

**A LEVEL**

**Moderators' report**

# **DRAMA AND THEATRE**

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**H459**

For first teaching in 2016

**H459/11/12 Summer 2024 series**

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## Introduction

Our moderators' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

## Online courses

We have created online courses to build your confidence in delivering, marking and administering internal assessment for our qualifications. Courses are available for Cambridge Nationals, GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Technicals (2016).

### Cambridge Nationals

All teachers delivering our redeveloped Cambridge Nationals suite from September 2022 are asked to complete the Essentials for the NEA course, which describes how to guide and support your students. You'll receive a certificate which you should retain.

Following this you can also complete a subject-specific Focus on Internal Assessment course for your individual Cambridge Nationals qualification, covering marking and delivery.

### GCSE, A Level and Cambridge Technicals (2016)

We recommend all teachers complete the introductory module Building your Confidence in Internal Assessment, which covers key internal assessment and standardisation principles.

Following this you will find a subject-specific course for your individual qualification, covering marking criteria with examples and commentary, along with interactive marking practice.

### Accessing our online courses

You can access all our online courses from our teacher support website [Teach Cambridge](#).

You will find links relevant to your subject under Assessment, NEA/Coursework and then Online Courses from the left hand menu on your Subject page.

If you have any queries, please contact our Customer Support Centre on 01223 553998 or email [support@ocr.org.uk](mailto:support@ocr.org.uk).

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Did you know that you can save this PDF as a Word file using Acrobat Professional?

Simply click on **File > Export to** and select **Microsoft Word**

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If you do not have access to Acrobat Professional there are a number of **free** applications available that will also convert PDF to Word (search for PDF to Word converter).

## General overview

Again, this year my team and I felt very lucky to experience such a unique range of practitioner based devised work. We saw a comprehensive range from experimental Mitchell, immersive Punchdrunk, experiential Stanislavski and some truly thought provoking Brecht inspired epic pieces.

The centres that were most successful were those that put experimenting with practitioners at the heart of the work they did across this component and then evidenced this practical journey in the Research Report and Portfolio.

As ever, our large centres deserve to be applauded for the work they do in putting on up to 10 devised performances.

## Administration

Every year we have a large number of memory sticks that aren't labelled with the centre name and number. These can easily get mixed up with those from other centres, so please label your memory stick by sticking on a label to the actual memory stick.

For centres submitting work online through the new Submit for Assessment portal, please label each file correctly, for example:

### **Candidate name – candidate number – Research Report**

In some cases, files were saved under all sorts of file names which has a real impact on moderation. Similarly, candidates should provide a heading on their work for example:

### **Candidate name – candidate number – Research Report**

For immersive/Artaudian performances, please do not have all the candidates dressed in black. If each candidate could have a distinctive costume feature to help identify them, that would support the moderation process.

This year again we saw a number of overly long Research Reports. Centres are advised to adhere to the recommended maximum length for the Research Report and the Portfolio as outlined on page 27 of the H459 specification. A number of candidates exceeded the recommended lengths and often this impeded the clarity of what was written.

## Filming the performance

Please position your camera so that each student's face can be seen clearly in the performance. Aim to balance the lighting for effect, with lighting that clearly shows up the candidates.

### Test shot



Position the camera, film 20 seconds of the first group and watch back to check the lighting before filming the whole performance.

## Marking

When marking candidates, in particular a candidate at the top end, aim to use all the marks available across the band to best reflect where a candidate lies.

For larger centres, it is completely acceptable that you could end up with a number of candidates on the same final mark with numerous different combinations across the 5 mark point, the spread of marks in the centre reflects the attainment of each candidate. This year there were a number of examples of the lowest candidates being marked harshly; it's always worth reflecting wherever possible on the positive achievements of Band 2 candidates.

### Full marks

The awarding of full marks across all 5 mark points is reserved for the very best candidates across the whole cohort.

## Research Report

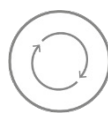
The Research Report is the area of the component that candidates are most likely to struggle with. The Research Report is the evidencing of the practical exercises explored on both practitioners and the exercises explored to work on the chosen text. It is not a theory essay.

Candidates evidence their research on the practitioners as part of the report but the majority is the evidencing of practical exercises/rehearsal techniques. The report is there for each candidate to evidence their practical exploration and to analyse and evaluate that. Candidates that got this balance wrong within the Research Report were less successful.

A number of candidates listed key ideas/techniques of their chosen practitioner when the specification requires candidates to explore a technique practically, evidence this and then evaluate it. For example, rather than explaining how Mitchell uses Live Cinema, candidates are required to evidence how they explored Live Cinema and then put this into practice with their chosen text.

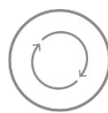
Candidates that were most successful clearly structured the report to address the key areas of the criteria, for example using the heading 'Exploring Mitchell with Hickson's Oil' leads a candidate to evidence a key requirement of the specification.

### What the specification says...



'The Research Report has a recommended maximum of 2000 words and will include a detailed breakdown of the **practical exercises completed** and the stages of exploration using the **extract of performance text**.'

### 3 practical to 1 research



The marking criteria for the Research Report is 3 to 1 in favour of practical exploration over research and context. It is recommended, therefore, that candidates replicate this 3 to 1 ratio in their reports.

## Practitioners

After last year's tie between Stanislavski and Frantic Assembly at the top of our practitioner leaderboard, this year saw Brecht reaffirming his dominance as the most explored practitioner across the cohort.

Popular combinations this year were:

- Stanislavski and Brecht
- Mitchell and Brecht
- Stanislavski and Frantic Assembly
- Brecht and Artaud.

As in recent years, centres that explored two contrasting practitioners proved the most successful. Practitioners that have a wealth of resources and exercises allowed candidates to fulfil the criteria within Section 1.

Centres where candidates used a practitioner whose canon of work was predominately devising based with the text choice often struggled. Centres that chose a practitioner with a track record of exploring text and a series of exercises to explore with text fared better.

### Exploring a global majority practitioner



As one of your two practitioner choices, let your students experience a global majority practitioner, for example, Tamasha.

## Text choice

Centres chose a variety of texts from classical to contemporary with 75% of centres exploring a play by a white male playwright as their chosen text for H459 11-14. In addition, many of these centres chose two white male practitioners to explore. Interestingly, one of the most successful centres chose to explore the play *Fairview* by Jackie Sibblies Drury and the evidencing of the practical exploration within Section 1 was enriched by the centre's choice of text. The text choice is an opportunity for you as centres to introduce your students to a variety of diverse voices.

### Misconception



Although the text may be used as a stimulus for the devised performance, this does not have to be the case and candidates can create theatre in Section 2 and 3 from any stimulus.

Listed below are the examples of both female and global majority playwrights that can be explored for H459.

### Five contemporary plays from female playwrights to explore

<i>Shifters</i>	Benedict Lombe
<i>Yen</i>	Anna Jordan
<i>Rock/Paper/Scissors</i>	Chris Bush
<i>The Wasp</i>	Morgan Lloyd Malcolm
<i>Oil</i>	Ella Hickson

### Five plays from global majority playwrights to explore

<i>The Comeuppance</i>	Branden Jacobs-Jenkins
<i>Lions and Tigers</i>	Tanika Gupta
<i>Leave Taking</i>	Winsome Pinnock
<i>Red Pitch</i>	Tyrell Williams
<i>Scenes from 68 Years</i>	Hannah Khalil

## Portfolio

Key to the portfolio evidence is the journey a candidate goes on to create their devised piece and the evidencing of the practitioner influence and how that has aided this process.

For Design candidates, successful candidates included rig layouts, material chosen, gels experimented with colour, all allowing candidates to evidence the experimental and collaborative journey they have been on.

In some cases, it seems candidates spend a disproportionate amount of time on the portfolio evidence in relation to other mark points within the component.

### Common misconception – Analysis and Evaluation mark



The mark for Analysis and Evaluation (30) is taken from both the Research Report and the Portfolio evidence.

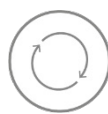
## Devised and Designed Performance

As ever, my team and I were lucky enough to see a huge variety of performances from a wide range of practitioners. By far the most successful performances within the component were those centres that used the work they had practically explored in Section 1 and 2 to create their devised performance, putting the practitioner influence at the heart of their performance.

The stimulus for the devised performance is up to the candidates to decide and may or may not be related to the text chosen as part of Section 1.

Centres that are effective create unique theatre year on year with each cohort of students creating the theatre they want to create. There is no favoured performance style at H459 11-14.

### Key word in the specification



'Learners perform their final **polished** performance'

Allow candidates time to run their devised piece before filming to gel all the elements of the performance.

Always weigh up the benefit of lighting for performance and lighting for moderation – it is vital for the moderation process that the moderator can clearly see the candidates' faces. As a centre, think about the staging of the piece in relation to the filming of the performance.

## Helpful resources

There is an expectation that at A Level, students will explore the most up to date resources on a chosen practitioner and explore exercises that truthfully reflect the practitioner's work.

OCR have produced a range of practitioner resources/delivery guides to use as a starting point and for a variety of practitioners there are recommended resources at [OCR Practitioner resources](#).

*An Actor's Work*, Konstantin Stanislavski

*A World Elsewhere*, Steven Berkoff

*Stanislavski in Practice: Exercises for Students*, Nick O'Brien

*The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre*, Scott Graham

*The Director's Craft: A Handbook for the Theatre*, Katie Mitchell and Nicholas Hytner

*The Punchdrunk Encyclopaedia*, Josephine Machon

*Theatre in Practice: A Student's Handbook*, Nick O'Brien and Annie Sutton

*The Theatre and Its Double*, Antonin Artaud

Candidates who did well generally:	Candidates who did less well generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explored contrasting practitioners</li> <li>evidenced their practical exploration in the Research Report</li> <li>stayed within the word count</li> <li>focused on evaluating their work throughout the component</li> <li>used their practitioner influence to ignite ideas for their devised piece</li> <li>were experimental throughout the devising process</li> <li>polished their final performance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>chose similar practitioners</li> <li>included limited practical exploration as part of the Research Report</li> <li>wrote overly long Research Reports</li> <li>provided limited evaluation</li> <li>didn't use the practitioner work explored in Section 1 to ignite the devising process</li> <li>'played it safe' when devising.</li> </ul>



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# Supporting you

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## Teach Cambridge

Make sure you visit our secure website [Teach Cambridge](#) to find the full range of resources and support for the subjects you teach. This includes secure materials such as set assignments and exemplars, online and on-demand training.

**Don't have access?** If your school or college teaches any OCR qualifications, please contact your exams officer. You can [forward them this link](#) to help get you started.

## Reviews of marking

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our post-results services. For full information about the options available visit the [OCR website](#).

## Access to Scripts

We've made it easier for Exams Officers to download copies of your candidates' completed papers or 'scripts'. Your centre can use these scripts to decide whether to request a review of marking and to support teaching and learning.

Our free, on-demand service, Access to Scripts is available via our single sign-on service, My Cambridge. Step-by-step instructions are on our [website](#).

## Keep up-to-date

We send a monthly bulletin to tell you about important updates. You can also sign up for your subject specific updates. If you haven't already, [sign up here](#).

## OCR Professional Development

Attend one of our popular professional development courses to hear directly from a senior assessor or drop in to a Q&A session. Most of our courses are delivered live via an online platform, so you can attend from any location.

Please find details for all our courses for your subject on **Teach Cambridge**. You'll also find links to our online courses on NEA marking and support.

## Signed up for ExamBuilder?

[ExamBuilder](#) is a free test-building platform, providing unlimited users exclusively for staff at OCR centres with an [Interchange](#) account.

Choose from a large bank of questions to build personalised tests and custom mark schemes, with the option to add custom cover pages to simulate real examinations. You can also edit and download complete past papers.

[Find out more](#).

## Active Results

Review students' exam performance with our free online results analysis tool. It is available for all GCSEs, AS and A Levels and Cambridge Nationals (examined units only).

[Find out more](#).

**You will need an Interchange account to access our digital products. If you do not have an Interchange account please contact your centre administrator (usually the Exams Officer) to request a username, or nominate an existing Interchange user in your department.**

# Online courses

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## Enhance your skills and confidence in internal assessment

### What are our online courses?

Our online courses are self-paced eLearning courses designed to help you deliver, mark and administer internal assessment for our qualifications. They are suitable for both new and experienced teachers who want to refresh their knowledge and practice.

### Why should you use our online courses?

With these online courses you will:

- learn about the key principles and processes of internal assessment and standardisation
- gain a deeper understanding of the marking criteria and how to apply them consistently and accurately
- see examples of student work with commentary and feedback from OCR moderators
- have the opportunity to practise marking and compare your judgements with those of OCR moderators
- receive instant feedback and guidance on your marking and standardisation skills
- be able to track your progress and achievements through the courses.

### How can you access our online courses?

Access courses from [Teach Cambridge](#). Teach Cambridge is our secure teacher website, where you'll find all teacher support for your subject.

If you already have a Teach Cambridge account, you'll find available courses for your subject under Assessment - NEA/Coursework - Online courses. Click on the blue arrow to start the course.

If you don't have a Teach Cambridge account yet, ask your exams officer to set you up – just send them this [link](#) and ask them to add you as a Teacher.

Access the courses **anytime, anywhere and at your own pace**. You can also revisit the courses as many times as you need.

### Which courses are available?

There are **two types** of online course: an **introductory module** and **subject-specific** courses.

The introductory module, Building your Confidence in Internal Assessment, is designed for all teachers who are involved in internal assessment for our qualifications. It covers the following topics:

- the purpose and benefits of internal assessment
- the roles and responsibilities of teachers, assessors, internal verifiers and moderators
- the principles and methods of standardisation
- the best practices for collecting, storing and submitting evidence
- the common issues and challenges in internal assessment and how to avoid them.

The subject-specific courses are tailored for each qualification that has non-exam assessment (NEA) units, except for AS Level and Entry Level. They cover the following topics:

- the structure and content of the NEA units
- the assessment objectives and marking criteria for the NEA units
- examples of student work with commentary and feedback for the NEA units
- interactive marking practice and feedback for the NEA units.

We are also developing courses for some of the examined units, which will be available soon.

### How can you get support and feedback?

If you have any queries, please contact our Customer Support Centre on 01223 553998 or email [support@ocr.org.uk](mailto:support@ocr.org.uk).

We welcome your feedback and suggestions on how to improve the online courses and make them more useful and relevant for you. You can share your views by completing the evaluation form at the end of each course.

## Need to get in touch?

If you ever have any questions about OCR qualifications or services (including administration, logistics and teaching) please feel free to get in touch with our customer support centre.

Call us on  
**01223 553998**

Alternatively, you can email us on  
**support@ocr.org.uk**


For more information visit

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