Cambridge
TECHNICALS

OCR LEVEL 2 AND LEVEL 3 CAMBRIDGE TECHNICALS IN PERFORMING ARTS

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS AND GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

VERSION 1

OCR

INTRODUCTION

The following gives guidance on the terms and technical demands that are inherent in Performing Arts assessment and where there is a need for enhanced clarity and definition. It has specific reference to the Cambridge Technical in Performing Arts but is informed by reference to other qualifications where a similar need for clarification has arisen.

The following definitions will attempt to give answers to the frequently voiced 'yes, but what do you mean by?' and therefore give consistency to internal assessment and external moderation processes. They are terms and phrases that are wholly contextualised by the criteria and demands of the assessment of performing arts and specifically the Cambridge Technical.

Technical Requirements

DVD evidence

Most units across the qualification will specify, recommend or suggest DVD evidence. There is a wide range of contexts for DVD recordings, they could be capturing whole performances, workshops or milestone assessments. Tutors and/or students could be in control of recording evidence or they could be recorded presentations, seminars and interviews.

The nature of the recording should reflect the evidence and its intended use against the grade descriptors. For instance DVD evidence of skills development over time will be chaptered and there will be direct to camera commentaries by learners and/or teachers indicating the learner details, the dates, skill, and stage of the development and the series of exercises or performance pieces being explored. Alternatively evidence of a final performance piece could involve a static camera left running for the entirety of the performance.

In all contexts and formats DVDs must be appropriately chaptered with clear identification of learners in a line-up and on an accompanying running order sheet. Where whole performances are submitted as evidence this identification **must** be given. Additionally software exists for the 'tagging' of learners when they appear on stage and this is recommended.

Where show-reels are submitted these should respond to a professional standard ie be very carefully selected and edited, short and impactful, show specific skills and be 'packaged' for marketing purposes.

If allowed by school or college protocols recordings of work could be archived or sites such as *Youtube*.

Length and group sizes for performance

Units and model assignments will give details of where group sizes and lengths of performances are specified but generally the size of a group and the length of a performance should reflect 3-5 minutes exposure for each learner. This is meant as a guide only since art-forms will differ in how long is reasonable to profile the skills and performance elements inherent in the assessment, for example stamina, sustaining a role or range of instrumental skills.

The operative concept in these decisions is profile. Centres should make decisions based on the learner's access to the full range of the descriptors and their opportunities to evidence this. Whole school productions, for instance, can both increase this profile unnecessarily by providing too much work for individual learners and also bury a learner's contribution. These productions can also make DVD evidence problematic (see above).

Observations/Witness statements

Some units ask for observations and/or witness statements either as part of the expected evidence or as suggested evidence to support assessment decisions. It is helpful if observation and witness statements are produced using the OCR standard format available on the website and these are used consistently by all staff.

Centres are advised to record learners, times, places, description of activity/event and details of level of attainment. The observation report is the centre's opportunity to provide significant and additional evidence and should make explicit reference to the grade descriptors in the assessment evidence grid. In this way they provide additional annotation for moderation purposes.

Observations and witness statements should also use appropriate performing arts terminology and can also be completed by peers, visiting professionals and workshop leaders or teachers from learners' private lessons and coaching. These must be authenticated by the centre staff and include all the details outlined above.

Peer and self assessment

Generally this is encouraged as part of the evidence mix in most units; however it is subject to the same development of formats outlined above. There must be clarity about the purpose and structure of such assessments and reference of the descriptors. These forms of assessment can work particularly well in workshops and in independent practical work. These should also be recorded.

Moderation

OCR has documents available that provide information, guidance and support for moderation procedures. These brief notes are intended to reinforce the importance of annotation, tracking and mapping of criteria and sampling.

Annotation is used by the teacher/assessor to guide the moderator to relevant evidence. It should refer to descriptors and could be done by pro-forma that accompanies learner portfolios or it could be written against the work itself. Other general qualitative statements such as 'excellent' or 'well done' should be avoided. Annotation needs to justify the mark awarded and so needs appropriate focus and detail. Moderators are **not** re-marking the work or engaging in an archaeological exercise to find evidence. It is the responsibility of the assessor to indicate how their grades have been determined.

Centres should use spreadsheets to track Learning Outcomes at the appropriate levels; this will enable them to map the individual learner's grades and levels of attainment across the year. These documents are particularly important if the centre is delivering through integrated projects where there

is a necessary fragmenting of LOs. These documents not only aid administration and awarding of final grades, they can help moderators drill down into assessment procedures and decisions. For individual unit assessment Unit Recording Sheets are provided by OCR to record teacher decisions and location of evidence. (see website)

OCR will provide details of the sampling process for the qualification. Sampling further emphasises that moderation is not a re-marking process. See Centre handbook for further details..

Internal Standardisation and Verification

As with all other vocational qualifications with a wide range of units, teachers and other specialist deliverers, the Cambridge Technical moderation process requires that centres should internally standardise staff against the assessment criteria and descriptors and then internally verify assessment briefs and decisions. This ensures that there is consistency and a thorough knowledge and understanding of the benchmarks and protocols of assessment. IS and IV also demands that documents and pro-forma have clear and unified designs to make them accessible to all staff as well as the moderator.

Research and Citation

For Level 3 work in particular (although not exclusively) independently researched evidence should include citation. This should be for both practical and written work and so will have a range of forms. It could be in a bibliographic form (such as Harvard) or in the form of footnotes, it could also be direct to camera that cites references in the practical exploration to choreographers or practitioners. It could be a combination of all forms; citation should become usual practice, as it will need to be for HE progression.

Along with citation learners should become habitual annotators ensuring that any downloaded material is used and seen to be used in the collating of researched material and its application to results and findings. Unannotated downloads will be ignored by moderators.

Range

'Range' in any descriptors or assessment text indicates *three or more*, the use of the plural as in 'performance opportunities' indicates *two*.

Vocational assessment methods

Vocational assessment demands a wider range of methods and evidence than traditional 'academic'. In this sense it is more demanding and rigorous, as well as being far more creative in approach. Essays are to be avoided as much as is possible as these do not reflect this more demanding context. Assessment strategies in the units and guidelines will more often talk about written responses in the form of presentation and seminar notes, reports, logs, case studies and artistic documentation and in some cases business plans, pitches and interviews. As indicated this doesn't negate the need for citation and annotation but rather makes this process more demanding since learners will need to be inducted into methods of logging and documenting practical and artistic work in a way that is both fulfilling the demands of the course and that they have full ownership of.

Repertoire

• the stock of plays, operas, roles, songs, etc. that a company, actor, singer, etc. is familiar with and ready to perform
• all the musical or theatrical works of a particular writer, composer, etc., available for performance
• the stock of special skills, devices, techniques, etc. of a particular person or particular field of endeavour.

When the specification refers to repertoire it refers to published work and **not** to the accumulated work of the learner or the teacher. There is some debate as to whether a style or genre can be described as a repertoire as in the 'repertoire of the 60s', but this is not specific enough for the purposes of meeting the requirements and demands of the Cambridge Technical. Nor is the last definition separated out above.

Documentation and log books

As indicated above learners will need to find individual ways of documenting their work over and above the specific forms outlined in units. Centres should look for creative and progressive ways of doing this and engaging learners in what is a demanding discipline for any practitioner. Logging processes feed into evaluation and monitoring evidence and encourage ownership and commitment.

As a very general guide logs could include -
• **Target setting** or **action plans**
• **Descriptions of the work done** – descriptive entries will say 'today we worked on scene 2' or 'refined dance routine'. More developed entries will show evidence about how the candidate is gaining control of the work and becoming more confident in their performance.
• **Review/reflection/analysis.** What problems have been encountered? How have they been resolved? What has gone well? Action plans and targets are helpful here.

- **Peer/teacher observation** and how the learner has made use of it. Teacher observations on their own do not count as the learner's own work. What evidence is there that the learner has read the comments and acted on them?
- **Information about changes made or editing of scripts.** The script on its own should be ignored unless it is annotated showing evidence of how it has been used.
- **Subject specific terminology:** Is there evidence of it? Is it applied correctly?
- **Character studies/choreographic/compositional ideas**
- **Devising starting points and other random ideas**.

Health and Safety

Many of the units refer explicitly to H&S but even where they don't centres and learners should encourage policies and working practices that replicate the profession. There could be evidence of the following:

- **Generic risk assessment**, e.g. from the local authority or theatre.
- **Risk assessment** for the venue being used related to the performance. There could be basic bullet points of general H & S e.g. 'Wires need to be taped down, no water on stage.'
- **Vocal, Physical and Mental warm ups.** Examples could be given with an explanation of why they are undertaken. E.g. If a vocalist needs to hit a high, sustained note what action has the candidate taken to prepare for this? Depends on art form but learners should be able to give specific information, e.g. 'There is a lift in the second dance routine and the H & S measures are……' or they could record that they, 'Did a warm up today to avoid injury.'
- **H & S regarding Costume, Jewellery, Footwear**
- **Awareness of Sound, Light, Special Effects**.

Scenario/tasks/briefs

Some units will refer to ways in which assessed work can be framed and set for learners. This is also true of the model assignments for levels 2 and 3 and integrated projects. The **scenario** refers to the overall purpose and intention of the project or piece of set work. It is important in vocational areas because it can refer to how things are done in the industry or by professionals and can set out a replication of these. It can include rationale, aims or objectives but is usually more general and can give an attractive incentive to complete the project.

Tasks are the specific instructions that need to be carried out to complete the work for assessment. There could be one, as in 'produce a portfolio' or a number that set out the stages. These shouldn't be confused with qualitative descriptors such as 'work well with others'.

Briefs can often provide a clear focus for work and some units ask for learners to work to a commission that is set by a third party. This can provide good replication of professional working and could encourage contact with arts organisations and individual professionals. Learners are presented with the discipline and constraints of working to the demands of others (and limited budgets).

Glossary

There are a number of terms in the assessment descriptors and accompanying guidelines that may need some clarifying, especially as they tend to be concentrated in the higher range and move the evidence beyond description and basic explanation. Some of these terms can be subjective but generally we should recognise the rigour attached to evidence when a level (or depth) of accomplished artistic work has been achieved.

Commitment Learners show a serious approach to their work and to replicating the work of other practitioners. This could be realised in classes and workshops but it is also apparent in individual and self-directed practical and research activities. They seek out solutions and their approach to work is leading to a personal style developing away from original sources and replications. They are showing ownership of the material in the way they are committing fully to its realisation.

Focus and **Concentration** In performance is dependent on how absorbed the learner/artist is the work. They will show a clear embodied relationship between themselves and their instrument: body, musical instrument or media. This means that the audience will be fully engaged and communication between artists and audience will be strong. All this is predicated on very rigorous preparation and rehearsal and this will reveal itself in performance so that the process becomes seamless with the product independent. We do not see the characteristics and reticence of the learner but the created character, the artistic intentions of the composer or choreographer and can engage with the intellectual and emotional demands of the performance itself.

Fluency/flow When all of the above is happening there will be fluency. The learner is *fluent* in the language, intentions and demands of the piece. In movement terms there is clear flow with little physical inhibition getting in the way. The body is working effortlessly, although a lot of effort has been put into making this so. The work is accomplished because all the process and preparation has led to a unique and complete realisation of the performed piece. Fluency is not confined to stagecraft and can also be apparent in presentations and log books; it is about a completely owned activity.

Extension is another example of a term that has applications across all evidence forms since it can refer to the extension from Pass to Merit to Distinction as well as moving towards control and mastery of the combined elements of an artistic form.

Technical Theatre Checklist

The following gives a general outline for Production pathway learners of what should be included in portfolios (or available for moderation) for particular skills. These lists are indicative and show the more obvious inclusions.

Scenic/Set design
- Statement of conceptualisation (for each performance or design brief)
- Research materials
- Storyboards
- Planning sketches
- Hand drafting and/or CAD samples
- Perspective renderings
- Model box (or photos of it)
- Photos of work in process
- Production photos (or DVD of production)
- Materials list with costing estimate

Costumes
- Statement of conceptualisation (for each performance or design brief)
- Research materials
- Sketches and studies
- Swatched costume renderings
- Examples of pattern drafting
- Discussions of process
- Photos of work in process
- Production photos (or DVD of production)
- Materials list with costing estimate

Lighting Design
- Statement of concept (for each performance)
- Visual research
- Storyboard and lighting studies
- Light plot – examples of hand work and/or CAD
- Full set of documents – all schedules/cue sheets if running the performance
- Colour Key – gels/filters selected with reasoning
- Production photos

Technical Direction

- Production photos and copy of designer's sketches or rendering
- Drafting samples, especially of working drawings
- Examples showing challenges and how these were dealt with
- Examples showing organisational skills such as crew/ building schedules etc
- Budget documentation and reports
- Other documentation of the work

Stage Management

- Introductory commentary reviewing specifics such as Director's Brief, team profiles and technical challenges
- Contacts list
- Fully annotated Book with blocking and cue information
- Rehearsal schedules
- Rehearsal and show reports
- Risk Assessments
- Incident report sheet
- Policies

CONTACT US

Staff at the OCR Customer Contact Centre are available to take your call between 8am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

We're always delighted to answer questions and give advice.

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