

Performing Arts

Advanced GCE A2 H546

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H146

Report on the Units

June 2008

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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Advanced Subsidiary GCE Performing Arts (H146)

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Chief Examiner's Introduction

Report on the GCE Performing Arts Units taken in June 2008

June 2008 proved to be a busy session. There appears to be a preference to submit work in the June session, which is in line with the expectation of the specification. There was evidence of good practice in all units and varied work across the spectrum. Candidates are approaching the units with enthusiasm and centres are providing opportunities for candidates to develop greater knowledge and understanding of The Performing Arts Industry. This is encouraging as these opportunities fulfil the vocational aspects of the course.

The impression from the examiners and moderators was that candidates were generally well prepared and displayed a good awareness of the requirements of the specification. Good practice was evident: in 'Skills Development' the portfolio work was in some centres showing detailed analysis of skills development and its process; the Case Studies saw prepared and thorough answers, alongside research and good comparative skills in the study of organisations; Performance work in some centres was again noted as being of a 'professional standard' with candidates tackling demanding and difficult performance pieces. Examiners/Moderators commented that it was a pleasure to witness some of the work seen or produced in portfolios and felt that centres had really started to develop the type of performance tasks undertaken. Candidates were able to access the assessment criteria with confidence. They were able to use technical terms and appropriate terminology, which contributed to their increasing vocationality when tackling the tasks set for each unit.

G380

This investigation unit was designed to help candidates to understand how 'the business' works and the range of roles within an organisation. Many candidates were able to produce case studies that covered the scope of the performing arts industries and the way in which they operate. There were some portfolios of a high standard, including detailed comparative essays, where candidates had researched how organisations relied on the effective deployment of people and resources. Good practice saw information sourced extremely well, presented using graphs and pie charts, data collection charted for comparative analyses and PowerPoint used to deliver the job presentation. The organisations were well researched and findings clearly presented. However, some of the tasks set were too self-limiting with candidates simply choosing organisations that were either too small (which meant that they could not get the depth or detail needed to access the higher mark bands) or far too large (making it difficult to access information). Candidates must also comment on aspects such as pay and conditions, trade unions, the social and cultural dimensions of the organisations as well as the opportunities for progression and development. The second aspect of the unit, containing the job presentation, was less well done. Issues with regard to the type of job selected and generalised evidence meant candidates were unable to access the higher marks. It is essential to set the role thoroughly in context of one of the selected organisations.

G381

A very encouraging entry showed some clear improvement in the structure of candidates' portfolios. Centres are clearly starting to organise the evidence needed. The unit gives the candidates the opportunity to develop professional practice and explore new skills in specialist areas of the performing arts. Candidates need to evaluate the level and range of their technical skills and identify suitable activities and exercises through practical exploration to develop and extend their abilities.

There was evidence of a wide range of art forms and a broad variety of work across the art forms. Production candidates were also submitting work in costume and set design as well as in technical aspects such as lighting. Portfolios should be unique to the candidates' skills and abilities and outline a skills development programme to aid their development. Research must be relevant to the selected repertoire pieces and should include the work of practitioners. Good practice included detailed commentaries and candidate ownership of their selected pieces.

The unit presented some outstanding work during this session, demonstrating exceptional candidate engagement, progress and professionalism. Examples of good practice will be available at INSET meetings and centres are strongly recommended to attend, in order further to advance their knowledge of the unit.

It was pleasing to see candidates able to take advantage of the range of expertise available and the level of resources that exist in centres. Candidates quite clearly had the freedom to choose appropriate contexts for their skills development.

All centres need to concentrate on the process of acquiring skills through practical involvement in pieces taken from repertoire. There were too many issues with self-devised work, which is NOT in line with the specification. Performance work **must** be recorded on DVD and accompany the portfolio to support progress made.

G382/3

Many centres displayed a strong sense of professionalism in their work. The key factor was undoubtedly teamwork. Good centres demonstrated appropriate and effective interaction with everyone involved giving a feeling of unity and coherence.

This performance unit is about the skills and activities involved in a performance project from the initial planning to the development and ultimate performance of the piece. Some candidates seen during this session had developed a real sense of 'belonging to' and 'ownership of' their work. The discussion saw candidates who were passionate about their performance work, what it meant to them and how they personally had developed. Centres really tried to provide challenging projects where candidates could aspire to professional standards in front of a 'live' audience. Selection of material is probably the most important factor for centres and during the next session they may wish to ask for further guidance and clarification as to whether their chosen piece meets the requirements of the specification. Attendance at INSET meetings is strongly recommended.

G383 proved to be more successful during this session, with candidates more aware of the need to provide DVD evidence. Good practice saw candidates presenting various aspects of their work to camera, creating 'DVD diaries.' This showed the examiner the preparation work that production candidates are involved in as well as what is going on before, during and after a performance. Portfolio work contained further evidence to support the candidates' work. Centres still need to provide industry-compliant software and process, including industry-standard diagrams, scales and terminology. Teaching the G383 unit requires adequate planning and resources. Many centres do not have teaching staff with the necessary experience or skills to teach on this unit. Centres must also ensure that they have the equipment and software that will allow candidates to receive appropriate teaching and exposure to technical tasks, computer programmes and technical tools. These centres should look to provide workshops and visiting speakers, or look for specialist courses run by independent providers.

Performance

Good practice saw candidates performing with accuracy and control. They showed good performance technique, created as an appropriate approach to the type of audience selected. There was no doubt that for the majority of candidates the practical aspects of a performance

piece were both exciting and challenging and definitely motivational. Centres must ensure that candidates are prepared as there were clearly candidates who needed further guidance with singing in the correct key and tonal qualities.

Performance Diaries

The recording of this process was generally good with centres structuring the work via tracking sheets and observations. There was an improvement from the last session; but there was still evidence of poorly produced diaries, done almost as an afterthought. Centres must pick up on this as candidates are losing vital marks that will affect their overall grade. **Centres may not have realised the importance of the diary but must be encouraged to bring them in line with the standards achieved for performance work.** Good practice saw some very good diary/portfolio work where candidates had detailed and extensive work that showed the production process from start to finish.

Many of the recommendations made from the last session through reports and INSET have been taken on board by centres. However, centres must ask for clarification of their material choice if they are at all unsure. Recording the performances was done well with chaptered DVDs but **centres are reminded that they must send the DVD recording to the examiner within three days.** Centres must take responsibility for DVD recordings and ensure that they are of a good quality and packaged adequately for transit. Centres should hold copies of the DVD in case the DVD sent to the examiner is lost or damaged in transit. Centres also need to ensure that the DVDs can be played on a variety of DVD players (and Windows Media Player).

G384

Candidates were required to prepare a promotional pack that included their CV, an action plan and a prediction of their first year of work including income and expenditure. There was evidence of some outstanding work where candidates displayed a real sense of the income they could achieve, alongside an understanding of the business and the professional aspects of getting employment. These candidates had a real awareness of the professional context of the work. Promotional packs were persuasive through visual evidence as well as realistic content. Interviews with freelance professionals are vital to both inform and help candidates in the planning aspects of the tasks. Quality in the outcome is essential to attract professional agencies and employers. Candidates should focus on a particular market – agent, music/dance genre.

Centres are reminded that there is a Coursework Consultancy. Centres which have used this facility have found it to be both helpful and of benefit to their candidates.

Centres need to read the Principal Examiner's report for further guidance.

G385

This session saw a good cohort of over 400 candidates. There appeared to be a sense of engagement with the concept of repertoire and some outstanding work was evident. Centres do need to be aware that equal marks are attached to both performances as too many centres are producing one high quality full-scale production and one production that is almost an afterthought. For many of the historical performances candidates needed to display how key factors they had researched had impacted on the performance of the piece. Centres must ensure that they are not over-marking their candidates by applying the marking criteria more rigidly. Selection of contrasting works is also essential, in order to give candidates very different roles in a different genre/style. The written essays were not always sufficiently related to the practical work undertaken. The Principal Examiner has written a detailed report and centres

should read this as well as seek further advice from INSET meetings and exemplar materials. However, there were some excellent submissions and much to be commended.

G386

A good entry was seen for this unit. Candidates were required to perform three pieces of work – two solos and one duet/duologue/pas de deux. There were some outstanding examples of accomplished and dynamic performances in which candidates were able to display complete mastery of their selected material. Good candidates were able to shape and mould their material to display a sophisticated understanding of the interpretative skills required. Performance work was impressive; candidates had made a real effort to perform their pieces using effective lighting, sound, live music, costume and make up. It was extremely impressive to see candidates achieving such high levels of skill as well as a perceptive understanding of the professional context of the work.

Centres were more confident with this unit. Candidates were performing to audiences with the focus very much on performance techniques and technical effects. Centres responded well to the unit requirements. The best work saw aspects of professionalism and outstanding practice. Where there was evidence of teacher guidance candidates were better prepared in both their selection of material and in the performance of the work.

Centres were showing evidence of greater understanding of the unit requirements.

Centres do need to read the Unit reports from the Principal Examiners/Moderators carefully, to ensure that they too are developing their understanding and subsequent application of the specification. INSET is strongly recommended.

G387 Production Demonstration

There was only a small entry for this session; however, there was an improvement in the submission of evidence including detailed DVDs, thorough preparatory notes and planned demonstrations. Candidates demonstrated through their portfolio work and product presentation a detailed understanding of the processes required to realise their designs. They included research undertaken, and the creative process adopted by candidates showed a depth of understanding. Most candidates considered the social, historical and cultural influences on their designs. Material selected, particularly at the highest mark, was impressively sophisticated. Candidates were able to display a good command of technical language and conventions as well as complying with industry requirements. There was some excellent puppetry work submitted as well as detailed set designs and box sets. These works supported candidates on the G386 pathway, which is how the unit was originally designed to work.

Where necessary, Centres should ask for guidance on this unit to ensure they are complying with the specification.

The product demonstration should be authoritative and absorbing. Designs need to create highly effective engagement for the audience. There should be evidence of technical accuracy. The candidate should be able to demonstrate a personal style in shaping and moulding the designs. Good practice saw a level of originality in both the conception and realisation.

Candidates must submit both their preparatory notes and their portfolio containing their designs as well as pictures, photographs, DVD, or video evidence of their product demonstration.

Centres are encouraged to support production candidates in recording a video/DVD diary throughout the process detailing all aspects of the work undertaken. This helps the examiner to see how the candidate has worked and can be a better source of evidence than the portfolio and

Report on the Units taken in June 2008

diary. All centres must ensure that the interview/discussion with the examiner and production candidate is recorded. Evidence is often difficult to provide for the production candidates and every opportunity to capture it should be undertaken. Those candidates that did use DVD diaries were able to capture aspects of the work undertaken that may not have been obvious in their portfolios and so gained marks which may have been lost without DVD evidence.

Chief Examiner
June 2008

G380 Investigating Performing Arts Organisations

General Comments

This was the sixth session of G380. Most of the work arrived on time and was complete with administration in order. However some centres were still very late in their submissions, with the moderator having to contact them several times. Even then, some work arrived incomplete, without CCS160s and even MS1s. Occasionally important pieces of information, such as candidate names, numbers and mark totals, were left off the URS.

In the case of candidates re-submitting work, it is essential that the moderator receives all the evidence, not just those parts the candidate is trying to improve.

There was a wide range of responses from candidates. Some of the portfolio work was of a high standard, showing a considerable amount of research and often expressed clearly with good use of performing arts terminology. Even so, some of the organisations were still far too big. On the other hand, selecting a one-person company can prove self-limiting. Candidates need to choose organisations that offer them the opportunity to cover all the Assessment Objectives in some depth.

Only a few portfolios were presented in tabular form this time. The expectation for this Unit is that work should be presented as an essay. Centres should be aware that they should avoid overlapping material in the portfolio with the job role chosen for the presentation. For example, to focus on the role of conductor in the portfolio and then reproduce the same person and material in the presentation is not advisable, as two sets of marks cannot be awarded for essentially one piece of work.

Some centres used colour-coded systems to highlight where the Assessment Objectives were met - this was generally helpful, though it is still important to complete the URS comments section fully to clearly identify the location of evidence. This is an aid to marking as well as to moderation. It is *not* useful for the moderator to know that the location of the evidence is "in the Portfolio" or "on the DVD" - a page reference or a timing is essential. There were still instances where annotation was still minimal or even non-existent. This made moderation much more difficult.

Internal standardisation was evident in all the centres moderated and some of the portfolio showed evidence of a sound knowledge base. Some candidates had researched both organisations in depth. However, in a few cases candidates were awarded too many marks for work that did not compare and contrast the two organisations in enough detail, specifically with regard to roles, purpose, effectiveness and structure. Centres are reminded that for AO1.2 it is vital that candidates display an ability to make comparisons between roles that exist in both organisations for them to be awarded a mark in the highest band.

Centres must remember to award marks for spelling, punctuation, grammar and communication under AO1.2 and AO4.1. Some candidates did not receive their full entitlement of marks because of this omission and it was sometimes necessary for the moderator to make adjustments for that reason.

Very few portfolios contained unnecessary and irrelevant material this time - centres are starting to keep peripheral evidence down to a minimum. Assessors need to make sure that all of the work is in the candidates' own words, unless the sources are identified. Candidates should avoid including photocopies of job specifications unless they are to be used as the focus of comment or analysis.

Report on the Units taken in June 2008

The job presentation was less well done. Some centres seemed unaware that this should be based on a single job within one of the chosen organisations. It is helpful to see the work actually happening - a video or DVD (DVD only as of January 2009) of a talk or PowerPoint presentation is the most common format. Paper copies of notes or slides are also extremely useful. Please ensure that videos or DVDs are labelled with all the relevant information and have a list of contents with timings. Try to make the sound and picture quality as good as possible - avoid filming in a room with lots of flickering computer screens and record at a reasonable sound level ! Candidates need to announce their names and candidate numbers clearly at the beginning of the talk.

Some of the presentations were knowledgeable and demonstrated high levels of understanding of the chosen job role. However, some candidates only gave a very generalised talk on a type of job - a "stage manager" was a favourite. This choice limits the amount of marks available under the mark scheme. It is essential to set the role thoroughly within the context of one of the organisations. To access the highest marks in AO4 it is vital to discuss working practices, such as appraisal, progression, health and safety, contracts, unions etc.

G381 Professional Practice: Skills Development

General Comments

Most aspects of the moderation process went well. Centres generally understood the sampling process and enclosed the correct documentation. However, some centres included neither the Centre Authentication Form (CCS 160) nor the MS1. This led to moderators chasing centres for those documents.

If a centre has ten candidates or fewer, they should send all the coursework promptly to the moderator. If the centre has more than ten candidates, they should send the MS1 and wait for the moderator to send them a letter stating which candidates' coursework should be sent as a sample. DVDs must be sent with the portfolios. From the next session videos will not be accepted.

There is a wide range of art forms and a broad variety of work across the art forms, with some candidates working in two art forms. On the production side some candidates have taken the opportunity to focus on stage management, direction, costume, set and/or lighting design and to develop their skills in these areas by working as designers/managers/technicians.

A few centres are still mistakenly offering devised work rather than repertoire. This is not permitted.

It would be helpful if centres included a front sheet, as page one of the portfolio, clearly stating the skills chosen for development and the three pieces of repertoire with details of titles of work and the names of the playwrights, composers and choreographers (eg: "Hamlet" by Shakespeare, "Swansong" by Christopher Bruce (1987)). Candidates should have researched the repertoire and be able to give detailed notes relating to when the piece was written, who performed it and where. There should be an explanation about which version of the repertoire they are using and how they have adapted it for performance. This is particularly important for dance pieces and physical theatre.

There should be a recent photograph of the candidate and details concerning their appearance on the DVD, such as a brief description of their costume, so that the moderator can identify them. DVDs should be chaptered with a clear indication of where the candidate appears on the DVD. Too much time is wasted by moderators searching for candidates' performances on the DVD.

Pages in the portfolios should be numbered and centres should use these numbers when referring to the location of evidence. Centres should apply the assessment criteria rigorously and provide detailed annotation on the portfolio and on the URS to justify the marks awarded. Reference should be made to the DVD to help locate the evidence.

Portfolios should be unique to the candidate and art form and relevant to the skills chosen for development. Internet research and studies of practitioners must be relevant to the repertoire chosen for performance and annotation of research should make this clear.

The **Skills Development Plan** (SDP) should be detailed and include a summary of what the candidate has already achieved. This should be a resume of no more than 500 words and can be in the form of a CV or short biography. The SDP should outline which skills are to be worked on and state the three pieces of repertoire work (two in progress and almost complete and one finished piece performed in front of a live audience.) The SDP should be adjusted as the unit progresses. The SDP is the framework for the unit and should include notes on workshops and lessons.

Commentaries should be in written form or presented on DVD. They need to be detailed and demonstrate candidate ownership. Tick box approaches and proforma documentation are not conducive to in-depth analysis and they hinder personal engagement. The commentary should be an independent document which explains how the repertoire demonstrates the skills development. The candidate can write notes throughout the portfolio detailing development and then a commentary at the end.

Observation reports must likewise be detailed analyses of the candidates' work and development, written by appropriately skilled observers who use appropriate technical terminology and their experience to make artistic judgements. In order to document the journey made by the candidate throughout the unit, it is helpful to make observations at the beginning and end of the unit and at key points on the way.

The unit has presented some outstanding work this session, demonstrating exceptional candidate engagement, progress and professionalism. Some of the best examples of live evidence are chaptered DVDs where candidates introduce themselves to camera by name and number with a brief description of role and skills chosen for development. This gives the moderator time to identify the candidate before they perform. This information should appear just before the performance of each piece of repertoire.

Production work has covered a wide range of marks across the bands. The most successful portfolios included detailed plans, designs and keen attention to professional standards. Centres need to be able to offer the expertise necessary in production to ensure that these candidates are aware of the procedures as well as the technical and artistic demands of professional theatre.

Centres show good awareness of Health and Safety procedures and this is clearly shown in the portfolios. There needs to be a constant update of Health and Safety regulations to encourage candidate awareness.

G382 Professional Practice: Performance

General Comments

There continues to be a wide variety of evidence presented for examination. Most centres had a clear understanding of the specification and were well organised. Centres display increasingly knowledgeable understanding of the unit assessment criteria – this is often gained through useful INSET and exemplar work as well as teacher guidelines, reports and other support material. It's clear that most centres are becoming more fluent in the demands of the specification. In a minority of cases there continue to be issues with administration, in particular the sending of diaries within the specified timescale (14 days before the exam) and the interpretation of repertoire, especially with regard to Dance. On the latter issue, a pragmatic approach is being worked out based on informed and useful dialogue, but it should also be stressed that examiners sometimes report a remarkably low level of knowledge and understanding amongst all candidates on what 'repertoire' actually constitutes in their own art-form.

It should be noted here that on-line debate is contributing to the higher level of understanding of the specification and the understanding of repertoire and other concerns. Please visit www.community.ocr.org.uk/community/performing-arts/home.

As in previous sessions the full range of marks was used with examiners reporting work accessing the maximum available but also some sub-GCSE standard. Generally performance work showed a sense of professionalism. There was a variety of performance types and more integration of the disciplines within them, in the best cases with full understanding of the nature of artistic integration and at other times merely to present a group's disparate range of skills. Large groups generally coped very well ensuring opportunity and exposure for all candidates across the performance pieces with some centres opting to split large candidate groups in order to provide adequate opportunity for all. **However some centres produced work that was too short, from small groups which had been split down inappropriately.** Some teachers were more involved with regard to the selection of the material; this can enable candidates to really focus on the performance aspects and develop technically demanding performance work. **However this should be balanced with the need for candidates to have a clear sense of ownership of the evidence – especially important in the diaries, where this sense of ownership underpins commitment and authenticity.** Drama and Musical Theatre work were still the most popular option. **However, there are still centres misinterpreting the specification and producing 'cabaret/variety' style works alongside self-devised work.** This does NOT allow the candidates to fulfil the unit objectives. Again, centres are advised to use existing material taken from repertoire. Centres are advised to contact OCR for further guidance if they are in any doubt over the selection of material for future submissions, or to ensure that staff at the centre have access to training opportunities provided annually by OCR.

There was evidence of centres obtaining performance licences/rights as well as covering the full spectrum of putting on a performance with candidates taking responsibility for various aspects of the production in terms of job roles/structure and technical/production. This enabled candidates to experience the vocational aspects of staging a professional performance.

Managing the external examination

Examiners commented on the organisation of the centres with well-structured timetables for the running of the examination. Centres where good practice was evident had ensured that all paperwork had been completed and sent in advance to the examiner with the candidates' production diaries. Examiners were seated in an appropriate place with tables and suitable table lights. Most centres had considered the examiner and ensured that the audience were also seated appropriately. **It should be noted here that while examiners must have a clear view of the performance they should not be completely excluded from the audience experience or placed so far in front of the audience at a desk that they feel virtually part of the show.**

Most centres were aware of the suitability and timings of the piece. The performances generally took place in the evening, which enabled an appropriate audience to be invited. This is of benefit to the candidates as it provides relevance to professional practice and removes many of the problems that can occur during a school/college day. Performances were around 45 minutes to an hour long, which worked very well enabling the examiner to assess the development of the candidates' characters. At first glance this may pose a problem for certain art forms, small groups, large groups and single-sex groups; but with a library of works available there really are solutions and ways of interpreting existing pieces of work. Themed events and reviews have been discouraged as they provide only snap-shots of candidate skills and insufficient development, depth and continuity. Centres with large candidate numbers must ensure that performance time for each candidate is adequate. Appearing in just one scene may not be sufficient to enable the candidate to access the marking criteria. Centres should seek advice if they have a large entry. A few centres produced full scale works or extracts that approached 2 hours plus. This is really not necessary and examiners were finding some performances just too long. There is no upper limit for performance time but the recommendation is around an hour. Centres wishing to perform whole works should discuss this with their examiner before the examination day.

Centres must also discuss the performance arrangements with the examiner to ensure that there are no misunderstandings. Examiners may need to arrange overnight accommodation if the performance finishes after 10.00 pm and centres must be mindful of this. Centres must agree their arrangements with the examiner, who has set procedures to follow. Any particular requirement or special arrangement must be agreed prior to the examination. Amendments cannot be made within 10 days of the examination.

The Performance

Many centres attempted material that was demanding in terms of skills and technical ability. Works from repertoire in this respect were undoubtedly more successful than material that had been produced to accommodate the skills of the candidates. **This was particularly true of Dance centres; where the performing of 'street dance' or 'Hip-Hop' may have given candidates a basic vocabulary that they felt comfortable with, but few of these candidates were able to define or articulate cultural, historical or wider performance contexts that would have given technical depth and range to their work. Material written in these circumstances provides little or no opportunity for candidates to research and develop.** Cabaret, variety or musical showcases also offered limited opportunity for the candidate to develop their characters journey with many pieces selected because they are 'known' or 'easy'. Existing material taken from repertoire is more likely to avoid these problems from occurring.

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The use of lighting and sound during this session was sometimes extremely effective. Many centres made every effort to use technical effects to create atmosphere and mood. Elaborate sets, props, costumes and sound amplification made a significant contribution to the performances, giving candidates a vocational opportunity to take on a production role as well as creating a professional feel. All centres had considered the professional aspects of performance and audiences were present for most of the performance work seen. This enabled candidates to communicate and engage with an audience. Audiences ranged from classes of school pupils to larger-scale public audiences. Good practice was also seen where centres had produced glossy programmes, displays of photographs and elaborate ticket designs.

All centres met the requirement of recording the performance; however, some examiners had to chase centres for these. Centres are reminded that they have 3 days after the performance to send the video or DVD to the examiner. The quality of these recordings is in some cases poor, with the beginning of the first half or second half missing. Centres must ensure that they are able to produce a recording of the highest quality. This is a mandatory requirement of the Unit and in the best interests of the candidates. Good practice saw excellent DVD recordings that were professionally done, with chapters, index and candidate identification. Generally some more sophisticated DVDs are being seen with the occasional centre using two or even three cameras to produce a highly effective product that fully supports the candidates' work while still giving an honest and rigorous account of the quality. These centres also had a more dynamic approach to recording – zooming in to particular moments and giving clarity and importance to individual performances. However, one centre, otherwise excellent in this technical respect, changed the costumes of candidates after the 'line-up' had been filmed, making it a bit more difficult to identify them in the performance. . . Issues with DVD recordings are perennial and difficult to fully eradicate. However centres need to think carefully about how useful it is - not least for their own candidates' final grades - to have clear and full identification of students and a fully thought-through technical process of recording.

There was a range of performance material seen during this session including:

| | |
|----------|--|
| Musicals | Godspell, A Slice of Saturday Night, Chicago, Fame, Grease, Blood Brothers, Treasure Island, Old Time Music Hall, We Will Rock You, Chorus Line, Chicago, Bugsy Malone, Oh What a Lovely War |
| Plays- | Our Country's Good, Accidental Death of an Anarchist, Two, Under Control, A Year and A Day ,Perfect Pitch, Abigail's Party, The Crucible, The Maids, Death of a Salesman, Baccheus |
| Dance- | Works of Bob Fosse, Bruce, Graham and Cunningham, African Folkdance, Hip-Hop (real Hip-Hop) |
| Music | Works of Weber, Tribute Bands, Rock Festivals, The Beatles |

The Interview

Centres and examiners reported a positive feel to the interview. Examiners used the time to familiarise themselves with the candidates, taking on their views and opinions. The format was less formal and this gave the candidates the chance to develop avenues that they felt were important. Candidates felt that a less formal approach actually helped them to feel less nervous and more comfortable about the process. Interviews were held in separate rooms with the candidates and the examiner.

Candidates did vary in their approach to the interview. Some were knowledgeable and able to discuss various production aspects showing good understanding of the material. They were able to comment on the playwright/composer's intentions as well as the themes, historical, social and cultural aspects. All candidates were able to discuss personal and spatial health and safety. There was extensive evidence of warm-ups, exercises, mental preparation and relaxation techniques.

G383 production candidates this year were asked to be much more expansive during the interview and provide further recorded evidence of their work. In some cases this involved being taken on a tour of their technical 'territory', showing the examiner in much more detail how they prepared for their role and fulfilled their technical responsibilities in situ. Centres should also note that any further recorded evidence of preparations before the examiners visit should be included with the final DVD material.

The Diaries

There was improvement in some centres with regard to the importance of the diary. Most centres are now more aware of the significance of marks lost when candidates have not produced a full performance diary. In this session many of the candidates were not only submitting extensive works but also really focussing on their character's journey and its development from the start of the project to the finish. Candidates were reaching the higher band, with some scoring full marks. Centres had clearly provided candidates with support and guidance, which focused more on the rehearsal process. There were teacher observations, self-evaluations, peer comments and a range of feedback giving candidates opportunities to develop and improve. Assessment and re-assessment of how the candidate was progressing certainly helped the candidate to understand how they could achieve their aims.

However there remains a real issue for those centres that are not fully responding to previous advice and guidance on preparation and on the value - in assessment terms - of comprehensive, analytical diaries. Some candidates continue to be disadvantaged by presenting diaries that are cursory, descriptive and lacking in the full range of evidence.

Report on the Units taken in June 2008

Centres are advised to refer to the unit specification and teacher guidelines where the requirements for the diary are clearly outlined. A comprehensive checklist is as follows:

- Selection of material
- Audience intention
- Audition process
- Candidates own rehearsal plan
- Rehearsal planning and progress
- Target setting
- Skill development
- Health and Safety
- Production meetings, planning and team dynamics
- Performers responsibilities e.g. costumes
- Relevance of production aspects to performance
- Research and its application
- Teacher comments and feedback
- Individual interpretation
- Regular lesson logs/diaries outlining progress made
- License and contracts
- Use of technical aspects
- Working with others

Better candidates wrote up sessions regularly and not in retrospect where knowledge may have been lost or forgotten. Candidates must also note that internet printouts with highlighted text are not acceptable in defining an understanding of the work. Candidates must acknowledge the source of their findings and not submit teacher notes or internet findings as their own work. Candidates may work collaboratively but must be able to show who had been responsible for each aspect.

Administration

Some centres continue to have difficulty with aspects of the administration process. Examiners found it very difficult to contact the person actually responsible for the unit within some centres. Teachers must respond to the examiner and keep the lines of communication open. The examiner has a wealth of experience that can support centres and candidates through the process. Centres who display many aspects of good practice ensure that the examiner is well informed and adhere to all requests for paperwork, forms and deadlines. **Diaries must be sent 14 days before the examination date.**

Many centres claimed not to have received the appropriate forms and paperwork. Teachers must check that they have the necessary administration and contact OCR if they need any further documents. OCR sends out the formal documents to centres via the examination officer prior to the examination period, together with instructions and details of the examiner apportioned to the centre. The examiner will make contact with the centre to arrange a suitable date for the performance. If centres are constrained by a school/college calendar and find that they are compromised they should contact OCR and the examiner to discuss dates for their performance.

Diaries should be forwarded to the examiner 14 days in advance of the examination.

Some Centres were not compliant with this, putting undue pressure on the examiner. Diaries should be clearly labelled, which is essential in identifying each script. Centres should also note that diaries are not returned to centres after the examination but retained by OCR like other examination scripts. If they would like them returned, Centres must apply for the diaries through the 'Return of Scripts' procedure.

Report on the Units taken in June 2008

All candidates require a GCW212 Form that identifies them and gives information to the examiner on roles undertaken, details of scenes and appearances. Candidates are required to submit two photographs of themselves, one of which must be in costume. Centres should ensure that photographs are attached to the forms and are of a good quality.

G383 Professional Practice: Production

Entry levels were again extremely low during this session. Entries were seen for stage management, set design, lighting and sound. Some candidates were fully involved in the production process and able to make a significant contribution.

It is apparent that many centres still underestimate the range and depth of technical evidence that needs to be produced both in portfolios and in production. Documentation must be equivalent to industry practice, or a clear replication of industry practice, and whilst there was more evidence of its use there was still too much reliance on the candidate's sense of unbounded but technically inadequate enthusiasm. Written submissions were generally weak and did not support the candidate's production work. Centres are advised to read the specification and seek guidance from training courses. Centres that had links with local technical professionals and venues were much more successful. Candidates need to have much more sense of the potential of their skill especially in centres where the performance opportunity provides for minimal technical support. Centres should also refer to the point made above on additional evidence for production candidates. Examiners will ask for more recorded evidence of preparation and operational competence; some of this will be done on the visit but it is candidate's interests to record earlier and more on-going evidence of work.

G384 Getting Work

General Comments

The administrative issues that arise here are similar to those experienced in other units. Occasionally, centres with more than 10 candidates misunderstood the need to send the MS1 first to moderators for them to select the sample; there were some missing Centre Authentication forms and MS1s. Instances of these errors remain small but they can take up a disproportionate amount of moderators' time in pursuing documents and the correct sample.

On the other hand, it is now quite rare for the URS not to be clearly annotated, showing that most centres have a firm hold of the specification demands and context and could confidently refer to evidence and its realisation in the portfolio.

Promotional pack

There was a wide range of promotion packs. Some were highly 'produced' and effective, with a strong sense of what was needed to persuade and sell the candidate in a professional context. These candidates were clearly drawing on their research and experience to be able to speak directly and with focus to those potential employers working in a specific vocational area. Here there was a good underpinning knowledge and understanding. Weaker candidates had little of this underpinning knowledge and were obviously working in a very narrow context, one essentially provided for them by the centre and entirely focused on their own anecdotal or school-based knowledge and not on interviews conducted with freelance professionals. At this level it is essential that candidates talk to working professionals and experience the vocational context in both replicated events and in visits to real professional venues and spaces.

The promotional pack needs to work with the work-plan and some candidates made good links between, for instance, a set of credible qualifications in a resume and what could be reasonable expected in the first year of work. Some candidates had very modest CVs based on what they had actually done and wildly ambitious plans for their first year. Candidates can have fictitious resumes and qualifications: they just need to be *credible* and *sustainable* and working in a well-informed professional context.

One centre produced very good but unsuitable material promoting a new performance company. While this produced well-researched and informed evidence it did not respond to the need for individual portfolios of professional work.

Plan of first year of work

Again, there was a wide range of responses here, with a variation in the number of years forming the basis of projections, some very ambitious earning and some unrealistic ideas of what work might be available in the first year. Most candidates however kept to the prerequisite for 50% contract and 50% freelance - although some didn't always understand that the contract work should be in a related area rather than any part-time casual work. A number of centres took a more formal line to freelance and contract work and presented research and compilations of what constituted the differences between the two – this was obviously a response to taught sessions and while relevant pedagogically the results were better placed in an appendix rather than the working document.

Some centres had very detailed statistical projections over varying periods of time; these were useful when placed in context but pages and pages of them, however meticulously produced, add little more to the evidence in terms of grading criteria.

The use of 'strands' of work mostly proved useful, providing structure and focus to the material. As previously indicated, the best candidates linked the plan very closely to the promotional pack giving the overall evidence credibility and coherence.

There was an increasing use this year of the plan written as a retrospective of work acquired rather than a projection of potential work laid out in a plan of action. A projected *Plan* integrates the possibilities of the roles as outlined and the subsequent income with a range of other possible job opportunities being considered and presented as evidence for knowledge and understanding of the industry. A retrospective tends to limit this range and can also take up time and energy in creating diary entries - some very facile - trying to present the verisimilitudes of everyday life at university. In other words, by saying "these are the jobs I've already got", the candidate is restricting the range of evidence he or she could present. Retrospectives of this nature should be avoided.

Analysis of the plan

This section continues to be the main differentiator between candidates and standards of work. It is an opportunity to reveal a depth of analytical language and insight; those candidates that provided coherent packs and plans knew clearly where the strengths and weaknesses of the market and professional area were and used this to contextualise their own personal analysis. Weaker candidates tended to restrict their analysis to just their personal strengths and weaknesses - and even these not very effectively treated, at times.

Much of the weaker work was in response to a misunderstanding of the purposes and intention of a SWOT analysis. The best portfolios had very succinct analyses because they had looked at their overall plan and projections and done a focused SWOT analysis of the market and where relevant and appropriate of their own abilities and personal characteristics. Better candidates also topped and tailed the SWOT analysis with summaries, fuller evaluations and a further projection of work.

Conclusion

Generally the level of understanding of the demands of the unit continues to grow and subsequently evidence in the portfolios is becoming more accurate and focussed. Centres still need to consider more specialist professional and technical input into the teaching of some of the more professional elements, especially to meet the assessment demands at this level. Some centres continue to ignore the need for interviews with practitioners, for instance; a vital part of the evidence that plays a significant part in the decisions of moderators.

G385 Exploring Repertoire

General Comments

For this session candidate numbers had increased dramatically, reflecting the fact that more centres reached the A2 delivery point this year. Overall, there emerged a sense that candidates were engaging with the concept of repertoire and much good work was seen. Both candidate and centre experiences showed evidence of enrichment wherever the repertoire canon was given full opportunities for investigation.

However there are some issues that have arisen from this session that need to be addressed in the future. The biggest problems for moderators were as follows:

- Late submission of coursework
- No word count
- No bibliography/webography
- Quality of video material (camerawork/lighting etc.)
- Identification of candidates, in costume, on video
- Lack of a written running order and photographs of candidates
- DVDs that were incompatible with PC DVD players
- Tapes/DVDs damaged due to inadequate packing
- Imbalance of production values between the two performances
- Assessment
- Completion of URS forms
- Choice of material with reference to casting in dramatic productions

Late submission of coursework

Centres are informed of the due dates well in advance of the moderation session, yet in some cases moderators received coursework over three weeks late. It is appreciated that centres experience a number of challenges that impact upon submission. However it should be noted that the moderation session is finite and that moderators themselves have deadlines for both this unit and others. Late submission impacts heavily upon the overall process and OCR cannot guarantee being able to enter late submissions on to the system in time for the date set for the award. As a consequence candidates may find themselves failing to aggregate.

Word count

Please note that there is currently a specified ceiling guide of 1000 words for each essay. Moderators have not been penalising candidates who have exceeded this number of words. However, essays should comply with current academic practice and this includes a note of the word count at the end of each essay.

Bibliography/webography

In accordance with the requirement for essays to observe the rules of current academic practice centres should note that each essay should include a detailed list showing the candidate's use of reference material. In the case of published works this should be as a standard bibliography and where Internet/electronic sources are consulted there should appear a list showing the appropriate URL reference. All citations included in the main body of the text of each essay should also be acknowledged in a footnote according to current academic practice.

Quality of video material

Centres are encouraged to view the video material as a crucial and integral part of the moderation process. This material is all the moderator has to go on when considering the performance assessment criteria and consequently it is essential that it be recorded to the highest standard possible. Common problems included overall poor quality recording and filming techniques which left the camera locked on a wide long shot so that facial expressions can not be seen. A competent videographer should be employed who is able to follow the action intelligently thereby focussing on individual performance skills in preference to a generic single long shot. This practice also overcomes the common problem of high contrast faces under stage lighting conditions, which renders all candidates as luminous clones. Moderators reported difficulty viewing a high proportion of the material sent to them. This was either because the lighting or camera work was poor or because the DVD copies were corrupt, damaged or incompatible with common playing devices such as Windows Media Player. Centres are reminded that in the event of an enquiry or an appeal this material will be the sole evidence upon which to base judgement. Video material that is not 'fit for purpose' cannot be considered at results enquiries and appeals, and marks will remain as adjusted by the original moderator.

It should be stressed that many centres are producing materials of excellent quality, however, and are to be commended for so doing. All centres are requested to note that material submitted on VHS will no longer be accepted.

Identification of candidates on video

It is essential that before each and every performance recording all assessed candidates are clearly identified, wearing costume or with their instruments and clearly speaking their name, candidate number and individual role. If, in the case of a public performance, this 'identity parade' cannot be carried out before the audience then it should be prepared in advance or assembled post-performance as a dedicated chapter on the DVD. All DVDs should be chaptered for ease of access.

Without clear identification the moderator is required to search for particular candidates and is sometimes forced to recognise them via a highly time consuming process of elimination. Moderators have to process large numbers of candidates and it is unrealistic to expect them to apply detective work in order to ensure that the identity of a particular candidate is established.

Running order and candidates' photographs

All centres are issued with printed Video Running Order sheets. These should be completed and submitted with the DVD. Furthermore, photographs as required for units G383 and G386 should be submitted to assist in identification. Each candidate should appear in costume where appropriate with an outline of their roles for each of the two performances. In some cases where a video identification was included however, these were sometimes rushed or incomplete making it difficult for moderators to be confident about who was who.

Centres are encouraged to see 'identity parades' as a way of ensuring that their candidates are supported adequately in the moderation process and that there is no room for mistaken identification.

Packaging of video material

An alarming number of DVDs arrived damaged. The most common cause for this is scratching caused by the shattering in transit of inadequately protected jewel cases. Centres that sent DVDs in simple, purpose made filing pockets did not encounter any problems with damaged DVD material.

Imbalance of production values between performance conditions

It was noted that in many cases centres submitted two productions that were highly variable in terms of production quality. At the extreme, one performance might be a full-scale high value production whilst the other would be typified by a half-hearted classroom approach with no technical support or audience. Whilst it is not expected that centres should expend vast resources of time and materials it is expected that both performances should be given equal weighting and though one performance style may require less resourcing than another both should aspire to highly polished and professional values. In all cases an audience should be present.

Assessment

Moderators reported a tendency for teacher assessors to over evaluate the quality of the work. At AO2.1 credit was often awarded in the 'highly assured' bracket to work which in fact displayed only limited abilities to construct argument or apply analysis. It was frequently the case that candidates who had misspelt the names of key practitioners or had misquoted or misrepresented them, or who habitually committed errors of punctuation and grammar, were awarded marks in the top band. In all such cases centres had their marks adjusted.

Social and historical context was often clearly researched and rendered but a large number of candidates did not demonstrate how key factors arising out of this research in both the historical and the contemporary productions applied to and informed their realisation of the performance both within the group context and as individual performers.

It was much less often reported that centres overestimated the performance qualities assessed through AO2.1, but it was still evident that there was some uncertainty about the accuracy with which stylistic features had been assimilated via the appropriate unique practical skills.

At AO3.1 and AO3.2 there was, somewhat expectedly, a much more accurate assessment of candidates' abilities and with a few exceptions assessors appear to have been realistic about their candidates' performance abilities.

Another key issue that needs to be addressed urgently is a trend towards insufficient contrast in choice of texts. In a startlingly significant number of cases centres offered two contemporary texts, thereby penalising candidates by reducing the opportunities for maximising all aspects of the assessment criteria. This was evident in all three discrete art forms and in musical theatre.

Completion of URS forms

Many essays were poorly annotated and in some cases annotation was entirely absent. Marginal comments should be AO specific and should in every case link to a specific point on the URS form. Many centres demonstrated appropriate and effective methodology in this area. One such is the highlighting of key points in the script and giving each an AO specific colour code, which in turn links with the various AOs on the URS. Other methods include a brief, focussed marginal comment with an AO reference along side it linked numerically to the related comment on the URS. There is no one approved method, but in all cases clarity and brevity are encouraged. It should be understood that in citing the specific criterion against the marks that have been awarded, centres are in effect 'leading' the moderator to that evidence. Not only does this make the process easier, it also has the effect of developing confidence in a centre's judgement and therefore creating a centre 'profile' in which the moderator may come to trust. Also, centres need to give specific references to video or DVD material and the video running order sheet can be used to detail this.

Choice of material with reference to casting in dramatic productions

It is understood that there are, throughout the canon from Shakespeare to Godber, many valid reasons for 'cross casting' with M playing F and vice versa. However, centres should consider the wisdom of adopting this method when the text itself does not require it. In the case of less able candidates such casting decisions can place individuals at a disadvantage. For example, when assessing physicalisation, characterization and vocal skills in creating a believable character, an actress playing a male character may be already at a disadvantage - though of course, as stated above, this does not preclude, circumstances where it can be justified as part of the exploration process, e.g. an all female cast for Shakespeare. This approach however needs to be justified in the essays.

Other issues:

- Some centres submitted a single integrated essay over two productions rather than one essay for each production. The aims of each of the two essays are subtly different.
- Skills development was not always sufficiently related to practical work. The two often seemed to exist as separate entities in the teachers' minds.
- It is expected that evidence will be generated in the form of continuous prose. Teacher produced grids (often heavily proscribed), to record what has been done, should not be seen as either a substitute for diversity on the recording of events, nor as a stand alone record of what has been done. Centres should send only two essays as written evidence. Notebooks or other materials should not be submitted. Similarly any form of log or diary is unacceptable.
- Historical and social aspects require far more depth and evidence of reading and weighing up of sources if they are to be of any real value.
- Imagination needs to be encouraged in research e.g. other productions seen, relevant movies watched and their respective approaches to historical accuracy or sociological relevance.
- Centres need to be aware that this is an A2 unit and as such a professional approach to this vocational specification is expected.

Nevertheless, overall, there was much to be commended and the outcomes promise well for future sessions.

G386 Producing your own Showcase

General Comments

Many centres were able to rectify the issues that arose last year and to produce performance work of a good quality. It was reassuring that many centres had obviously taken on board the comments made and advice given in last year's report regarding the staging of this unit event. Most centres arranged an evening viewing with an invited audience and staged the event, moving away from classroom performances and using stages and appropriate studios with lighting and sound amplification. This meant that the whole event had a sense of occasion. Candidates were better equipped in terms of skill level and whilst there are still issues with dance candidates, most drama and music candidates performed pieces taken from repertoire. This assertive approach from centres saw them responding to the requirements of the unit, with examples of good practice evident. The best work, at the top end of the marking scale, showed professionalism and outstanding practice.

There was evidence of teacher guidance in both selection and performance of the material. However, too many candidates were selecting works that were unsuitable and far too difficult for them to cope with. For many of these candidates, prompting and cueing was expected, however, this meant that the candidates could not show mastery of the material or produce dynamic performances. Examiners observed examples in all disciplines, with drama and musical theatre works as the most popular options. Candidates were asked to produce a showcase of three pieces of work containing two contrasting solo pieces and a duologue, duet or pas de deux. Candidates could choose to work in a single art form or choose a combination of art forms. Centres must ensure that candidates are producing a showcase. Candidates are required to perform their pieces in a fifteen-minute showcase. Candidates can select the running order of their performance, which ideally would be solo, solo, duo/duet or duo/duet, solo, solo. Too many centres are allowing candidates to perform their work in a compilation/variety show where their programme is interspersed with other candidates work. **The challenge of this unit is to perform all three contrasting pieces over a fifteen-minute period showing a range of skills and abilities;** being able to move from one piece to the next, showing focus and complete mastery of each piece. Centres that had organised a variety showcase were asked by examiners to revert to individual showcases, but there were still quite a few centres that did not adhere to the requirements.

Candidates are assessed over five aspects concerned with preparation and the performance itself. These include selection and preparation of the materials; accuracy and expression; stylistic awareness; difficulty of material and communication. Candidates are also required to produce preparatory notes to demonstrate the preparation process of putting their Showcase together.

Examiners reports again commented on a session of variable standards of performance work. Selected material was appropriate for most candidates and was well prepared and rehearsed in most centres. However, candidates must ensure that they have the appropriate skills to tackle their selected pieces. Choosing a piece just because they like it is not a valid choice and centres must guide candidates away from doing this. There were a number of candidates who scored high marks in this section. Examiners saw candidates tackle the challenge of 'live' performance with increasing enthusiasm and skill technique. Centres commented on how much the candidates had enjoyed meeting the challenges of the unit and the performance experience that it gave them confirmed this. Many centres approached the work as a 'process to performance' encouraging candidates to create 'The Showcase'- developing and improving skills and performance techniques whilst tackling material that was both challenging and effective.

Some candidates made selections only on the basis of 'challenge', when they should have considered 'strengths' and 'skills' more carefully. Some candidates were playing safe and recycling material which they had performed before. This is not in the spirit of the examination.

Administration in centres was generally good. Good practice was seen in centres that ensured the paperwork arrived in plenty of time, provided a running order and details of candidates' performances. Preparatory notes were labelled. Evidence of performances was on DVD or VHS; some centres produced excellent DVD material with clear chapter labelling and candidate identification. Poor practice was unfortunately evident where examiners received little or no preparatory notes, portfolios, details of running orders, or candidate identification. **Centres must adhere to the published guidelines and ensure that paperwork arrives within the fourteen-day deadline.** Examiners were not receiving the information to check, which meant that issues regarding running orders and how the showcases were organised were not discussed in advance. This put examiners in a very difficult position when they were then faced with having to ask a centre to alter the running order immediately prior to a performance.

Evidence of good practice was seen when centres ensured that candidates fulfilled the specified time requirements of 15 minutes to cover all three performance pieces, which included breaks/changing between pieces. Centres should be aware that some of the set studies in dance and audition materials often fall short of this requirement and standards, particularly in the set dances, often do not meet the A2 criteria. Candidates must be equally prepared in all three pieces so as to not disadvantage themselves. Candidates who produce short performance pieces cannot access the higher marks. Candidates must also consider the difficulty of the material, particularly in dance, as higher marks are awarded for technically demanding pieces. Centres should also check on the level or grade of the chosen pieces ensuring that they meet the assessment criteria.

Centres are reminded that chosen pieces/selection of pieces cannot be changed after submission to the examiner and certainly not on the day of the examination. In exceptional circumstances such as illness or injury a change of piece may be considered but this remains at the discretion of the Examiner. Too many candidates were changing pieces as they had failed to prepare them.

Provision of a suitable performance space is important. Good centres are providing excellent facilities for both the Examiner and the candidates, with centres opting for a studio or theatre space. Centres, however, should consider the placement of the Examiner, ensuring that they can see and hear the performance. Many centres are now using lighting and sound amplification, which does enhance the performance aspects of the work.

Centres that demonstrated good practice made every effort to engage fully with the Examiner over all necessary details from pre-examination through to providing a DVD/video at the conclusion of the examination. Good practice included; details of candidates showcases highlighting their chosen pieces including copies of scripts, music, lyrics or synopsis of dances, named photographs, running order, travel arrangements. This process enables the session to run smoothly and allows candidates the opportunity to achieve their potential. Hospitality for the examiner is also important. Many examiners travel long distances; being welcomed and provided with refreshments is very much appreciated.

Provision of video/DVD-recorded evidence of the examination was good during this session. Some centres are now submitting work on CD and DVD. This is to be encouraged in terms of immediate availability and quality. However, centres should check carefully that this type of evidence could be played back on DVD players/ equipment, as in previous sessions some of the discs received were not compatible with other equipment making it difficult for the examiners to view the work. Centres should also check that they submit a video/DVD/camera tape that actually has the session recorded on it, as blank tapes and performances with missing sections have been received. All evidence should be clearly labelled/marked with candidate names,

numbers and a running order so that it is easier for the examiner to find the candidates required for sample or exemplar material.

The Discussion

Centres and candidates were well prepared in this session. Although there were no marks available the candidate was able to discuss with the examiner the selected pieces detailing how they would be performed and personal interpretation. The discussion gave the candidates a chance to talk about their showcases and give the examiner an insight into what they were trying to achieve. The informal discussions produced a relaxed and informative result. Candidates showed a good understanding of the creative process as well as Health and Safety and warm up procedures.

Good candidates were equally prepared in all three pieces so as not to disadvantage themselves. They were able to talk about each stage of the preparation for their Showcase, including evidence of supporting research. Candidates were able to clarify the nature of the work, which helped the examiner when awarding marks for the preparatory work.

Dance

Dance candidates need to demonstrate musical awareness and an understanding of style genre, motif and technical language. Good candidates had researched their pieces thoroughly and could talk about influences of dance practitioners and performances seen. They had an in-depth knowledge of both their choreography and performance. Good candidates successfully described the choreographic process employed to learn their work. They were aware of stylistic influences and able to put the dance into context, describing the purpose of the pieces, the intended audience and its impact. **There were significant numbers of dance candidates who did not select work from repertoire and therefore were unable to discuss any of the above. This is in breach of the specification and centres must ensure that all selected dance pieces are taken from repertoire.** Personal interpretation of the works is allowed.

Drama

Most drama candidates were well prepared. Good candidates displayed a good understanding of their chosen pieces as well as a thorough appreciation of the playwrights' intentions. They were able to discuss their ideas for performance of the pieces, influences, style and context as well as characterisation, period, mood and atmosphere. They had excellent knowledge about the style of their pieces creating their own imaginary context and profile for the characters as well as detailed character analyses. This enabled them to inform the Examiner of their intended interpretation. Knowledge of the play and the period of history are fundamental to all aspects of preparation and development of the work. Candidates should have read the plays from which their selected works are taken.

Music

Candidates were generally well prepared. They were able to discuss factual information regarding birth dates of composers, names of other pieces written or how successful the music had been in the charts and gave an understanding of style, genre, musical awareness, how the composer communicated the work, technical language and influences. Good candidates were able to discuss their own interpretations on style and content and relate them to historic and social influences. Candidates need to be able to discuss technical competence and how they have achieved balance/contrast in their showcase. Many Candidates were actually 'performing'

the pieces and not relying on the sheet music - which often hid their faces. Candidates are awarded higher marks for learning the pieces, which also allows for audience interaction and communication; there was good evidence of this from the candidates. Centres should check that the selected pieces are appropriate for an advanced level examination as low graded pieces and set studies do not always fulfil the assessment requirements.

The Performance of the Showcase

Performances were generally of a good standard. Many candidates were prepared and had rehearsed their pieces. There was a good variety of interesting performance work covering a range of genre and style. Successful candidates were able to perform in contrasting styles and showed a good range of skills and techniques. Selection of appropriate material is possibly an area for development. Successful Centres are guiding candidates in their choice of performance material and selecting appropriate pieces in terms of technical competence/difficulty. Candidates need to be aware of selecting Grade 2/3 music pieces or GCSE Set Studies in dance, which may not allow them to access the higher assessment criteria. This may also be a cause of falling short of the two-minute minimum requirement. There are also a number of candidates who are choosing or directed to perform pieces from different disciplines, which is most commendable if they have the necessary skills and abilities. However, a number of able actors/dancers reduced their overall marks by choosing to perform songs despite the fact they could not hold a tune. Overall, performance material was varied and the diversity of material selected for the showcase was very encouraging.

Technical support was also generally good and enhanced many candidates' performances. Good centres had provided sound and lighting as well as a suitable performance space that was well lit and appropriate. Many performance pieces were presented with full use of costume, stage and lighting which, although, not examined, does add to the spirit and realism of the candidates work. It was encouraging to see that only a few candidates were still trying to perform in classrooms and working studios not set out for performance. Centres that had undergone training were more informed and able to provide the facilities and resources required for candidates to perform their showcases. This is really encouraging.

Candidates working at this level deserve the opportunity to perform to a live audience demonstrating the skills learnt and honed over the two-year course. The unit focuses on the performance aspects of skill development and not the audition process. Candidates deserve the opportunity to perform to a live audience and evidence suggests those that did have an audience produced better performances. All centres are encouraged to make the showcase an event on the centre calendar.

Dance

Good candidates performed choreographed routines taken from repertoire. They showed the style through the appropriate movements and stylistic features achieving a good technical standard. Good practice saw the inclusion of the five basic actions, gesture and stillness, for example, steps, jumps, turns, lifts, falls, locomotion and balances. Dancers confidently used motif, development and variation. Spatial awareness was included with use of shape, size, pattern, line, direction, level and location. Well-choreographed routines taken from repertoire also included various dynamic elements such as tension, force, strength, speed, tempo and rhythm. The selected routines in contemporary, theatrical and street dance focused on form and structure. Good dance centres were able to provide the candidates with material from choreographers and a wealth of performance material. This gave the candidates the opportunity to perform works of a good standard.

Centres that allowed candidates to devise their own dances were in fact in breach of the specification and disadvantaging the candidates. Many dancers at this level do not have the ability to choreograph works that match professional standards. There are plenty of professional works available and centres must be encouraged to employ these in order to provide the correct standard of dance and works from repertoire. Many dance candidates were unable to score highly as they were unable to access the marking criteria. Centres that enter dance candidates must be able to facilitate the material required.

Dancers seen were able to show awareness of Health and Safety issues. They had discussed various aspects of footwear, jewellery, hair and costume in their preparatory notes. Spatial awareness and suitability of the performance space were also highlighted. There was also evidence of costume and appropriate setting and style.

Drama

All candidates choose pieces from repertoire during this session. Candidates were performing with imagination and at times prepared to take risks with challenging pieces. Successful candidates showed how effective research had been used in performances and were always aware of the whole play having read the text. Vocal skills were good with emphasis on effective voice projection and clear diction. Good Shakespeare was evident where candidates had an understanding of iambic pentameter, clear diction and clarity of voice. Centres must ensure that candidates performing Shakespeare pieces can discuss the structure of the language and how they have interpreted the work. There was evidence of some difficult and challenging works selected, but some candidates were unable to cope with the demands of the works. There was far too much prompting of candidates. Centres must support candidates in both the selection and direction of their selected pieces.

Good candidates were using costumes and props. This was effective and even simple costumes enabled candidates to really 'get inside the character' which added impact.

Staging of the pieces still needs some attention. Good performances considered the audience and engagement with them was enhanced through consideration of blocking and motivation behind movement. Credibility of character allowed for a more believable performance. Good candidates were using a range of skills, techniques and drama conventions. Material selected was challenging with examples of contemporary drama, Greek Theatre, Classical Speeches and Shakespeare. There were good examples of duologues i.e. Caryl Churchill's overlapping dialogue, Pinter, Peter Shaffer.

Music

There were some outstanding performances of musical theatre with the emphasis on singing. Candidates had considerable expertise and advanced technique tackling some very difficult performance pieces. Many of the pieces were performed with backing tracks and good candidates had obviously rehearsed thoroughly as they were able to achieve fluency in performance.

Some music candidates used live music. Good candidates had rehearsed with the pianists to ensure that they were familiar with the key and style of the song.

Choice of material allowed more candidates to display a range of performance and vocal techniques. The Musical Theatre pieces allowed candidates to develop facial expressions and gesture, characterisation, and to capture the feeling of the piece, as well as demonstrating the candidates' technical ability. Candidates who played musical instruments were well rehearsed playing from memory. There were impressive solo pieces from musicians taken from the Rock

Report on the Units taken in June 2008

School Syllabus at grade 7 and 8. This high standard of material enabled the musicians to access the higher marks.

Many candidates in the session were able to produce dynamic performances of their Showcase showing complete mastery of their selected material. Good candidates were able to shape and mould their material, displaying a sophisticated understanding of the interpretative skills required. Candidates at the highest level showed a committed personal style. It was extremely impressive to see candidates displaying such a high level of skills and a perceptive understanding of the professional context of the work. Good practice saw a number of candidates producing authoritative and absorbing performances, which really engaged with the audience.

Preparatory Notes

Most candidates gained a higher proportion of marks for their performance than for their preparatory notes. The best examples displayed a professional approach to planning for performance, with their research into potential pieces and selection procedure explained rather than merely described, with relevant research into the social, historical and cultural context of the pieces actually applied to the final performance. There was also clear evidence of initiative and the adoption of targeted rehearsal and preparatory techniques, including meaningful evaluation of the process. There was good evidence of developing skills and techniques through a fluent demand of technical vocabulary. Preparatory notes were extremely well done by these candidates and many of them were able to score full marks.

Unfortunately, for most candidates submissions were little more than basic descriptive logs, with limited Internet research that was not applied and little evidence of the use of action planning and feedback to develop the final showcase.

Those candidates who did not produce and submit any working notes were disadvantaged and unable to access the higher marks. The preparatory notes are worth 20% of the final grade and both centres and candidates must be aware of this.

G387 Production Demonstration

This session again saw a small entry, however there was an improvement in the submission of evidence including detailed DVDs, thorough preparatory notes and portfolios and planned demonstrations/ presentations.

Candidates are required through their portfolio work and product presentation to demonstrate a detailed understanding of the processes required to realise their designs. There should be research undertaken and whichever creative process is adopted by the candidate should show a depth of understanding. Candidates must consider the social, historical and cultural influences on their designs. Material selected particularly at the highest mark should be impressively sophisticated. Candidates must display a good command of technical language and conventions as well as complying with industry requirements.

The product demonstration should be authoritative and absorbing. Designs need to create highly effective engagement for the audience. There should be evidence of technical accuracy. The candidate should be able to demonstrate a personal style in shaping and moulding the designs. Work scoring at the higher end should contain a level of originality in both its conception and realisation. There was evidence of some excellent puppetry work, where designs had been constructed and used in a performance as part of a candidate's monologue. Where production candidates work alongside the performance candidates this shows how the specification should be applied and taught in centres.

Less successful candidates need to improve the research, detail and presentation of their work. There must be evidence of industry standards, scaled drawings and construction techniques. Drawings and designs of period sets and costumes must be historically accurate and candidates must ensure that any accessories/props are to scale. Buying the dressings for a set box from retailers is not what the unit is about.

Candidates must submit both their preparatory notes and their portfolio containing their designs as well as pictures, photographs, DVD, or video evidence of their product demonstration.

Grade Thresholds

Applied GCE Performing Arts H146 H456
June 2008 Examination Series

Coursework Unit Threshold Marks

| Unit | | Maximum Mark | A | B | C | D | E | U |
|------|-----|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|---|
| G380 | Raw | 50 | 43 | 38 | 33 | 28 | 23 | 0 |
| | UMS | 100 | 80 | 70 | 60 | 50 | 40 | 0 |
| G381 | Raw | 50 | 43 | 38 | 33 | 28 | 24 | 0 |
| | UMS | 100 | 80 | 70 | 60 | 50 | 40 | 0 |
| G384 | Raw | 50 | 43 | 38 | 33 | 28 | 24 | 0 |
| | UMS | 100 | 80 | 70 | 60 | 50 | 40 | 0 |
| G385 | Raw | 50 | 43 | 38 | 33 | 29 | 25 | 0 |
| | UMS | 100 | 80 | 70 | 60 | 50 | 40 | 0 |

Examined Unit Threshold Marks

| Unit | | Maximum Mark | A | B | C | D | E | U |
|------|-----|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|---|
| G382 | Raw | 50 | 43 | 38 | 33 | 28 | 23 | 0 |
| | UMS | 100 | 80 | 70 | 60 | 50 | 40 | 0 |
| G383 | Raw | 50 | 43 | 39 | 35 | 31 | 28 | 0 |
| | UMS | 100 | 80 | 70 | 60 | 50 | 40 | 0 |
| G386 | Raw | 50 | 44 | 39 | 34 | 29 | 25 | 0 |
| | UMS | 100 | 80 | 70 | 60 | 50 | 40 | 0 |
| G387 | Raw | 50 | 41 | 37 | 33 | 30 | 27 | 0 |
| | UMS | 100 | 80 | 70 | 60 | 50 | 40 | 0 |

Specification Aggregation Results

Uniform marks correspond to overall grades as follows.
Advanced Subsidiary GCE (H146):

| Overall Grade | A | B | C | D | E |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| UMS (max 300) | 240 | 210 | 180 | 150 | 120 |

Advanced GCE (H546)

| Overall Grade | A | B | C | D | E |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| UMS (max 600) | 480 | 420 | 360 | 300 | 240 |

Cumulative Percentage in Grade

Advanced Subsidiary GCE (H146):

| A | B | C | D | E | U |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 9.8 | 25.2 | 52.5 | 76.9 | 92.2 | 100 |
| There were 774 candidates aggregating in June 2008. | | | | | |

Advanced GCE (H546):

| A | B | C | D | E | U |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 9.7 | 39.0 | 72.5 | 92.8 | 98.6 | 100 |
| There were 453 candidates aggregating in June 2008. | | | | | |

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:

http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

How to Calculate a UMS (Uniform Mark Scale) Conversion

This method can be generalised to apply to any set of raw marks and any uniform mark scale.

You must have the appropriate session's grade boundary threshold information at hand.

- I. Determine which grade the candidate obtained
- II. Find out how many raw marks there are in that grade
- III. Find out how many marks are in the equivalent uniform mark grade
- IV. Calculate the conversion factor. This is the number of uniform marks in the grade divided by the number of raw marks in the same grade
- V. Calculate how many raw marks the candidate had scored over the raw mark boundary
- VI. Multiply this number (v) by the conversion factor (iv)
- VII. Add the result to the uniform mark boundary for the grade. This will be the UMS for the candidate.

Example

Gill gained a raw mark of 35 on unit G380 and a UMS of 68.

The raw mark and UMS boundaries were determined as follows:

| Unit | | Max mark | a | b | c | d | e | u |
|------|-----|----------|----|----|----|----|----|---|
| G380 | Raw | 100 | 41 | 36 | 31 | 26 | 22 | 0 |
| | UMS | 100 | 80 | 70 | 60 | 50 | 40 | 0 |

| | |
|----------|--|
| Step I | Gill gained a C grade |
| Step II | There are 5 raw marks (36-31) in the C grade |
| Step III | There are 10 marks in the equivalent C UMS grade (60-50) |
| Step IV | The conversion factor is 10 divided by 5 = 2 |
| Step V | Gill scored 4 marks over the C raw boundary (35-31) |
| Step VI | $4 \times 2 = 8$ |
| Step VII | This is $8 + 60 = 68$ |

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