether or not they were successful in performance.

In addition to the portfolio, Candidates will be assessed as performers/designers in a **devised performance/realisation (AO2)**. The mark criteria for each Assessment Objective is outlined on pages 22-33 of the AL specification.

Series specific context:

For the third year, centres were asked to upload work digitally and this was made possible through the Learner Work Transfer platform. Both moderators and centres agreed that this process had improved. Portfolio work, supporting documentation and performance work were submitted through the LWT platform and Teacher-assessors completed administration and commentary, using NEA authentication and CCIS forms. Centres are advised to check that they are using the most current and up-to-date forms as administrative details often change during the life of a specification. All forms are available via the Pearson website. The evidence on these forms helps the moderator to place the work from each candidate in context and understand where and why final marks have been awarded.

Marks for this NEA component are awarded as follows:

Portfolio	60
Group Performance/Design Realisation	20
Total marks for Component 1	80

There is essential guidance for centres provided in the Administrative Support Guide. This document includes the requisite forms and instructions for Component 1. It is required for all components and includes information about all assessment procedures. It is updated annually with forms and deadlines that apply to the administration of all three components in this AL specification.

In addition, centres are reminded that there are several resources available to support centres delivering the 2016 specification. Online support material is available through the Pearson/Edexcel website. These include training packs, portfolio examples, commentary from the Principal Moderator and a detailed guide to completing this first component.

'Ask the Expert' is another support service that provides centres with answers and information regarding common questions and issues. Centres are also advised that the FAQ page is regularly updated and this is designed to answer questions regarding the delivery of the specification. It is important that centres take the time to look at example materials as this will help gauge the expected standard and requirements of this first component. Support material is regularly updated.

The web link is:

[Edexcel A level Drama and Theatre \(2016\) | Pearson qualifications](#)

This report is designed to support centres in the delivery of Component 1 and address some of the issues raised. It will also report on the successes of this component and celebrate the work of candidates in this series.

There now follows some specific observations from the moderation team, based on centre responses to this specification in 2024.

Component 1: Devising

Performance text/extract

Centres continue to have a free choice when selecting an appropriate **performance text stimulus**. However, it should offer students the opportunity to demonstrate exploratory range and depth that is appropriate to the level of demand for A level study. As outlined in the specification, the performance text must also be professionally produced and have a minimum running time of 60 minutes. It was pleasing to note that this requirement, as outlined on pages 10/11 of the A level specification was correctly observed by all centres, this year. However, there were a few examples where candidates had *reimagined* the performance text and this is not the overall objective. In this component, students will develop their creative and exploratory skills to **devise an original performance**.

The **choice of texts** is generally based on teachers' preference, experience and the suitability of text to cohort. In this series, moderators reported that centres currently choose from a diverse and exciting range of performance texts that immediately engage candidates and encourage them to think about the many ways in which theatre can be used to communicate ideas to an audience. **Popular texts/extracts** for 2024 included: *Metamorphosis, 1984, Things I Know to Be True, 4.48 Psychosis, Love Song, The Crucible, A Doll's House, A Streetcar Named Desire, Girls Like That, The Jungle and Small Island*. Again, several centres opted for classical or Shakespearean texts, and this was often a successful springboard for discussion and exploration of contemporary issues and ideas. *Othello, Macbeth* and *Romeo & Juliet* are particularly popular. Moderators once again commented on the exploration of new and modern play texts being used for this first component. Centres are reminded that it is not possible to explore one of the set texts offered for Component 3.

Candidates begin their devising experience from a performance text stimulus. Teacher-assessors should introduce candidates to a specific extract at the start of the devising process and this should 'springboard' the early stages of the component. Centres are reminded that the devising process should begin as a result of candidates being introduced and engaged with a key extract from a suitable performance text. Teacher-assessors who offer practical workshops that explore key themes, ideas and characters, serve their students well in the early stages of introduction and exploration.

Most candidates were able to write about their stimulus text with clarity and confidence and moderators reported that a vast number of candidates were able to make links between key themes, symbols, characters and ideas that showed a clear understanding of the performance text as a whole. Once again, it was reported in this series, that some candidates struggled to consider the specifics of their chosen extract and how this moment had played a significant part in the early stages of development. This is the focus of the very first statement and it is this immediate investigation that directly links to the demands of AO1 (creating & developing). The **initial response to the extract** and how the exploration of this specific moment had shaped, developed and influenced the early stages of the devising process is central to the early stages of devising and once again, moderators felt that low and middle-scoring work failed to address the specifics of the chosen extract. In a minority of cases, some candidates struggled to make any reference to the specific extract.

In contrast, candidates who analysed and considered how the ideas of a specific moment had developed in the early stages of their devising journey were more successful in their approach. For example, one centre focused on the final moment from Ibsen's, 'A Doll's House' and this led to various discussions about women living in a patriarchal society. Another example involved candidates considering the opening scene of Berkoff's 'Metamorphosis' and linked to modern cases of body dysmorphia. The most successful

pieces showed clear progressions from the initial moment of discovery to the final production.

As suggested, it was popular to find candidates exploring the 'opening or final' moments of their performance text and this often helped to contextualise their initial response, within the narrative arc of the performance text as a whole. Candidates who were able to detail their early exploration of the extract and outline how creative ideas had developed as a result of their initial reaction were often able to access marks at higher levels. Responses and connections were often sharper and more perceptive when specifically linked to the initial reaction of the chosen extract. Once again, it was reported that candidates achieving marks in the upper levels were able to cross-reference links to their extract exploration, throughout their portfolio. The most successful candidates were able to make explicit connections to their chosen extract and the performance text as a whole, throughout the final portfolio.

Choice of Practitioner

Centres are also given a **free choice** in the selection of their **chosen practitioner**. However, the choice must be different to the practitioner selected for Component 3. This is clearly stated on page 11 of the specification.

Popular choices for the 2024 series included: *Berkoff*, *Stanislawski* and *Brecht*. However, *Artaud* and *Frantic Assembly* continue to be most popular, rooted in a specific and accessible style. *Kneehigh*, *Splendid Productions*, *Gecko* and *The Paper Birds* are also popular choices for this first component. Once again, non-naturalism dominated the work seen by moderators, however, it is important to stress that more subtle forms of theatre practice were also successful in their exploration and execution. Less common, but nevertheless engaging and successful choices, included using the methodology of, *Complicite*, *Wise Children*, *Alecky Blythe*, *Katie Mitchell*, *Punchdrunk* and *Bruiser Theatre Company*. Most centres continue to pick practitioners from the published list (although not a requirement) and this may have something to do with the extensive range of free resources available through Pearson/Edexcel. The most successful practitioners are those who offer sufficient theory to support the practical exploration of the chosen methodology. As outlined on page 11 of the AL specification: *a practitioner is an individual or a company that has an established and defined approach to the creation of performance, and which creates both theatrical performances and theory that informs this practical work.*

As in the previous series, moderators did stress that the most successful performances came from those that were rooted in detailed practitioner methodology and final performances that had been developed and refined as a result of genuine influence and research were more credible, theatrically inventive and engaging to watch.

As reported in previous years, performances that explored *several* different performance styles and methods were less clear and often lacked focus. For example, a small number of centres explored more than one practitioner's influence, and this often diluted the impact of research and evaluation of final outcomes. Others combined influence from practitioners with similar approaches. For example, Artaud and Berkoff were a common combination and whilst it is clear to moderators that other theatre-makers and companies may influence the devising process, the style and methodology of the chosen practitioner should dominate and contextualise the overall performance style. **Centres are reminded that the wording of the assessment criteria specifies the work of the 'chosen practitioner'.** When candidates refer to more than one major influence, they struggle to make sophisticated connections between theory and practice (AO1). Centres that explore a range of methodologies often miss the depth and detail required for A level study.

There were a few examples when the methodology of the chosen practitioner was not always obvious. For example, naturalistic acting that dominated 'Punchdrunk' inspired

pieces, or very basic physical work exploring the methodology of Frantic Assembly. Moderators reported that the best examples of work were those where the influence of the chosen practitioner was central to the performance work and obvious from the start of the recording.

In a small number of cases, *Absurd Theatre* and the work of *Beckett* had been chosen as a practitioner and centres are reminded that **playwrights and literary movements are not practitioners**, even though some practitioners are playwrights. The problem when selecting a movement or playwright is that the methodology is literary, rather than theatrical and this is not the focus of the work.

Performance work

Moderators reported that most centres offered a range of exciting and adventurous work that was a pleasure to see. Candidates securing marks at the top level often presented innovative work, took risks and challenged audience expectations. Centres are reminded that top-level marks should only be awarded to work that is considered 'sophisticated'. Most candidates had engaged with the task of creating an original performance and candidates generally showed great enthusiasm in performance. However, moderators reported that marks awarded at the top end of the mark range were often lenient. Sophisticated performance work is dynamic, controlled, perceptively integrated, showing skilful variety.

In a minority of cases, candidates had reimagined their chosen performance text and this is not the objective of the component. The objective is to create new and original work and moderators reported that most candidates from this series had been prepared well to take on the demands of this first component. Candidates that fully engaged in the theatre-making process should be congratulated for both their originality and integrity.

As has been the case for the last few years, most candidates chose to be assessed as performers, although there were examples of design offered and this is pleasing to see. Design work that embraced the influence of the chosen practitioner was often highly inventive, effective and supportive of the performance work. For example, one sound candidate, working in the style of Gecko Theatre Company, made use of live and recorded voiceovers, underscore and soundscapes to communicate ideas to the audience. Moderators commented on examples from all aspects of design including projection. Centres are reminded that projection should be considered within either lighting or set design. It is not a design option in its own right. Centres are reminded that design candidates are required to submit evidence of the 'additional documentation' as outlined on page 17 of the AL specification. Supporting documentation should be uploaded to the LWT platform and should also be captured as a visual record at the end of the group performance.

Performances targeted to specific audiences tended to work well and moderators commented on the advantages of choosing a specific audience as it often helped candidates to fine-tune the aims and intentions of their performance/design realisation. Moderators reported that most performances were well attended, although a minority of centres only performed to one or two audience members, and this did not always support the intended impact of the final piece.

Many centres still chose to use a 'pre-show' experience to set up or introduce their performance work. This is particularly true of candidates exploring the methodology of Punchdrunk or Kneehigh. This often involved the audience and how they were asked to enter the performance space. This can create engaging and provocative work, although in doing so, many centres are forgetting the importance of candidate identification at the beginning of the recording. This makes the evidence presented for moderation difficult to view. **Centres are reminded that any pre-show activity counts in the time limit**

for the performance. Moderators will stop watching when the maximum time limit is reached, this will include the pre-show.

Once again, several candidates from the 2024 series chose to explore practitioner methodology that used promenade/site-specific or site-sympathetic staging and centres are reminded that the recording is paramount when capturing evidence. The recording needs to ensure that there is sufficient evidence to justify the final marks awarded. In a few reported cases, moderators noted problems when performers split into different venues or used multiple performance spaces and the camera only captured one specific moment. **Centres are encouraged to find a balance between the need to engage a live audience and satisfy the requirements of assessment.** The marks awarded need to be justified on the recording. Moderation of marks is evidence-based and therefore, regardless of the chosen practitioner, the camera must have the 'best seat in the house'. Further details on recordings and good practice can be found in Appendix 4 of the AL specification.

Candidates tended to work most effectively when the subject matter was something that resonated with their own lives and experiences or when they had researched their subject matter in depth to fully understand the issues/characters they were exploring.

Popular themes and ideas in this 2024 series included: *Isolation, Displacement, Power/Control, Equality, Sexuality, Domestic Abuse, Dreams and Nightmares, Addiction, Love/Death, the negative impact of social media, body image, political corruption, misogyny and mental health.* Several pieces continue to explore the aftermath of the *Global Pandemic* and *NHS*.

Performances that considered social issues or explored thought-provoking material were generally more successful as candidates took on the approach that they could use theatre as a medium to say something about the world in which they live in. It was encouraging to see candidates challenge themselves to produce a piece of original theatre that spoke to their audience and made them question their own ideas or preconceptions.

As in previous series, moderators reported that a significant amount of work was influenced using physical theatre. No doubt this is a direct result of exposure to companies such as Gecko, Frantic Assembly and Complicite. Moderators commented that when movement material was connected to the ideas in the performance, the result was often powerful and visually engaging. However, when movement or dance was unconnected, it was considered superficial, irrelevant and often lacked meaning.

Quality of recordings, group sizes and timings:

Most centres continue to provide recordings that are clear in terms of visual and audio quality. As ever, the most effective recordings began with a clear image of the group in a long shot and candidates were then introduced by name and candidate numbers. Centres that use identification placards or on-screen sign systems provide the most helpful visual aid to moderators. Moderators also reported that it was effective when candidates introduced themselves by name, number, role(s) (performer or designer) and distinguishing feature. The use of digital file chapters is another useful identification tool. Centres are reminded that candidates should present to camera in the costume they are wearing for the performance. Some centres use candidate placards to help identify candidates on the recording and centres are reminded to ensure lighting states support this. Introductions to camera should also be delivered at a slow and steady pace to help support the identification process.

Centres are reminded that further guidance on 'Best practice when recording performance' is available on pages 77-78 of the AL specification (Appendix 4). The recording is an

essential piece of assessment evidence and teacher-assessors should do as much as possible to ensure the quality of the recording is as high as possible. The camera should be in a position to capture the dynamics and details of the performance. Some centres struggled to capture a recording that was 'fit for purpose' and where that has been reported to individual centres, the Teacher-assessor would do well to take advice and improve this area of assessment. **The recording is an essential piece of evidence and teacher-assessors should do as much as possible to ensure the quality of the recording is as high as possible.** The camera should have the 'best seat in the house' to capture the dynamics and details of the performance.

Common problems reported this year included:

- candidates dressed in all-black or similar costumes with very little offered in terms of visual differentiation
- 'bleached out' faces due to over-bright lighting
- music or sound levels that overpower dialogue
- audience members obscuring the view of the camera and therefore the view of the moderator
- the camera being placed on one side of the performance space
- the camera being placed too far away from the performance space
- the Teacher-assessor marking in front of the camera and blocking the view.

The evidence for AO2 is significantly compromised and candidates are disadvantaged when the evidence that has been captured by the centre does not support the marks awarded.

Centres are reminded to ensure performance times and group sizes comply with the requirements of the specification. Details are outlined on page 11 of the specification and in the ASG.

Some moderators reported examples of centres using **non-assessed individuals** without permission from Pearson/Edexcel. This is an infringement of the specification and permission for non-assessed individuals must be sought through Drama Assessment. It was also noted that some centres used non-assessed individuals when it was unnecessary. Again, centres are reminded to check the conditions and rules relating to non-assessed individuals in the ASG. Failure to comply with terms as stated in the ASG is an infringement of the specification and centres will be reported to the malpractice team at Pearson.

Centres that identify when a candidate is no longer part of the course significantly speed up the process of identification. Moderators appreciate that, due to the linear nature of the A Level it is now common to find students on recordings that are no longer entered as candidates. Moderators found it particularly useful when this was highlighted in the administration or on the actual recording. This is excellent practice. When centres had made no attempt to signal which candidates were no longer part of the course, this often led to confusion and slowed down the early stages of moderation.

Most centres worked within the **recommended time limits** and encouragingly, every single candidate was able to present work that met the minimum time requirement. However, moderators did report that some performances exceeded the maximum time limit allowed. Teacher-assessors must indicate when marking has stopped for performances. Moderators will only consider evidence that falls within the maximum time allowed.

The portfolio

All portfolios were submitted digitally in this series and, as a result, all candidates produced written portfolios. There were no reported cases of recorded portfolio evidence, although this is an acceptable format. Several candidates chose to use photographs and diagrams to document key stages of their research, development and performance work and this often helped to provide insight into their theatre-making experience. However, portfolios that were dominated by bullet points, diary-style entries, role-on-the-wall and flow chart diagrams were less successful as they rarely provided enough detail to give purposeful insight into the candidates devising experience. Whilst they are each credible forms of documentation and note-taking, moderators felt that candidates who chose this style of presentation were less able to achieve marks in the upper levels. There was significantly less evidence this year of candidates using 'appendices' or footnotes to document their work and this is a pleasing trend. Centres are reminded that *'it is strongly advised that the upper word/time limits are adhered to by students to enable them to satisfy the requirement to produce a concise and coherently structured portfolio'*. Portfolios that struggle to work towards the upper limit of the recommended word count often lack the depth and detail that is required to achieve marks in the upper levels of the assessment criteria. For further clarification see page 19 of the AL specification.

The most successful portfolios were those that responded directly to the 6 statements, as outlined on page 18 of the specification. Candidates who used the statements often wrote with a greater sense of clarity and structure. Those that did not, tended to fall into generalised 'reporting' or description of 'what we did'. **There was a clear link between accurate marking and the use of the six statements.** Candidates who did not address the demands of the statement were rarely able to address each assessment objective. For example, some candidates still struggle to make links between their live theatre experience and how this has influenced their theatre-making process. **Live theatre** is a key feature of statement 4. It is not optional and should not be considered a 'bolt-on' to their devising experience. It is not a 'tick box' exercise. Candidates are encouraged to reference the key theatre-makers involved in the production and make relevant links to the influence of others in relation to their own creative choices. Live or digital performance work is acceptable, but **candidates are encouraged to see as many live theatre performances as possible.** Many candidates securing marks in the upper levels were able to deconstruct and refer to their experiences of production work across the portfolio and this often allows them to consider links between their own creative work and the influence of other professional work. For example, candidates who experienced Frantic Assembly's production of 'Metamorphosis' were able to consider how the impact of physical sequences had influenced their use of staging and choreography. Some candidates did not refer to live theatre at all and centres are reminded this is both a requirement of the specification and a key feature of AO4 (Analysis & Evaluation).

As previously mentioned, it was rare to see candidates discuss their chosen extract in enough depth or discuss its context within the wider play. Candidates often focused on the stimulus in response to statement 1 and there was no further discussion. Candidates who embedded this discussion throughout the portfolio were able to communicate a more 'sophisticated' understanding of their creative journey and not lose sight of how the extract had acted as a creative springboard for ideas, aims and intentions.

As in the previous series, marks awarded for **AO1 (Theory & Practice)** were more accurate and it was obvious when candidates had or had not outlined and connected how the methodology of their chosen practitioner had impacted their creative process and production intentions. Candidates who did well were able to make succinct and relevant references to how their chosen practitioner had informed and influenced their ideas in both rehearsal and production. They were also able to reference other theatre makers, individuals and companies but kept the central focus of their reflection on their chosen practitioner. Portfolios that were unable to connect practical exploration to practitioner

theory were less successful. Candidates scoring marks in the higher levels were able to 'sprinkle' and 'pepper' their theory, connected to their practice, throughout the final document. It was reported that some candidates struggled to make connections between theory and practice (AO1) or engage with the exploration and execution of their practitioner methodology, on paper. This is a requirement of the portfolio and, as stated in previous reports, candidates that were too biographical or literary in their response to practitioner methodology often failed to make connections with their own work. Low-scoring work also included simple description of practitioner theory without connecting to their own exploratory or performance experiences.

Similarly, isolated theory and research that did not address the demands of the assessment objective often led to some mark adjustments. In a few reported cases, research was often dominated by practitioner methodology and, whilst relevant, statement 2 provides the opportunity for candidates to make links between wider research findings and the development of ideas. For example, research connected to immigration statistics provided candidates exploring Brecht's epic theatre with details that informed scene work. When candidates offered detailed practical examples, connected to relevant research they were able to communicate a genuine creative journey and link to a clear decision-making process.

Teacher-assessors were most confident in rewarding **AO4 (Analysis & Evaluation)**. Many candidates embedded evaluation and analysis throughout their work communicating a continually reflective process. Candidates evaluated the effectiveness of practical exploration and analysed the significance of their research. Some candidates only offered evaluation in response to statement 6 and were rewarded with marks in level 5. This often led to mark adjustments. Centres are reminded that evaluation should consider both personal discovery and audience intentions. **The intended outcome of the performance is paramount in the evaluation of both process and final performance.** Moderators reported that evaluation that was explicitly linked to trial and error, performance outcomes and audience impact was significantly more effective. Candidates are also discouraged from writing about what they did not do. The recommended word limit is 3,000 words and therefore it is unhelpful if candidates waste words acknowledging what they might have done, what they intended to do or why they originally explored a different practitioner.

As ever, the most effective portfolios were those that were personal and succinctly responded to and engaged with the demands of each statement. High-scoring work detailed the experience of the candidate within an exploratory and production context, and outlined how research, context and practitioner methodology had contributed to the influence and success of their final devised performance.

Annotations and recommended word count

Many centres helpfully annotated their students' work so that moderators were able to follow their thinking. The moderator's task is considerably eased when annotations show how the assessment criteria have been applied. *This cannot be stressed enough.* Digital annotation was particularly helpful and serves the candidate well. However, when work is submitted in PDF the annotations are not visible to the moderator and centres are reminded to send files in WORD format. This year, a small number of moderators were forced to send work back to centres when it did not offer enough reasoning as to why final marks had been awarded. Centres are reminded that whilst annotation is not a requirement, it is considered best practice. Teacher-assessors are also advised to ensure the level of marking and annotation meets the regulatory requirements, as outlined by JCQ standards. Further information can be found on page 11 of the following document, 'Instructions for conducting non-examined assessment'.

[Non-Examination Assessments - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#)

In some centres, there was evidence of genuine departmental standardisation and cross-moderation of work, something that is essential for the security of marks awarded to students in centres where there is more than one teacher-assessor. Where teacher-assessors note how students' work fulfils the needs of the portfolio, moderators report that they can more easily agree on the marks awarded, than if they have to search for evidence. **This is particularly important when work is submitted in continuous prose.** Once again, centres are reminded that either the candidate or the teacher-assessor must indicate where each of the 6 statements are addressed. Moderators found that detailed comments on the NEA authentication/CCIS form, in addition to annotation, often helped them 'to see' and understand where and why marks had been awarded. However, it is less helpful when the words of the assessment criteria are simply copied and repeated for the moderator. Personal, bespoke and pertinent commentary allows the moderator to fully understand how the teacher-assessor has considered the application of final marks.

It is pleasing to note that most candidates were able to submit work within the **recommended word count**. This is an improvement from the previous series. Again, the use of LWT allowed moderators to verify word counts and centres are reminded that over-long work should be cut out at the first draft stage. Moderators reported examples of excellent practice where teacher-assessors had drawn a line across the page of work to indicate to the moderator that the recommended word limit had been reached by the candidate and the centre had stopped marking.

Administration

The administration for this component is now completely digital and centres are thanked for taking such time and care to upload the work of their students. The following guidance is designed to ensure that all administration for this component is correct.

Edexcel/Pearson is aware that the administration of this component has significantly changed since the launch of this specification and centres are thanked for their cooperation and advised to regularly visit the Pearson/Edexcel homepage and ASG to ensure that the documentation being used is the most current version.

The following observations were made in this series:

- Most centres ensured their work arrived on time and in good order. Work that was late or incomplete significantly slowed down the early stages of moderation
- **Consortium centres must indicate this arrangement with Drama Assessment and make it clear on the CCIS form**
- Once again, moderators commented on several arithmetical/addition errors Teacher-assessors are strongly advised to check the addition of candidate marks carefully and contact Edexcel Online when mistakes have been made. There were often discrepancies between the NEA authentication form, the CCIS form and the marks uploaded to Edexcel Online
- Centres are politely reminded NOT to upload NEA authentication or CCIS forms in PDF format as moderators need to access the file
- Centres are reminded that all scanned work should be checked carefully, before sample submission. Several pieces of portfolio work were incomplete as scanned documents often missed 'one side' of the paper
- Candidates must ensure that their *Name, Number and Component code feature in the header of their work. Page numbers should also be used.* This detail is a

requirement and is outlined in the JCQ document

- As previously mentioned, most teacher-assessors provided personal and pertinent comments for each area of assessment. Teacher-assessors who offer specific examples of where candidates had met key aspects of the mark criteria often guided the moderator through the process of awarding marks. Several teacher-assessors highlighted specific moments from the performance and included time reference points. This helped to signpost evidence to the moderator. This is excellent practice. Handwritten comments are often difficult to read
- Most samples of work were correct. A small number of centres needed to be contacted regarding the work of their highest/lowest attaining students. This administrative error significantly slows down the early stages of moderation. Centres are reminded that if **it is a requirement to upload work from the highest and lowest candidate** if they are not part of the original sample request
- In most cases, documentation had been correctly signed and this is pleasing to note
- Where centres requested special consideration for students or felt some circumstances meant the work of students was not as strong as it should be, they were referred to Edexcel/Pearson directly. Centres are reminded that a formal request for special consideration is always advisable, and these should be made through the examinations' officer to the specific department at Edexcel/Pearson and not through the moderator. This is also the case for 'lost coursework'. The moderator can only award marks for evidence that is presented
- The overall quality of recordings was satisfactory although **this is the most important area of administration to get right**. Centres are once again advised to look at Appendix 4 in the specification for further guidance on ways to ensure this evidence is captured successfully. Poor recordings significantly compromise the validity of assessment.

High-scoring work was felt to show some of these features:

- Students had clearly been given the advantage of practice that engendered confidence and risk-taking
- Creative group performances/design realisations that were and innovative and embraced the style and methodology of the chosen practitioner
- Performance work that encouraged a range of skills and control in terms of character, communication, voice and physicality
- Performance work that met all required and recommended time limits
- Performance/design realisation was dynamic using a range of creative choices to engage and create impact on an audience
- Portfolio content was driven by the 6 statements and used the language of the questions/statements in the response
- Portfolios that used a personal voice throughout. Students referred to their own work, not just that of their group. They made use of 'I' rather than 'we'
- Portfolios that offered a balance between analysis and evaluation
- Students' practical examples were embedded in their writing, across all of the statements
- Portfolio research was connected to key stages in the development/exploration/production process
- Consideration of contextual awareness and its impact on the work
- Strong use of subject-specific vocabulary to support ideas
- Theory and practice are connected. Understanding is embedded in portfolio and performance work/design realisation
- Students work independently to present their artistic aims and intentions before an audience. Ownership comes from a genuine sense of exploration and understanding
- Portfolios were concise, perceptive and made full use of the recommended word limit
- Teacher-assessor comments were detailed and specific, allowing the moderator to 'see' examples of how and why marks had been awarded.

Low-scoring work was felt to show some of these features:

- Group performances/design realisations that were poorly executed in performance and did not sufficiently embrace the methodology of the chosen practitioner
- Performance work used a limited range of skills in terms of character, communication, voice and physicality
- Performance work did not meet the regulatory or recommended time limits
- Portfolio content was unclear and often ignored the demands of the 6 statements. Some candidates failed to address the content of all of the statements and therefore some content was missing when mapped to Assessment Objectives.
- Portfolios struggled to find a personal voice
- Portfolios showed a lack of analysis or isolated analysis without sufficient evaluation
- Students' found it difficult to offer practical examples in response to the 6 statements/questions
- Portfolio research was either missing, superficial, minimal or unconnected to key stages in the development/exploration/production process
- Lack of consideration towards the contextual impact on the work
- Theory and practice are often unconnected or irrelevant
- Limited subject-specific vocabulary used to support ideas
- Performance work was underprepared or lacked focus, energy
- Portfolios significantly exceeded or struggled to meet the available number of words
- Centres were poorly organised, had lost coursework, did not present appropriate recording evidence, had not carried out centre standardisation or did not have specialist drama staff to deliver the component.

In conclusion, most centres served their students well and proved to have a firm understanding of the demands of this first component.

Based on the evidence presented for moderation, students have engaged in the challenge of devising and several were able to present innovative, creative and engaging pieces of original work.

Moving forward centres should:

- Ensure that the **key extract is specifically referred to** in the final portfolio and connected to the wider context of the performance text
- Ensure candidates **use the 6 statements** to structure the content of their portfolio evidence
- Ensure the **methodology of the chosen practitioner** is **dominant** in both the performance/design realisation and portfolio
- Ensure the **recording captures the best possible evidence** to support the marks awarded for AO2
- Ensure all **design documentation** is made available to the moderator
- Ensure **references to live theatre are meaningful and connected** to the overall devising experience
- **Check that final marks awarded are consistent** across all administration
- Regularly **look at the ASG and support material available** on the Pearson/Edexcel website.

