

NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Creative Studies: Performance Skills (600/6990/9)

Chief Examiner report

Marking window: January – April 2014

This report contains general information from the Chief Examiner. The aim is to point out the positives and negatives of the scripts in the marking window to guide you to areas that are doing well and not so well.

Key points:

- **Administering the external assessment**
- **Standard of candidate work**
- **Referencing of external assessment tasks**
- **Evidence creation**
- **Interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria**
- **Planning in the external assessment**

It's important to note that candidates shouldn't sit the external assessment until they've taken part in the relevant teaching of the unit to ensure they are well prepared for the external assessment.

Administering the external assessment

The external assessment (both preparatory and timed period) must be independent from the teaching of the unit. Work completed during the teaching of the unit can't be used in the external assessment. Any stimulus materials used by the centre during the teaching of the unit can't be used in the external assessment. Candidates must complete all of the tasks independently.

The completion of the preparation tasks must be supervised by the Teacher and can be sat in the normal classroom environment.

The completion of the timed tasks must be Invigilated and sat in accordance with the Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment - V Certs.

It's important that the external assessment is sat in accordance with the specified conditions.

Standard of candidate work

The Examiners were pleased to see a number of different performance disciplines evidenced in this first marking window including dance, drama and music. In the main, Examiners were satisfied with the offerings for this first external assessment paper.

A number of points were raised from the first paper which centres need to be aware of when preparing for any future marking windows, and this report should provide some support to centres and candidates in preparing for future windows.

Referencing of external assessment tasks

Candidate evidence must be clearly labelled with the task number it refers to. This is something that Teachers should be advising candidates of during the preparatory period. Any electronic evidence must be in a suitable file format as listed in the external assessment materials.

Where audio/visual evidence of multiple candidates is used, centres must ensure that each candidate being assessed is clearly visible and can be identified by the Examiner.

Some of the video evidence for the performance was of good quality and candidates identified and introduced themselves at the start of the performance, however some video evidence was of a poorer quality. All evidence produced on DVD should be checked for quality and this type of evidence must be linked to individual learners. If the Examiner isn't able to see or hear the candidate because of a poor recording they won't be able to grade the candidate and a result of Not Yet Achieved will be awarded.

If group work isn't part of the performance then it's advisable to submit electronic material per candidate.

Evidence creation

Candidates should note that tasks are there as a vehicle to address the assessment criteria (AC) and they should make continual references to the ACs and grading criteria while preparing their work for the tasks. On the first assessment paper, Examiners noted that some candidates embellished the tasks in an attempt to improve their work but some of these extras were not credit worthy as they added nothing to the assessment criteria. It's therefore important, during the teaching of the unit, that the assessment criteria and grading descriptors are discussed with the candidates.

During the teaching of the unit, centres may use stimulus materials to support the teaching of the unit. However, no additional guidance documents, in the form of centre produced worksheets, tasks or pro forma documents can be used by the candidates in the external assessment.

The use of such documents in the external assessment may well disadvantage candidates in terms of achievement and the work may not be graded.

Interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria

Task 1, AC 1.2 and 1.3

The research work needed should be directed at performance skills and techniques. Any research work which is focused on composers' lives, arts festivals etc is not likely to receive any credit unless it's related in some way to improving the performance skills and techniques of the piece being performed. A candidate may therefore research other performances of their piece and listen or watch various performances to get ideas for developing and performing their own piece

Task 1, AC 1.4

A rehearsal schedule is requested in Task 1 and this provides evidence for AC 1.4. Generally this needed more thought from most of the candidates. A basic schedule stating times of rehearsals will satisfy the pass criteria, but to receive a higher grade Examiners were looking for a schedule which goes beyond just the basic times and looks at issues such as the times needed for various sections of the performance piece or the times particular performers will need to attend. To make efficient use of time all performers may not be required to be present for every rehearsal.

Task 2, AC1.1

Some candidates were very clear about their role and reasons for their performance piece but others seemed to show some indecision about the performance and their role within it. Candidates are advised to think carefully about their performance piece and their role, as there will be little credit for writing about their role in a dance piece and then singing a song on the DVD.

Task 3, AC 1.4, 1.5, 1.6

This task asks for evidence of the preparation for the performance and here some candidates produced an evaluation of what they did rather than evidence of them preparing for the performance and developing their skills and techniques. Rehearsal diaries could have been used here in various formats eg, written audio, video podcasts, blogs etc. Other evidence might include annotated scripts / sheet music, notes, images, rehearsal details etc. The best evidence for the development of skills and techniques would be short clips of video demonstrating a range of rehearsal exercises and technical skills in development. It's worth pointing out here that it's acceptable that the Invigilator isn't present when rehearsals are being videoed. The final performance can't be used as evidence of rehearsal and improving techniques. Some of the performances were very good and implied quality rehearsals but these may be candidates who were already good performers and haven't really improved their skills and techniques specifically for this qualification. A video with the candidates demonstrating and talking about creative and imaginative techniques they're using could have provided valuable evidence here. In Task 3 the assessment brief clearly states that "candidates should include short video clips demonstrating a range of rehearsal exercises and a variety of skills in development". This gives a clear indication that visual evidence for the rehearsal evidence will produce the ideal evidence. Please remember that where audio/visual evidence of multiple candidates is used, for example a whole class video of a rehearsal, each candidate being assessed must be clearly visible. If this doesn't happen, candidates would be better served using individual discs to illustrate their own personal journey in skills development.

Task 3, AC 1.5

Task 4, AC 2.1

Centres and candidates are also reminded that each AC is assessed by Examiners individually against the grading descriptors. An excellent final performance may gain distinction for Task 4, AC 2.1, but little or poor rehearsal evidence on Task 3, AC 1.5 will only achieve a pass and therefore the grade for the whole unit will be affected. To gain higher grades on Task 3, AC 1.5, the candidate would need to show “clear evidence of critical judgment in their application of a wide range of rehearsal techniques demonstrating fluency and over several performance rehearsals”.

It should also be noted that in AC 1.5 the “technical skills” referred to in this unit are the performance technical skills such as use of gesture, timing, rhythm, expression, body positions, musicality, voice etc. It isn’t concerned with lighting, set design, etc. although these may be used to enhance the performance.

In Task 4, AC 2.1, candidates and centres are reminded that the final performance should take place before some kind of audience and it would be wise to make this apparent on the video. Examiners were impressed by the quality of some performances but the audiences were not always obvious on video. This is a Level 2 qualification and therefore the level of all the final performances should be similar to a GCSE candidate at A* to C grade. It’s important to consider an appropriate level when selecting performance material so that the candidates demonstrate techniques and skills appropriate to Level 2.

Task 5, AC 2.2

It’s important that candidates refer to their own performance and development of skills and techniques and not just make comments on how they think the whole show went.

Planning in the external assessment

Centres are reminded to give due attention to the marking windows of the external assessment. It’s not advisable for candidates to sit the external assessment early in their programme. It’s far more appropriate to enter candidates once they’ve taken part in the relevant teaching to ensure they’re well prepared. Centres would be in a better position to prepare their candidates for the external assessment following the support of an external moderation visit for the internally assessed units.

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Date: 25th May 2014