

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

Marking window: January to April 2015

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. The whole unit of work is 60 GLH and the external assessment is 30 hours therefore there should be 30 hours of teaching this unit before the candidates sit the external assessment. It is not intended that any teaching should take place during the 30 hours of the external assessment. During this time candidates should be working independently

Administering the external assessment

The external assessment (both preparatory and timed period) must be independent from the teaching of the unit. Any work completed or stimulus materials used during the teaching of the unit cannot be used in the external assessment. Candidates must complete all of the tasks independently. There should be no feedback or assessment from teachers on any work in the external assessment. Teachers should also not be giving advice on performances.

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. In this last assessment

window some teachers were asking questions on video and often prompting candidates with information.

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

Standard of candidate work

In this marking window Examiners looked at work which covered the full range from NYA through to Distinction. Examiners saw a number of different performance disciplines including dance, drama and music. It's important to remember that a performance for assessment criterion (AC) 2.1 which is at Distinction level does not mean that the candidate will receive a distinction for the whole assessment.

All ACs apart from 1.6 must be graded at Distinction for the overall result to be Distinction and the same applies to Merit and Pass. Some candidates seemed to be under the impression that the performance was more important than other ACs. In some cases candidates have been weak on one particular AC and this has brought their grade down on the whole assessment; there is no compensation between ACs. Some candidates did not present any evidence for 1.6 which meant they were NYA for this AC and therefore NYA for the whole assessment. It is really important that candidates understand that they will be NYA for the whole assessment if they miss out any ACs.

There are still some candidates presenting work for their final assessment which is not at an appropriate level for this qualification. Please remember that the standard of a performance on AC 2.1 should be similar to a performance of a Grade A* to C candidate at GCSE. It is also important that candidates do not attempt a performance piece which is too difficult for them as they may not perform in a manner that will engage the audience.

Referencing of external assessment tasks

Some candidate evidence was clearly referenced with the task number and often the AC number as well. As stated in the last marking window report it is not appropriate for teachers to label work for candidates although they could give reminders on best practice during the preparation time. Some teachers have taken responsibility for labeling DVDs and numbering them and this is not appropriate. Some candidates presented evidence which was to assessment criteria. This was often where all the candidate evidence was contained on one DVD. 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.” Best practice would be for each candidate to have their own disc or memory stick.

It is difficult for Examiners to identify candidates in group performances particularly when candidates were in costume with a hat or in identical costumes. Good practice would be to start the video clip with some form of identification for each candidate, possibly holding up names.

Where audio/visual evidence of multiple candidates is used, each candidate being assessed must be clearly visible and identifiable to the Examiner. It is important to play back video and imagine you are viewing it as a person who knows nothing about the centre or candidates.

It's also important to note that it is a requirement of the external assessment that the audience can be seen on the video. If they can't be seen the candidate may not be able to achieve the AC for engagement with the audience.

Evidence creation

Candidates must make continual reference to the assessment criteria and grading criteria while preparing their work for the tasks. Some candidates achieved well on certain criteria 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. As mentioned above there are 30 hours of teaching associated with this unit in addition to the 30 hours of the assessment. It seems as if some centres are trying to teach the unit as part of the assessment and this is not acceptable.

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. This is to be encouraged as the candidates will understand the nature of the tasks. There was some confusion on the tasks and details of these are given below.

Interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria

Task 1 AC 1.1

In this AC candidates are expected to identify their performance piece and their role within it. Candidates should understand why they have chosen their particular piece and for those looking towards merit or distinction there should be insight and justification for the choice. This may appear more difficult for a solo performance but in that instance the soloist is also able to direct the performance and take decisions about the performance

without considering others. Where a soloist plays with an accompaniment from another instrument they can explain their role in this context. In dance or drama there is also scope for the candidate to explain their changing role as the piece develops.

In terms of selecting the performance piece it is essential that the candidates consider the level of difficulty as some learners did not seem to have a performance piece which was appropriate for this level of qualification. There were many examples of a simple piece not being performed well. In a few instances the chosen performance piece was too advanced and the learners could not hold the listeners attention as they were struggling with a piece that was too difficult for them.

AC 1.2 and 1.3

These ACs can often be linked together and 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; this is good practice. It is important for candidates to link the research work to their own performances.

The requirements for the piece may include physical requirements in terms of equipment or costumes but should also include technical requirements in the performance. Any particular difficulties may be mentioned again within the rehearsal schedule. In general these ACs were well evidenced.

Task 2 AC 1.4 and 1.6

This task concerns the rehearsal schedule and an understanding of how the candidate will incorporate safe working practices in their rehearsals and performance. Candidates are asked to provide a rehearsal schedule for AC 1.4. This should be an outline plan of rehearsals which will lead up to the final performance. It may need to be changed as rehearsals begin but it is not intended to be a reflection on the rehearsals after the event. Some candidates wrote up an account of their rehearsals after the event and this is not the intention for this AC.

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. This may be something as simple as performing in a different size venue and how this may influence the rehearsals. A large hall may mean more rehearsal time projecting the voice for a singer and a small performing space may mean the dancer will have to re think choreography.

Some Teachers seem to have suggested a pro forma to the candidates and all candidates completed the same basic pro forma. In many cases this did not help the candidates and as stated earlier pro formas should not be given to the candidates. Some candidates completed the pro formas and put in N/A for some headings.

Quite a large number of candidates seemed to leave out the AC 1.6 on health and safety and therefore got NYA for this which would result in NYA for the whole external assessment. It is really important that candidates appreciate the importance of covering all the assessment criteria in order to achieve a pass for the whole unit.

Some candidates produced good videos for the health and safety AC1.6 and related their rehearsal schedule to the preparation of the video rather than the performance they were preparing for 2.1.

Task 3 AC 1.5

This task concerns the rehearsal stage of the process. Candidates are recommended to spend most of their time for the ten hour timed assessment on this task. Some candidates presented a rehearsal diary which was accompanied by video clips. The assessment paper suggests short clips of video showing the rehearsal process. Some candidates produced short clips of rehearsals and techniques but there was no real evidence of improvements made over time. It is important to show that there have been some improvements as a result of the rehearsals and development of techniques.

There needs to be clear evidence of preparation for the performance and development of skills and techniques which will be used in the final performance. Candidates are allowed to talk about the rehearsal to camera and this worked very well in some instances. Candidates need to video their early efforts so that they can demonstrate techniques for improvement and show how they have developed in the final performance.

One or two candidates showed preparation for a performance which was not presented for 2.1 .The rehearsals and the rehearsal plan in 1.4 should relate to the performance in 2.1. During the rehearsals there may need to be some changes to the rehearsal plan devised in 1.4.

Candidates are reminded 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. This commentary should not be just about the techniques required in the piece as these should have already been discussed in 1.3. Examiners are looking for video clips which show the process the candidate has gone through in the rehearsals.

As stated in the report from the last marking window, candidates should aim to have their own memory stick or DVD of evidence as this gives them greater ownership. 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. All candidates are marked individually and Examiners have to look at the candidate they are assessing rather than the work of the whole group. The "Big Brother" video chair tends to work better as it gives individual candidates a chance to show what they know.

If Teachers use oral questioning on video they must take care to ensure that they do not lead the questioning so that the candidates are supported to a higher grade. Teachers are not supposed to be guiding the candidates through the rehearsals. The candidates can however talk to each other as they seek to make improvements to their work.

Task 4 AC 2.1

Generally the standard of the videos presented for the performances was quite good but there were examples of video where the pictures were upside down. Candidates should check the completed videos before submitting them. Candidates are marked individually so they must all be visible on the video. Most candidates noted the fact that the audience needed to be visible on the video. 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

On this assessment paper candidates were asked to evaluate their performance on the video and many did this very well. In some cases candidates made an evaluation of everything they had done in the external assessment such as their health and safety presentation or their PowerPoint. This is not appropriate and they should just confine their efforts here to the video of the performance.

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 too early in their course of study. It is far more appropriate to enter candidates once they have taken part in the relevant teaching to ensure they are 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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