

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

### **Marking window: Sept – Nov 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 cannot be used in the external assessment. Any stimulus materials used by the centre during the teaching of the unit cannot 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 tasks within the preparation period do not need to be invigilated. However, the preparation tasks must be treated independently from the teaching of the unit and candidates must complete all tasks independently. This means the preparation tasks must not be Teacher led.

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.

Any Reasonable adjustments must be recorded on the invigilation sheet.

## **Standard of candidate work**

In this marking window the Examiners saw a number of different performance disciplines including dance, drama and music. There were quite a number of candidates with merits and distinctions for individual Assessment Criteria but often this was not consistent across all criteria and candidates need to consider this in the future when presenting their work.

## **Referencing of external assessment tasks**

In many cases candidate evidence was clearly referenced and labelled with the task number. It is not appropriate for teachers to name work for candidates although they could give reminders on best practice during the preparation time. There were some candidates who presented evidence where examiners found it very difficult to link the evidence to assessment criteria. If the evidence is not referenced accurately examiners may not be able to award a grade and the candidate will be given “Not yet achieved.”

Any electronic evidence must also be in a suitable file format as listed in the External Assessment Instructions document. Some candidates presented work in a format which could not be played by the examiner. If examiners are not able to play the discs the work may not be graded.

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. There were some examples where the candidate was not visible in the video clips and the poor video evidence did not match the higher standard of the written work. It is important to pay attention to the quality of the video evidence as this is all the examiner has available upon which to make a decision.

Some centres produced video evidence for the performance which was of good quality and candidates identified and introduced themselves at the start of the performance. It is important that the examiner can identify individual candidates and they should check the quality of the recording before sending it in. It gives the candidates more ownership of the evidence if they each have their own disc of electronic evidence.

## **Evidence creation**

Candidates are reminded that they should continue to make continual reference to the assessment criteria and grading criteria while preparing their work for the tasks. As mentioned earlier some candidates achieved well on certain criterion but did not maintain the standard across all criteria. It's important, during the teaching of the unit, (prior to the preparation time) that the assessment criteria and grading descriptors are discussed with the candidates so that candidates understand them.

During the teaching of the unit, centres may use stimulus materials to support the teaching of the unit.

Some centres have found it useful to use the internal assessment briefs on the NCFE website or a very similar approach for the internally assessed units as this prepares the candidates for the external assessment paper which adopts a similar approach.

## **Interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria**

### **Task 1, AC 1.2, 1.3**

Many candidates conducted research into their chosen performance piece and some used examples of others performing their chosen piece and made relevant comments about the performance and how it would influence their performance. It is important for candidates to link the research work to their own performances. Many candidates did quite well on the research work and some showed in their performance how the research work had influenced their performance.

### **Task 1, AC 1.4**

Candidates are asked to provide a rehearsal schedule for AC 1.4. A basic schedule stating times of rehearsals may satisfy the pass criteria but in order to receive a higher grade the candidate needs to go beyond basic times and look at areas of the piece which may require more rehearsal time or perhaps rehearsals where only certain performers need to attend. Candidates who are aiming for distinction should also note that the grading criteria for distinction says “*candidates demonstrate critical judgement in planning a rehearsal schedule, showing insight and perception in setting the performance in context for different audiences*” Candidates are not expected to perform the piece for different audiences but they need to think about how they might need to change their piece for different audiences and how this may impact on their rehearsals.

### **Task 2, AC1.1**

Most candidates were very clear about the piece they had chosen and their role within it. Taking this on to a merit or distinction was more of a challenge and required some careful thought on the part of candidates and many did not seek to justify the role, especially where a solo performance was involved. Candidates are advised to think carefully about their performance piece and what their role might be as a soloist or as a member of a group performance.

In terms of selecting the performance piece it is essential to keep in mind the standard that is expected for this qualification at Level 2. The final performance should be similar in standard to a performance by an A\* to C candidate at GCSE. The choice of material therefore may impact on the final grade. A piece for right hand only on the piano is unlikely to reach a pass level as a candidate at this level would be expected to play with both hands. Similarly a very limited part in a drama or dance piece is unlikely to reach the pass level. There were some centres who gave weaker candidates very small parts to perform and they did not achieve a pass grade. Please remember that all candidates are assessed individually.

## Task 3, AC 1.4, 1.5,

It is recommended that most of the time in the timed assessment is spent on this task where the candidate is asked to prepare evidence of the preparation for the performance. Here the assessment paper suggests short clips of video showing the rehearsal process. This can be and often was accompanied by some sort of rehearsal diary. Some candidates produced an evaluation of what they did rather than evidence of them actually preparing for the performance and developing their skills and techniques, which is what is required for this AC. One or two centres experimented with blogs and these worked quite well especially if the video extracts were combined. 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 candidates are, of course, allowed to talk about the rehearsal to camera and this worked very well in some instances where two candidates discussed their work together and demonstrated rehearsal techniques. Candidates who moved into the merit category generally ensured that their rehearsal clips illustrated improvements over time.

Some candidates included evidence where the teacher was involved in the rehearsal instructing them on what to do. This is not acceptable as the teacher should not be involved in teaching during this part of the course either during the preparation time or the timed assessment. Examiners were looking for the candidates to demonstrate their own knowledge of how to rehearse effectively rather than a video of a lesson which does not provide evidence of the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the rehearsal process. 1.4 is mentioned under this task as there is scope here to consider the rehearsal plan again which might need amending in the light of the developing rehearsals as a candidate discovers that they need to spend longer on certain sections of the piece which are problematic.

Candidates are reminded again that the final performance can't be used as evidence of rehearsal and improving techniques. The candidates who did best in this task produced short clips of the rehearsal process as suggested in the task and often accompanied it with a spoken commentary. Please remember that where audio/visual evidence of multiple candidates is used, for example a group video of a rehearsal, each candidate being assessed must be clearly visible. It tends to work well when candidates have their own memory stick or DVD of evidence as this gives them greater ownership of the evidence. Even if the work is recorded as a group, individual candidates could take out extracts where they feel there is good evidence of them doing something and transfer that section to their own DVD with a suitable commentary on what they were doing.

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. Costumes, props, sound and lighting etc may however, be discussed under 1.3 where the candidate is asked to state the "requirements" of the piece.

## Task 4, AC 2.1

The quality of video for these performances tended to be better on this assessment marking window and most centres tried to include audience reaction in the videos. Once again candidates need to be aware that they are being marked individually and therefore need to be identified easily in a group situation. In this performance candidates and centres are reminded again that the final performance should take place before some kind of audience and it would be wise to make this apparent on the video. As mentioned earlier it's important to consider an appropriate level of difficulty when selecting performance material so that the candidate is able to demonstrate techniques and skills appropriate to Level 2 in the performance.

## Task 5, AC 2.2

It's worth reminding all candidates that they should refer to their **own performance** and development of skills and techniques in their evaluation 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.

It is advisable to allow candidates to label their own work in the internally marked units so that they understand this process and also they need to experience the format of the external assessment unit with a similar type of assignment brief for the internally assessed units so it would be wise for them to attempt these before the external assessment takes place.

Centres would also 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 or a support visit from a moderator.

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