

Moderator's Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2013

Advanced Subsidiary GCE in
Performing Arts
(Single Award: 8781)

Advanced GCE in Performing Arts
(Single Award: 9781)

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Contents

General Comments on the 2013 Series	4
Some Key Messages	4
Moderation Arrangements	6
Unit One: – Developing Skills for Performance	10
Unit Two: – Planning for a Creative Event	12
Unit Three: – Performing to a Commission	14
Unit Four: - Employment Opportunities in the Performing Arts	16
Unit Five: – Advanced Performance Practice	20
Unit Six: - Advanced Production Practice	22
Unit Seven: – Production Delivery	24
Grading information	27

General comments on the 2013 series

The enthusiasm for the specification continues in centres and the content free nature of the specification has resulted in a very wide range of course programmes offered across the country. The full range of disciplines is being offered, however, Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre remain the most popular routes. This year saw an increase in the number of centres offering a Music route.

Centre assessment saw the use of the four mark bands being applied however, the expanded Assessment guidance relating to each mark band may offer some centres a clearer appreciation of the evidence required in relation to the higher mark bands.

Some Key Messages

The following problems continue to occur and need addressing in some centres.

1. Students should not create portfolios in any other format than A4 (unless they are offering design skills) and not decorate their work (this type of approach is not indicative of AS/A level).
2. The **written** components for units 3 and 7 should be marked prior to the moderation visit. This should be marked using the Assessment Objective 2 criteria only. The evidence for Assessment Objective 1 will be evidenced in performance along with Assessment Objective 3.
3. Practical performances (3, 5 & 7) **must** be recorded and Students **must** be identified at the start of performances.
4. Recordings of units 3 and 7, in the correct format, must be available if requested by the moderator no later than one week after the visit.
5. Annotation on student work should indicate where marks have been credited against the criteria.

6. For units 3 & 7 centres should adhere to the rubric concerning the running time of the performances and group size.
7. When more than one teacher in a centre marks work it is important to carry out internal standardisation. This should also take place across any pathways or routes the centre offers.
8. Students should avoid web downloads unless they are essential to illustrate specific points they wish to discuss.

Moderation Arrangements

The moderation process was mostly straightforward this year with the moderation window between April 1st and the 30th June. Very few centres had organised dates without consultation with their designated moderators but it is worth re-iterating that the moderation date is to be agreed with their moderator through **negotiation** and that centres should **not** decide on dates and assume that the moderator will be available. Similarly when dates and times have been agreed they must not be altered unless the moderator agrees.

It should also be noted that whilst it is very beneficial to have an audience for the practical work, units three and seven are examinations and the requirements of the specification must take precedence over audience considerations.

OPTEM Forms

The procedure remains as follows: Centres must complete OPTEM forms for units 1, 2, 4 and 5/6 prior to the moderation visit and send the top copy to Edexcel at least a week before the agreed visit date. The yellow copies of the OPTEM forms should be with the Students' portfolios to enable the moderator to select an appropriate sample.

Recording of Practical Units

Please note that recordings of unit three and seven performances must be available if the moderator requests them. If this is the case, they must be sent to the moderator within seven days of the visit together with their marked yellow copy of the OPTEM for each unit.

Many centres did not identify students at the start of the performances. Given the fact that some centres are still producing poor quality recordings it is worth repeating the key factors that must be adhered to.

Firstly the recording must be in an **appropriate format**. The most suitable is on DVD in a Windows Media Player format. It is important that students are wearing the same costume that they use in the performance and that they state their name and candidate number and preferably the role/roles that they are playing at the start. Since students' concentration and performance preparation could be disrupted, it is advisable that the identification process is carried out prior to the actual performance but obviously at the beginning of the tape that will be used to record the work.

It is likely that in future inability to comply with this very clear instruction will be considered an infringement of the examination rubric and treated accordingly.

Portfolios

All portfolios must be available for the visiting moderator and these must be marked by the centre's assessor(s) and internally standardised where necessary. The centre marking should indicate where students' work has been credited against the criteria through suitable annotation. Moderators again reported that many centres had managed this very effectively and noted that the moderation process was as efficient as last year. In most centres a private area had been arranged for the portfolio moderation and it should be stressed that this is an **essential** requirement.

For units five and six it is important to remind centres that the recorded evidence of the production must be available with the portfolios and suitable technology available to view the work. Likewise, it is essential that students be identified clearly at the beginning of the recording.

Students should be discouraged from submitting work in any other format than A4 and must not use plastic wallets. The content is the only material that moderators will consider and the decoration of folders and unfiltered internet downloads add nothing to the student evidence.

The only students who need to work outside this framework are those offering design skills where plans and/or design sketches might be larger than A4 format.

This may be also the case for the promotional material in unit 4.

Practical Units Three and Seven

Moderators reported that they had viewed a wide range and variety of performance work both in the application of performance styles and techniques and in the creative responses to the commission briefs. No style of performance was overriding and a broad range of skills appeared to be demonstrated.

For unit seven most centres now appear to understand the focus of the unit but it is worth stating once again that this is **not a devising unit** and Students should focus on developing their own interpretation of an existing piece from the performance repertoire. It is important to read carefully the instructions given on the Production Brief for the relevant assessment window. It was found that this series some centres had not read the Production Brief relating to this series and had assumed it was the same as last years.

Process documentation to accompany practical units three and seven was managed effectively this year with centres applying the full range of marks for this component.

Unit Details for the 2013 Series

Unit One: – Developing Skills for Performance

There was a wide range of areas developed and different means of acquiring and applying skills were explored and applied, with mostly effective evaluation of the development process.

The Audit (AO1)

Students that are more able were guided by the centre to produce thorough and detailed audits, written independently. These students were then able to identify a personal skills development programme as a result of the audit. At the other end of the mark range students tended to use writing frames provided by the centre or a series of questions, which prompted brief, and often under developed responses. These students did not then use the audit to identify the skills they wished to develop. Some centres guided Students into writing about too wide a range of specialism e.g. acting, dancing, technical production etc. As an applied subject, students are encouraged to replicate professional practice and it would not necessarily be realistic to explore and develop skills in such a wide range of areas.

However, there was good and impressive practice where students clearly understood how to assess their initial skills level, and then signposted an area they were going to develop with an action plan of individual and independent intentions.

It was noted that 'The Voice' was a popular choice for development this series.

The Reports AO2 & AO3

It appeared again this year that some students producing diaries of what they learnt and what they did in every lesson, often including trips to the theatre, interviews with professionals etc. Numerous students again wrote about development through specific lessons and used writing frames. This resulted in the portfolios all being the same in content within a centre and lacked a clear focus on the skill that an individual student wanted to develop.

However, there was evidence of students taking responsibility for their own development and these students often clearly communicated the process of their development and the impact it had on their own practice.

There was some evidence of students using video diaries to support their written responses but these are still in the minority. Many centres produced recordings of students performing without the recording being referenced clearly in the portfolio. Best practice produced recordings to demonstrate tangible development of skills throughout the process and students could clearly be identified. Photographic evidence was often used and this was valuable when accompanied by a written explanation of exercises, practice material and technique development.

The annotated photographs in the dance portfolios often successfully demonstrated an understanding of the skills being applied.

Many reports were too descriptive and included everything a student had done during the unit rather than the Student selecting the appropriate and relevant materials for inclusion.

Students in centres who had a secure understanding of the unit produced evidence that communicated to the moderator the process they had gone through and repetitively applied their development to professional practice and provided clear evidence of development through fit for purpose evidence.

Many centres guided students into developing a skill for a specific performance and then the performance became the focus of their development.

There was a sense that students had different degrees of self-management and control and mastery of skills but tangible evidence was not always evident.

Health and safety issues were often successfully addressed within the context of the students chosen skill development. Less successful health and safety documentation tended to be generic and did not have a genuine context.

Evaluation (AO4)

Fully reflective evaluations were evident this year. Stronger students tended to evaluate throughout the portfolio and had a separate evaluation that reflected on and evaluated development, relating back to the initial skills audit and demonstrated a realistic understanding of the demands of the performing arts sector. In the latter, the correct terminology was used and spelling, punctuation and grammar was secure. Less able Students tended to describe their enjoyment of the activities they had followed rather than evaluating the methods they had used to develop their skills.

Overall this series the evidence presented at moderation was more fitting to the demands of the unit and in response to the weightings of the Assessment Objectives.

Unit Two: – Planning for a Creative Event

Most centres this series provided students with the opportunity to plan an appropriate creative event. Where the event was of a manageable scale this tended to give students more ownership of the event and the decision making involved.

Where a centre used a regular event to fulfil the requirements of the unit, it was felt that if the event takes place every year and is formulaic in its structure it affords little opportunity to deviate from tried and tested practice.

Some students made it very clear how the group was organised and jobs allocated. However, many students instead appeared to multi-role, and this often led to difficulties in differentiating individual ability for assessment purposes.

Some students were fortunate in being able to interview a professional whose job related to the role they were taking on or did the relevant research into their job role and they applied their new knowledge to the planning process. It is appreciated that not all students can access the former but there are many resources available for students to research professional practice in their chosen job role.

Report (AO1)

This series, most reports were fit for purpose in content and style, however to a varying degree. Some reports did not begin by communicating what the event was or detail clear creative intentions. The presentation and organisation of many portfolios was not indicative of AS work. Many students were confused about the difference between the report and an action plan. The best reports were reflective and retrospective documents written after the event had taken place and presented in a formal structured way.

It was again found that many students wrote an overview of how to plan an event rather than a report on a specific creative event. Stronger responses had a clear understanding of the planning process and submitted reports describing the key factors that had been considered.

Action Plans (AO2)

It is fundamental that all centres recognise that this assessment objective carries 50% of the marks available. In order for students to access the full range of marks the action planning evidence must be of sufficient detail and evidence sufficient skills acquisition relating to planning an event.

There was again some concern that students offered generic action plans (not annotated or personalised), often without deadlines as evidence of secure or comprehensive planning. Action plans also included a lot of bulky material such as minutes of meetings, scripts, rehearsal schedules etc that should be placed in a separate appendix at the end of the portfolio.

Where students produced detailed individual plans with realistic aims and deadlines it provided a much stronger response to the demands of the assessment objective.

Evaluation (AO4)

Many Students were able to document the process effectively but need to be more critical and analytical in their reflections. Stronger students were able to evaluate the planning and execution of the event rather than the event itself.

The evaluation should cover all the key stages of the planning process from initial idea to post event findings. The strengths and weaknesses of the planning processes should be understood in relation to the relevant decisions and actions undertaken. Critical analysis rather than description of tasks is required.

Unit Three: – Performing to a Commission

As with previous years, moderators reported a very wide range of responses across all disciplines to the commission briefs. Where Students had responded to the demands of the selected commission, the finished product was more secure and engaging for the target audience.

It was noted this series that the most popular response was to Commission 1 and the exploration of a Cultural Tradition. However, this series saw an increase in the number of centres responding to Commission 2 with a number of Theatre In Education style pieces being performed to key stage 2 audiences. For the first time, this series saw commission 3 being a less popular choice.

Responses to the commission briefs **(AO1)** were comparable to the previous series but centres had again benefited from previous moderation reports and feedback. Therefore, the approach adopted by centres, with a similar cohort of students, was again more focused and successful. Most centres ensured that the realisation of the brief was handled in a professional manner to create a developed performance targeted at a specific audience and with a clearly defined intended effect. Moderators reported some highly innovative and thought-provoking content and language of performance.

Most centres presented the work for an appropriate audience and this often helped students to raise the level of their individual performances. A few centres however did not pay sufficient attention to production values and sense of occasion.

It was less evident this series that centres were presenting work to no audience, with only the centre assessor and moderator present. It was felt that in such cases, an audience might have benefitted the students.

A small number of centres had not monitored the maximum and minimum time limits for the work and this usually was to the detriment of the piece. In pieces that were too short students were not always able to demonstrate their abilities and in over long productions they often ceased to maintain their concentration, focus and energy. Centres should ensure that the productions are within the allowed timeframe with smaller groups of three or four adhering to the shorter

time and groups above ten using the higher allocation of time. The style of work should also be considered when calculating an appropriate running time.

Most performances were effective responses to the commissions but weaker groups frequently displayed very tenuous connections with the commission brief and sometimes presented performances that were simplistic in concept and lacked sufficient intensity or commitment to engage an audience.

With very few exceptions, moderators were impressed with the commitment of Students and the work they produced. **(AO3)** They were equally complimentary about the professional approach of centre assessors and the approach to the marking that was achieved, in the majority of centres, through a clear focus on the criteria.

The written log is an essential requirement and there was a consensus that teachers now realise the purpose and value of the component and assessed the documents reasonably accurately. It is worth stating once again that the log should demonstrate clearly how the work stems from the commission, details any relevant research and conveys the creative process that the students engaged in. Centres should note that downloaded web pages without appropriate annotation and explanation are not valid at this level. The written log should be assessed prior to the moderation visit against the **(AO2)** criteria only.

Most centres were clear about the need to submit the group pro-forma designed to provide the moderator with the context for the piece, identify students and roles, confirm the performance style, and target audience.

Identification of students remained an issue in some centres when students were part of a large group and dressed in similar costumes. Whilst it is recognised that the integrity of the performance is important centres must also remember that it is an examination and the moderator must be able to distinguish individuals within the group.

Most centres responded effectively to the requirement to send a recording if requested to do so.

Students who offered a technical support role within the group often demonstrated great resourcefulness and expertise in their technical achievements. The ten minute presentation to the centre assessor to contextualise their work was mostly useful to both student and assessor.

There were very few students who elected to work in administrative roles but when this did occur they used the presentation time to demonstrate the range and quality of their input to marketing and promotion or front of house activities. Moderators again relied more heavily on the centre assessor's knowledge of the students input into these areas and despite the potential difficulties, moderators were happy with the reliability of the marks awarded.

It is also important to confirm again that unit three must not be used to deliver unit two 'Planning for an Event'.

Unit Four: - Employment Opportunities in the Performing Arts

Unit 4 places Students work within the context of the Performing Arts industries. It asks learners to research into employment contexts, jobs and roles, industry standards and conditions and progression routes and opportunities and then make connections between what they have analysed and their own artistic practice. This combination should inform their acquisition of skills, understanding and knowledge.

The summary below gives a brief outline that is expanded on in the report:

A report detailing three roles in the performing arts industry (AO1)

- This should include general contextualisation in the form of an introduction
- A conclusion should identify the student's vocational/progression route, this is generally into employment but can include HE or pre-professional training
- Case Studies can provide additional evidence but should not form the only basis of the report

A portfolio of evidence of students experience of practical work organised with promotional intention and linked to their chosen vocational/progression route (AO2/3)

- Underpinned with knowledge and understanding of the practice and industry conditions of their chosen vocational area
- Evidence of their experience, expertise and skill set profiled with promotional intention
- Rigorous editing and selection
- Less emphasis on skills development, more on skills promotion
- Avoid included unedited, generic taught material on industry
- Work experience is useful but not the whole story

An evaluation (AO4)

- Evidence that there has been a considered analysis of the work from the report through to choice of promotional material in portfolio
- Accounts of how the portfolio has been focused and structured
- Grammar, punctuation and spelling is checked
- Use of appropriate technical performing arts terminology

The title of the unit is Employment Opportunities in the Performing Arts. Once an overview of the industry has been established in the report (AO1) employment opportunities should refer to the students own options and not to opportunities in the industry as a whole. Weaker centres in effect merely taught and listed employment opportunities (along with higher education courses, job conditions etc). Better students understood what and where their opportunities for employment were and produced evidence in their campaign to position themselves in the industry job market. It should be strongly noted that this is not a skills development unit; the student should assume that they are already at an appropriately developed stage in their artistic and creative careers and progressions. Replications of audits in the style of Unit 1 tend to give accounts of deficits in skills and techniques and are therefore already reducing promotional intention.

A report (AO1)

This should outline employment opportunities generally in the performing arts industry and go on to describe three jobs specifically, one each from performance, technical support and administration. Better responses gave very informed, critical accounts of the roles in great depth that had been contextualised by accounts of the creative industries as a whole.

Some centres had produced discrete, stand-alone reports bound and with well-designed covers. This was not always a good indication of contents but it did show an appropriate understanding of the demands and structure of the unit.

They then went on to give a brief context to their own artistic role of choice and vocational progression route that underpinned the rest of the portfolio.

Reports were mostly structured appropriately with an overview of the performing arts industry and links to the three job roles. Credit should go to students who endeavoured to undertake primary research, as it gave a clear vocational relevance to the report. Some students had clearly gone to great lengths to obtain interviews with working professionals, although it should be noted that case studies by themselves could reduce the range of evidence of the industry and specific jobs as a whole.

Reports would benefit from an introductory 'overview' of the performing arts industry prior to detailing the research into three job roles.

A Portfolio of evidence (AO2, AO3)

As indicated some centres continue to misunderstand the context of the unit producing more of the report's contents in the portfolio section; identifying a progression route is not justification to include details of several university or conservatoire courses along with bulky prospectuses. There is some value in contextualisation especially when there is a decision to work on an audition piece for one of the courses.

However, evidence of work on an audition speech by itself does not constitute sufficient evidence for AO2 and AO3. To re-iterate the portfolio of evidence needs to respond to the vocational, practical and professional demands of the unit contextualised by the individual progression route.

In more developed portfolios the progression route indicated the extent to which the Students skills and experience was edited, selected and presented to give maximum promotional intention and thus increase opportunities for employment. It needs to be structured with promotional intention to sell and market the student in their chosen role.

Students need to be encouraged to provide more examples of practical work to support accomplishment in the higher mark bands. Although observation records are helpful they are not always supportive of the depth and comprehensive account of the learners work, for example the accomplished committed personal style for band 4. Some centres focussed on employment rather than solely on higher education and training and this resulted in materials and portfolios that had much more promotional intent.

Some centres are beginning to submit evidence in highly produced and promotional portfolios. These have included show reels, well-annotated photographs and websites. Commendable students had obviously subjected their work to constant review and thought very carefully at the end of the process about how they wanted to present the portfolio section to give the maximum effect of their development and skills to the reader. Equally, some students produced very slim portfolios consisting of CVs and photos only. Centres that did encourage a rigorous editing and shaping of material included full appendices, the use of which is becoming increasingly common. Appendices of this kind help to structure portfolios appropriately, while allaying fears of not including some good researched or taught material.

Evaluation (AO4)

Students should analyse how their skills, knowledge and understanding have been developed and informed by both their own work and the vocational context of that work. The other part of the framing of the portfolio section evidence is the evaluation. These generally were not problematic in terms of the demands of the unit since their use and format has precedent and centres and students have experience in producing them. They mostly responded to the report and portfolio section evidence and provided good differentiation of marking criteria. In contrast to the report the length and scope of the evaluation was almost entirely commensurate with the amount of the marks awarded for it.

Unit Five: – Advanced Performance Practice

The unit is based on building a balanced relationship between documentation of processes and the application of skills and techniques in a production. A working notebook logs the acquisition through research of knowledge and understanding of a specific performance role and the application of that knowledge and understanding through appropriate skills and techniques in a production. Student evidence should include:

Written documentation of the processes

- a working notebook showing research which focuses and contextualises the chosen performance material
- a rehearsal and preparation programme which reveals professional practice and commitment
- evidence of regular practice including scheduling and organisation
- an evaluation with use of specialist terms

A recording of the performance of existing repertoire (not devised) to an audience where Students are clearly identified.

AO1, AO2 and **AO4** are evidenced through the working notebook and **AO3** through the performance recording. There is equal weighting between the working notebook and the performance.

Centres generally encouraged students to make choices of roles and production that provided sufficient evidence to meet the full range of assessment criteria. Good choices of topic are those that generally represent repertoire where there is a substantial body of theoretical and practical context for research to be meaningful and at depth. These repertoire choices combine historical, cultural and social contexts with the need to research contemporary professional practice that underpins AO1 assessment. They also provide the systematic and planning necessary to meet AO2 that should see evidence of advance scheduling as well as retrospective accounts of rehearsals.

Students must be guided to make appropriate choices to meet the full criteria for this unit. A few centres choose to work on devising their own texts or pieces that may have historical contexts such as variety shows and pantomime, but this gave little opportunity for character development and a development of an accomplished personal style. These productions may also inhibit responses to contemporary artistic and creative conditions.

Students' portfolios were generally well presented and clearly signposted, with detailed and supportive feedback. They utilised the 'working notebook' required in the specification and there was a clear sense of progression as the process was documented. There was clear recognition that the unit is a synoptic unit and there was some excellent linking of theory and practice. Students tended to be honest and perceptive in documenting the process.

As with other A2 units editing and selection is a key skill and students should make use of appendices for including researched work that does not specifically relate to their chosen material or performance. This should avoid the inclusion of generic, taught or replicated notes. The inclusion of material on practitioners is useful if it informs the work. At this level it is expected that any internet researched material is fully referenced and annotated.

Most of the scheduling documentation seen tended to be retrospective and 'written up' after the event. Although there should be evidence of regular practice there also needs to be advanced scheduling that reveals a clear and robust understanding of the creative and logistical needs of the chosen material. The best notebooks were an engaging insight into the performance process underpinned with good knowledge of the techniques and genre.

Evaluations could be more detailed and focus more on individual and group performance rather than the production realisation. Some assessors for **AO4** credited description as analysis in their annotation. Students need to be more critical in terms of their evaluation of their own and the group's performance and to make links with professional practice.

The strongest students embedded evaluation in their working logs and provided a summative document with good quality of written communication. Weaker

responses were written in everyday language and were a descriptive report of the performance.

Performance standards in **AO3** were often high and demonstrated commitment to stylistic and professional practice considerations. Communication with the audience was consistently good in centres as was the demonstration of a secure understanding of the creative process. AO3 has a wide range of descriptors relating to performance and assessors should avoid crediting it all rather than carefully applying those aspects that best fit student evidence from across the bands.

There is sometimes a misunderstanding of the levelness of A2 within the context of the demands of this unit, which is predicated on *advanced* performance practice, *advanced* skills and techniques and critical and analytical research.

In AO1 there is a tendency to credit breadth of research material rather than depth. AO2 can lack accuracy in the crediting of contextualised research and the extent to which students provide advanced schedules and plans rather than descriptive diaries.

Technical quality of recordings was generally good, with few difficulties experienced in viewing students' work. However, in some centres there is the issue of poor student identification.

Unit Six: - Advanced Production Practice

As the optional unit sitting alongside unit five, unit six shares much of the demands and assessment criteria but relates more specifically to technical areas. This report should therefore be read in conjunction with the one for unit five. Because of the wide range of skills applied and the limited size of the national cohort limited definitive conclusions can be drawn, however a number of generalised issues arise and these are detailed below.

As with unit five the unit is based on building a balanced and fluent relationship between acquisition through research, knowledge and understanding of a specific production role (eg, lighting, sound, set or costume design, make up, or across a number of roles in a small company) and the application of that knowledge and understanding through appropriate skills and operations during a production.

Students should produce

- a working notebook showing evidence of research into style and technical requirements
- plans of the design and/or management ideas
- documentation and DVD of the realisation of the ideas
- an evaluation

AO1, AO2 and AO4 are evidenced through the working notebook and **AO3** through the performance recording or documentation. There is equal weighting between the working notebook and the performance documentation but there may be some replication of materials and some evidence may be seen that cuts across AOs.

Again, choice of material is crucial in this unit and must not only provide the range and depth necessary to meet the assessment criteria but also provide sufficient technical and logistical needs to satisfy *advanced* practice. This can be difficult in centres that may have enthusiastic Students but basic equipment and limited access to replications of professional standards.

Some students did produce work of a high standard although the balance between practical skills and technical documentation remains problematic. Often the technical and practical demands dominated the process and this is to be expected in some of the large scale productions seen but students need to be provided with the capabilities to be able to produce the same documentation as unit five students. There should be fully contextualised research, scheduling and planning and evaluative statements but with the added demands of the particular technical skill base and a recorded presentation as additional evidence.

Some students provided work that was far too wide, effectively taking on full production management roles that made evidence thin and difficult to pin down,

although they were often assessed internally on how 'hard' they had worked. Centres should ensure clarity of evidence in these cases.

Centres should ensure very careful selection of skills that accurately reflect the level and depth of work expected, the resources of the centre, the demands of the production and the likely replication of professional standards and documentation.

Unit Seven: – Production Delivery

Unit seven allowed students to engage with the subject in a very practical manner but demanded a very sophisticated and polished level of performance. To fulfil the demands of the criteria, students needed to be completely secure in the skills they employed and demonstrate them through a fully developed and practiced performance.

Most centres appeared to have recognised that the unit is about students developing their own interpretation of existing material from the performance repertoire rather than the creation of new work. As a result, there were some very interesting versions of a wide range of material involving many styles and genres within the performing arts. For the same reason, fewer students spent time on devising new motifs or dialogue to the detriment of their performances. Most centres appeared to have accurately understood the Production Brief, however, other centres appeared to have not read the specific brief for the 2013 series.

The response to the specific demand and challenge of the production brief **(AO1)** is essential.

The most successful students presented their work with a clearly defined focus on either performance style or dramatic intention to convey a particular message or achieve a particular effect for an identified target audience.

The choice of existing repertoire should be suitable for A2 exploration.

Most groups showed an excellent understanding of their material in both their logs **(AO2)** and performance **(AO3)** and a wide range of skills and practices were explored. There was a broad use of the creative space with varying amounts of set and often the application of multimedia techniques, particularly where centres had technical students.

In most cases moderators confirmed that students were well focused and committed to their work, often demonstrating individual flair and imagination, and that the performances were well rehearsed to a high standard.

Most centres clearly understood the need to develop their own interpretation of the chosen material with the most successful presenting their interpretation of an existing play or choreography. In a minority of centres, the requirement to interpret the production brief had not been fully understood and, again, skill development rather than interpretation seemed to be the focus.

Working logs were too often lacking in depth and evaluative detail and tended to be descriptive rather than analytical with some clearly having been submitted at the last minute. It is important that students explain their interpretation of the source material, show any relevant research and detail the creative rehearsal process. The document is the students' individual response and in some centres there was evidence of generic content.

In general, centre assessors had differentiated between students very effectively but had often rewarded this component leniently.

The most effective responses to the brief had a clearly outlined creative intent and thoroughly and imaginatively interrogated original sources.

There was again considerable evidence of a professional approach and full commitment to the performances and attempts to reflect industry demands and standards. There was also evidence of understanding and appreciation of the creative decisions made at the advanced level. Much of the work displayed the professional refinement that the specification required with excellent levels of concentration, imagination and accuracy that revealed a thorough understanding of methods and an excellent aptitude to communicate with an audience.

In most cases, the work was performed in front of the intended target audience and proved a suitable platform for a range of skills to be demonstrated. In the strongest work, communication between the performers and audience was evident and in the best performances there was clarity of intent where relevance and meaning were conveyed with confidence.

The strongest students produced consistently accomplished performances, demonstrating full mastery of a range of performance styles and techniques. Many students scored highly in this part of the specification but centre assessors were sometimes inclined to reward effort and enthusiasm rather than award marks against the technical ability aspects of the criteria.

The majority of students elected to be assessed on performance skills as actors, dancers and musicians but there was the usual range of design and technical support students. Presentations by stage managers or designers were usually very informative and clarified their contribution to the realisation of the group's work overall.

Summary Section

Based on the performance this series, students should:

- Select repertoire, where a unit demands this, that is suitable for AS or A2 exploration
- Present work in A4 format without unnecessary decoration
- Pay attention to the weightings of the Assessment Objectives for each unit and respond in the type and amount of student evidence presented
- Undertake critical analysis and genuine reflection where evaluation is required, and move beyond the description of activities undertaken
- Place all the work within the context of the Performing Arts industry

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwant to/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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