

Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2016

GCE Applied Performing Arts 8781/9781

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Summary Section

General comments on the 2016 series

The content free nature of the specification continues to result in a wide range of responses. The full range of disciplines continues to be offered, including Dance, Drama, Music, Musical Theatre and Production. The free choice of repertoire results in a range of work being performed and a range of skills being developed.

Key Messages

The following issues are improving however they continue to occur and still need addressing in some centres.

1. Candidates should not create portfolios in any other format than A4 (unless they are offering design skills) and not unnecessarily decorate their work (this type of approach is not indicative of AS/A level work).
2. The written components for units 3 and 7 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 (units 3, 5/6 & 7) must be recorded and candidates must be identified at the start of performances. Centres must keep copies of all recordings.
4. Centre assessor annotation or signposting on candidate work should indicate where marks have been credited against the criteria.
5. For units 3 & 7 centres should adhere to the rubric concerning the group size. Where the minimum number of performers is not met, it can limit access to some of the assessment criteria.
6. 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 different pathways or routes the centre offers.
7. All sources of information should be appropriately referenced.

Moderation Arrangements

The moderation process was different this series, with all work being sent to Pearson, and no centre visits taking place. Centres are thanked for their cooperation with the new procedures and their support for the moderation process.

The recording of performance work was mostly submitted in an appropriate format. The most suitable is on DVD in a format that will play on a commonly used laptop.

Candidates 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 unfiltered Internet downloads are best placed in an appendix as appropriate.

The only candidates 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.

Unit Details for the 2016 Series

Unit One: - Developing Skills for Performance

This series again saw a wide range of skills developed and different techniques and exercises were explored and applied, with predominantly successful outcomes detailed in the evaluation of the development process.

The Audit (AO1)

Candidates were guided by the majority of centres to produce thorough and detailed audits. The most successful candidates were then able to identify a personal skills development programme as a result of the audit and its findings. Where the skills audit was a more isolated task, it tended to be a less useful exercise in shaping the evidence for the unit.

This series again saw candidates focusing the development process on a specific skill.

The Reports (A02 & A03)

We saw more refined and coherent evidence this series overall, with a sense that the evidence being presented for assessment is less general however we saw some reports that were too descriptive and included everything a candidate had done during the unit rather than the candidate selecting the appropriate and relevant evidence for assessment.

There was evidence of many candidates taking responsibility for their own development and they often clearly communicated the process of their development and the impact it had on their own practice.

Photographic evidence was often used effectively and annotated with a written explanation of exercises and techniques being used.

Candidates in centres who had a secure understanding of the unit produced evidence that communicated the process they had gone through and frequently linked their development to professional practice.

Health and safety issues were again successfully addressed within the context of the candidates chosen skill development.

Evaluation (A04)

Fully reflective evaluations were again evident this year. Stronger candidates tended to evaluate throughout the portfolio and had a separate summative evaluation. Most candidates' work included the correct terminology and spelling, punctuation and grammar. Less able Candidates tended to describe their enjoyment of the activities they had taken part in rather than evaluating the methods they had used to develop specific skills.

Unit Two: - Planning for a Creative Event

Appropriate creative events were again the focus of this unit. Where the event was of a realistic scale this tended to give candidates more ownership of the event and the decision-making and self-management required.

Some candidates 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.

Report (AO1)

Most reports were fit for purpose in content and style, with some clear and well-structured reports being presented. The presentation and organisation of the majority of reports was clear to follow and included relevant and appropriate activities and tasks linked to the intentions of the event.

The best reports were reflective and retrospective documents written after the event had taken place and presented in a formal structured way, and reported against clear aims and objectives.

Stronger responses also had a clear understanding of the planning process and submitted reports describing in detail the key factors that had been considered.

Action Plans (AO2)

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

Action plans on the whole were detailed and thorough documents. Where candidates produced comprehensive individual plans with realistic aims and targets it provided a solid response to the demands of the assessment objective.

Evaluation (AO4)

Again, candidates overall were able to document the process effectively but some need to be more critical and analytical in their reflections. Stronger candidates were able to evaluate the planning and its consequence on the realisation of the event. The evaluation should cover all the key stages of the planning process from initial ideas to post event conclusions. The strengths and weaknesses of the planning

processes should be understood in relation to the relevant decisions and actions undertaken.

Unit Three: - Performing to a Commission

Where Candidates had genuinely created work in direct response to the demands of the selected commission brief, the outcome was more in line with the demands of the assessment criteria.

This series saw responses from all three commission briefs, and target audience was more fully considered.

Responses to the commission briefs **(AO1)** were comparable to the previous series. Most centres ensured that the realisation of the brief was handled in a professional manner to create a developed performance targeted at a specific target audience and with a clearly defined intended effect. Again, we saw some highly engaging, creative and inspiring performances.

Most centres presented the work for an appropriate audience and supported the work with adequate attention to production values and sense of occasion.

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 candidates were not always able to demonstrate their abilities and in over long productions they often failed to maintain their concentration, focus and energy.

The written log should demonstrate clearly how the work responds to the commission. The written log should be assessed against the **(AO2)** criteria only.

With very few exceptions, moderators were impressed with the commitment shown by candidates towards the work they produced **(AO3)**.

Candidates who offered a technical support role within the group often demonstrated great interest and knowledge in their technical achievements. The ten-minute

presentation to the centre assessor to contextualise their work was mostly useful to both candidate and assessor.

Unit Four: - Employment Opportunities in the Performing Arts

We saw some very clear responses to the requirements of unit 4, which places candidates work within the context of the performing arts industries.

The report detailing three roles in the performing arts industry was for most candidates thorough and detailed **(AO1)**.

A portfolio of evidence of a candidate's experience of practical work should be organised with promotional intention and linked to their chosen vocational progression route **(AO2/3)**. We saw a range of evidence, some that fully considered promotional intent and took into account current professional practice, and some that presented work more in line with a student presenting their course folder.

Evidence for **(AO4)** was mostly considered and included analysis of the work from the report through to the choice of promotional material in the portfolio.

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 candidates own opportunities and not to opportunities in the industry as a whole.

This is not a skills development unit; the candidate should assume that they are already at an appropriately developed stage in their artistic and creative careers and progressions.

Unit Five: - Advanced Performance Practice

Most centres this series selected repertoire that gave sufficient opportunity for character / role development and a development of an accomplished personal style. Most research (A01) was focused and relevant.

Candidates' portfolios (A02) were mostly well presented and clearly signposted, with detailed and supportive assessor feedback. There was a clear sense of progression as the process was documented. There was again recognition by most centres that this is a synoptic unit and we saw some effective linking of theory and practice.

The inclusion of material on practitioners and key influences is useful if it states how it informs the work. At this level it is expected that any Internet researched material is fully referenced.

Rehearsal schedules were fit for purpose. There was evidence of regular practice and an understanding of the creative and logistical needs of the chosen material. We again saw some well-developed and fully realised performance work (A03) with themes and intentions communicated effectively.

Again this year it needs to be stated that evaluations could be more detailed and focus more on individual and group performance rather than the production realisation. There was again (A04) evidence being credited for description where it required analysis.

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.

A01, A02 and A04 are evidenced through the working notebook and A03 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.

This series saw a very small number of entries for this unit.

Unit Seven: - Production Delivery

Centres seemed to have accurately understood the Production Brief, and responded with the production of appropriate performances.

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

We again saw an excellent understanding of the chosen source material in both the written support materials **(AO2)** and the performance work **(AO3)**.

Candidates showed interest in the work and dedication to the development process. 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.

Written support materials were again, for a very small number of candidates, lacking in depth and evaluative detail and tended to be descriptive rather than analytical.

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.

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 and accuracy.

The majority of candidates were again assessed on performance skills as actors, dancers and musicians but there was also the usual range of design and technical

support candidates. Presentations by technicians 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, candidates should:

- Select repertoire, where a unit demands this, that has the demand and substance appropriate for AS or A2 study
- Present work in A4 format without unnecessary decoration
- Fully consider the weightings of the Assessment Objectives for each unit and respond in the type and amount of candidate 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 and underpin tasks and activities with professional practice
- Fully consider the externally set commission briefs (unit 3) / production brief (unit 7) for the relevant series
- Present evidence for assessment that has been produced specifically to meet the requirements of the assessment criteria

