



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner

Feedback Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCE

In Drama and Theatre (9DR0)

Component 1: Devising (9DR0 01)

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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 A Level Drama and Theatre 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 A Level Drama & Theatre specification.

Series specific context:

For the fourth year, centres were asked to upload work digitally through the Learner Work Transfer platform. Portfolio work, supporting documentation and performance work were submitted through the LWT platform and Teacher-assessors completed administration and commentary, using NEA authentication sheets and CCIS form. 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 A Level Drama and Theatre 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 2025.

Component 1: Devising Performance text/extract

Centres continue to have a free choice when selecting an appropriate extract from a performance text to use as a stimulus. An extract is defined as a scene or a moment that is significant to the text as a whole and at least 10 minutes in length when performed. It should offer students the opportunity to demonstrate exploratory range and depth that are appropriate to the level of demand for A level study, with an appropriate degree of challenge. 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 Drama and Theatre specification, was correctly observed by nearly all centres this year. There were very few instances where centres had chosen inappropriate texts or from the Component 3 prescribed text list.

In this series, moderators reported that centres selected a broad and diverse range of performance texts that immediately engaged candidates and resonated with their world, reflecting issues of cultural and social relevance. Popular texts for 2025 included: *Pillowman*, *Kindertransport*, *Gladiator Games*, *Memory of Water*, *Metamorphosis*, *4.48*, *Things I Know to be True*, *A Doll's House*, *Yerma*, *1984*, *Find Me*, *The Crucible*, *Be My Baby*, *Lemons* and *Pool (No Water)*. Again, several centres opted for Greek or Shakespearean texts, and this was often a successful springboard for discussion and exploration of contemporary issues and ideas. Moderators once again commented on the exploration of new and modern play texts being used for this first component.

Candidates begin their devising experience selecting one key extract from a performance text. Teacher-assessors should introduce a specific extract at the start of the devising process to act as a creative springboard for candidates' initial exploration. Teacher-assessors who provided practical workshops that explored key themes, ideas and characters often supported students in the initial stages of the devising process. Many candidates wrote about their stimulus text with clarity and confidence, and moderators reported that many were able to make effective links between key themes, ideas, characters, and style, connecting these to their own practical exploration while also considering the influence of the wider play text on their devised work. Once again, it was reported in this series that some candidates struggled to clearly identify the chosen extract and detail how it had a significant impact on their work. 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 shaped, developed and influenced the early stages of the devising process should be clearly documented in the portfolio. 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 recognised the importance of the specific extract and were able to offer a personal and analytical response considering how it had impacted the early stages of their devising journey were more successful and able to access the higher marks. For example, one centre focused on the opening scenes of 'Our Country's Good', linking this to their intention to echo Wertebaker's aims and challenge audience perceptions of the justice system, with a particular focus on prisons and inmates today. Another centre chose to explore the ending of 'Miss Julie', considering key themes and incorporating the work of Frantic Assembly to bring the language of the extract to life through physical theatre, deliberately contrasting the original style of the play. A third centre worked with an extract from 'Blasted', exploring not only its key themes but also the brutality of its style, and how the playwright's personal struggles influenced the

writing. This exploration was immediately connected to Artaud, making a clear link to their choice of practitioner and justifying how it supported their initial response. As suggested, it was popular to find candidates exploring the opening or final moments of their performance text and this often helped to contextualise the initial response within the narrative arc of the play as a whole. The most successful responses began with an immediate personal reaction to the chosen extract and consistently referenced the stimulus throughout the portfolio, clearly demonstrating its influence across the creative process through to the final performance.

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.

Frantic Assembly was an overwhelmingly popular choice for the 2025 series with *The Paper Birds*, Brecht, Artaud, and *Complicité* also featuring prominently. Gecko and Alecky Blythe showed a noticeable increase in popularity. In contrast, there was less evidence of Stanislavski, Kneehigh and Punchdrunk being used this series. Some issues remained in centres that chose Punchdrunk, where the filming did not capture the work of all candidates, making it unclear how the teacher-assessor was able to assess each individual's contribution. Less common but often equally engaging were Katie Mitchell, Berkoff, Kneehigh/Wise Children, DV8 and *Splendid*. Most centres continue to select practitioners from the published list 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 A Level Drama and Theatre 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 noted that the most successful performances were rooted in detailed practitioner methodology, with final pieces that had clearly been shaped by genuine research and influence, resulting in work that was more credible, theatrically inventive, and engaging to watch. Where the chosen practitioner's methods were clearly applied in both the performance and accompanying portfolio, assessment tended to be more accurate and aligned with the assessment objectives. Conversely, candidates who struggled to reflect the practitioner's influence consistently across their work often produced less coherent or fully realised outcomes. A recurring issue in a small number of centres was the use of multiple practitioners without establishing a clear primary influence. Pairings such as Frantic Assembly with Brecht or Stanislavski with Artaud were not supportive of candidates accessing the higher levels in performance and portfolio work became muddled.

It is important to reiterate that the specification states there should be one chosen practitioner and this must be evident in performance. It is this focused engagement that supports a more secure and detailed response. Again, there were several instances where candidates used up word count explaining a change in practitioner during the process, which did not support the analytical discussion of their final chosen practitioner. Referring to other theatre makers did help some candidates demonstrate a broader range of influence, and those achieving marks in the upper levels often compared and reflected on how different practitioners had shaped their creative work. The most sophisticated responses typically came from candidates who could draw meaningful links between practitioners with shared ideas or stylistic similarities. For example,

candidates exploring the work of Joan Littlewood were often able to make effective connections to Brechtian theory and practice, which added clarity and depth to their creative choices.

Performance work

Moderators reported that most centres offered a range of exciting and inventive work that was a pleasure to watch. Candidates securing marks in 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, as was reported last year, marks awarded at the top end of the mark range were often lenient and work awarded Level 5 was more reflective of the Level 4 assessment criteria. Sophisticated performance work is dynamic, controlled, perceptively integrated and showed skilful variety with highly engaging energy and commitment.

As has been the case for the last few years, most candidates chose to be assessed as performers, although an increasing number of design candidates were reported this series. Sound and lighting continued to dominate, but there were also several examples of costume and set design. It was extremely encouraging to see that these were generally candidates with a strong interest or specialism in their chosen area, for example, a costume candidate who was also studying A Level Textiles. In many cases design was impressively managed and relevant to the narrative from shadow work behind a screen/sheet, front-projection of images, unnerving and well-chosen sound effects, sharply executed lighting cues and inventive soundtracks to underscore or intersperse the action. There were some extremely creative and effective design work that embraced the influence of the chosen practitioner and was supportive of the performance work. Centres seem to have understood from last year's report that projection should be considered within either lighting or set design and that it is not design option on its own. Centres are reminded that design candidates are required to submit evidence of the additional documentation outlined on page 17 of the A Level Drama and Theatre specification. This supporting documentation should be uploaded to the LWT platform. This was missing from a number of centres this year.

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 refine 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 support the candidates being able to consider the impact of their work.

There were less reported case of centres choosing to use a 'pre-show' to set up their performance. Centres are reminded that pre shows count towards the time limit for the performance. Moderators will stop watching when the maximum time limit is reached and this will include the pre-show.

Where centres chose to use promenade/site specific staging, 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 A Level Drama and Theatre 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. 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. Popular themes and ideas in the 2025 series included: Isolation, displacement, power/control, equality, sexuality, domestic abuse, trauma, addiction, love/death, the negative impact of social media, body image, misogyny, oppression, infidelity and mental health.

As in previous series, ensemble pieces and physical storytelling dominated the work seen by moderators. Moderators commented that most of the work seen was hugely creative and communicated a real sense of ownership from the candidates. Work rooted in naturalism was often among the weakest, with some performances leaning towards a soap opera style, and candidates often struggled to create and sustain well-rounded, believable characters. Moderators reported evidence of skilful and detailed movement work inspired by practitioners such as Frantic Assembly, DV8 and Gecko. There were occasions where the movement work was simplistic or repetitive for example, an over-reliance on basic chair duets or round-by-throughs which did not always justify the marks awarded.

This year saw a range of inventive staging choices with a strong awareness of the positioning of the audience. These decisions were often well considered and clearly linked in the portfolios to creative intentions and practitioner influence. Other centres took a more stripped-back approach to staging, which, while simple, was equally effective in supporting the clarity and focus of the performance.

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 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 when the lighting states support this so they are readable, they are helpful. 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 A Level Drama and Theatre 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. Some centres

struggled to produce recordings that were fit for purpose. Where this has been raised with individual centres, teacher-assessors are encouraged to seek guidance and make improvements in 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 be positioned to have the 'best seat in the house' to capture the details of the performance clearly,

Common issues reported this year included:

- candidates dressed in all-black or similar costumes with very little offered in terms of visual differentiation
- washed out faces due to over-bright lighting
- music or sound levels that overpower dialogue
- audience members obscuring view of the camera impacting the view for 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 page 12 of 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 on the CCIS or on the actual recording. This is excellent practice. When centres did not indicate which candidates were no longer part of the course, it often caused confusion and delayed the initial stages of moderation.

Most centres worked within the recommended time limits and encouragingly, there were no reported cases of centres not meeting the minimum time requirement. However, moderators reported that several performances exceeded the maximum time limit, which became particularly problematic when candidates featured only minimally before the maximum time limit had passed. Teacher-assessors must indicate when marking has stopped for performances. Moderators will only watch 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 process. 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. Moderators reported that candidates who chose this style of presentation were less able to achieve marks in the higher levels. There was significantly less evidence this year of candidates using excessively lengthy 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 A Level Drama and Theatre specification.

The most successful portfolios were those that responded directly to the six statements, as outlined on page 18 of the specification. It was reassuring to see most candidates chose to structure their work using these statements and this enabled them to write with greater clarity and coherence. Those that wrote in continuous prose tended to lean more towards a descriptive style of writing that lacked the analytical depth required to meet the higher levels.

As previously mentioned, candidates who clearly identified the extract in response to Statement 1 and referred to it consistently throughout their portfolio demonstrated a stronger understanding of how it influenced the devising process. There were many examples where it was explicitly clear that the stimulus had been instrumental during the initial stages of devising. However, moderators reported several instances this year where candidates relied too heavily on the themes of the extract/play which often limited their ability to make nuanced and insightful connections between the stimulus and their own ideas.

Overall, candidates demonstrated a secure understanding of their chosen practitioner, clearly outlining how the methodology of their chosen practitioner had impacted their creative process and production intentions. Candidates scoring marks in the higher levels continue to effectively integrate practitioner theory throughout their portfolio, consistently linking it to their practical work. Many also made effective use of quotations relating to the practitioner's aims and intentions, which often elevated the level of analysis and discussion. They were also able to reference other theatre makers, individuals and companies but kept the central focus of their discussion on their chosen practitioner. Candidates who were too biographical or literary in their response to practitioner methodology largely failed to make connections to their own work. Portfolios that were unable to connect practical exploration to practitioner theory were less successful. Candidates scoring in the higher levels effectively wove practitioner theory, linked to clear examples from their devising process, throughout the final document.

Some centres encouraged the research of practitioner methodology as the primary focus for research, and this dominated responses to Statement 2. While relevant, research should be far-reaching and support the themes, ideas and content; it is a given that practitioner research will be required. Statement 2 provides the opportunity for candidates to make links between wider research findings and the development of ideas. It was encouraging to see many candidates utilise a broad range of research methods, from online searches to more varied sources such as BBC Sounds, first-hand interviews, podcasts and play texts. Candidates often documented research that was pertinent, insightful, and well-considered. Key to candidates' success was

their ability to link research directly to practical exploration, enabling them to communicate a genuine creative journey and a clear decision-making process.

Some candidates do not make clear 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, but rather an essential source of inspiration to further shape ideas. 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 achieving marks in the upper levels were able to deconstruct and reflect on their experiences of live theatre throughout the portfolio. This often enabled them to explore a wide range of connections between various aspects of their own creative work and the influence of live productions. For example, candidates who watched productions by Frantic Assembly often explored the impact of physical storytelling and made further connections to staging or use of music, demonstrating a broad and thoughtful engagement with live theatre and how it influenced their own creative ideas. 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 A01 (creating and developing).

There was some excellent evidence of responses to Statement 5 being used to make meaningful links between context and the development of the candidates' own creative ideas. It was encouraging to see how this response was used to demonstrate further research, rooted in practical exploration, with many candidates also evaluating its impact on the final performance.

Many candidates embedded evaluation and analysis (A04 analysing and evaluating) throughout their work communicating a continually reflective process. Candidates analysed and evaluated the effectiveness of practical exploration, the significance of their research and the development of their role. 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 for example in response to statement 3 where candidates are asked to evaluate how their chosen role/s emerged and developed from initial ideas through to the final performance. A clear understanding of the intended outcome is essential when evaluating both the devising process and the final performance. Moderators reported that evaluations explicitly linked to practical experimentation, performance outcomes, and audience impact were significantly more effective. Candidates are discouraged from writing about what they did not do, as this did not help them use the word count effectively to document their process. Higher-scoring candidates were able to make meaningful links showing how ideas evolved, rather than simply stating that they were discarded. Moderators did note this year that reference to the 'audience' was often missing from portfolios. Candidates that took a more holistic approach to their evaluation and offered detail, analysis and key examples throughout their final document were more successful. Some candidates included verbatim from audience questionnaires which was helpful to an extent but those that connected personal feedback to aims and intentions were more successful. Listing quotes from the audience was not helpful.

For the 2025 series moderators reported increased evidence of candidates who did not include significant discussion of their practical exploration during the devising process. In some cases, candidates presented research or practitioner influences and moved directly to evaluating their impact in the final performance, without detailing the development of ideas in practice. However,

where candidates did include sufficient practical examples, they were able to communicate a genuine creative journey and demonstrate a clear, reflective devising process.

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 throughout the process and outlined how stimulus, research, context and practitioner methodology had contributed to the influence and success of their final devised performance.

Teacher comments/annotations and recommended word count

Moderators reported that many centres provided highly detailed and personalised comments, which were extremely supportive of the moderation process. Centres are thanked for the time taken in completing the NEA authentication sheets so thoroughly. Many centres also helpfully annotated candidates' work, allowing moderators to understand further where and why marks had been awarded. The moderator's role was more straightforward when comments/annotations showed how the assessment criteria had been applied. Less centres this year needed to be asked to provide justification for where and why final marks had been awarded which is a pleasing trend. 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 and is available to download from the JCQ website.

In many centres where there was more than one teacher-assessor, there was evidence of internal moderation which is an indication of good practice. It is appreciated this is not always possible for some centres. Where teacher-assessors highlight where students' work met the requirements of the assessment objectives throughout the portfolios rather than moderators having to search for evidence, moderators reported that it helped them reach agreement on the marks awarded. This is particularly important when work is submitted in continuous prose and centres are reminded that if the candidate chooses not to use the 6 statements, it is even more important for the teacher-assessor to indicate where the assessment objectives have been addressed. Moderators found that detailed comments on the NEA authentication sheets, in addition to annotation, often helped them identify where and why marks had been awarded. However, it is not 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.

Whilst the majority of centres adhered to the recommended 3,000-word count, there were several instances this year where centres significantly exceeded it. Centres are reminded that any work produced exceeding the maximum limit must not be assessed by the teacher-assessor and will not be moderated. Teacher-assessors should indicate either through annotations or comments on the NEA authentication sheets where marking has stopped for work that is beyond the word count. Where candidates did remain within the word count, their work was concise and succinct, using an economy of language to articulate ideas effectively.

Administration

The administration for this component remains 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. Centres are 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 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 Pearson and make it clear on the CCIS form which most consortiums did this year.
- Moderators commented on some addition errors on the NEA authentication sheets. Teacher- assessors are strongly advised to check the addition of candidate marks carefully and contact Pearson if mistakes have been noticed once work has been submitted. There were often discrepancies between the NEA authentication sheet, the CCIS form and the marks uploaded to Edexcel Online.
- Centres are politely reminded NOT to upload CCIS forms in PDF format as moderators need to access and add data to the file.
- Centres are reminded that all scanned work should be checked carefully, before sample submission. Several pieces of portfolio work were incomplete or uploaded in the wrong order.
- 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 missing 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 although some work had to be returned for students to sign.
- 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.
- There were a number of cases of 'lost coursework' this year. Some centres had completed the appropriate 'Form 15' but had only uploaded it to LWT and not followed the correct procedure via the Pearson website.
- The overall quality of recordings was very mixed. There were many centres who provided secure evidence which supported the marks awarded for A02. In some cases, moderators reported that the camera had been placed so far from the performance area, it was difficult to see facial expressions or hear the performance

or even the use of more than one camera. Equally, facial expressions were often obscured or washed out because of lighting choices/position of the camera. 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.

- NEA authentication sheets and portfolios should be uploaded as one continuous document

High-scoring work was characterised by some of the following 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 detailed and 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 rather than simply providing facts or statistics.
- Strong use of subject-specific vocabulary to support ideas throughout.
- 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 count.
- Teacher-assessor comments were detailed and specific, allowing the moderator to clearly understand how and why marks had been awarded.

Low-scoring work was characterised by some of the following 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.
- Portfolio content was unclear and often ignored the demands of the 6 statements. Some candidates failed to address the content of all 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 recorded 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 secure 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 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.
- Ensure practical examples of how ideas evolved and developed are embedded throughout the portfolio.
- Ensure the impact on the audience is considered throughout the portfolio.
- Check that final marks awarded are consistent across all administration and uploaded to Gateway as well as to LWT.
- Regularly look at the ASG and support material available on the Pearson/Edexcel website.

