

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

Assessment window: 1 September - 20 November 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 assessment window to guide you to areas that are doing well and not so well.

Key points:

- administering the external assessment
- standard of learner work
- referencing of external assessment tasks
- evidence creation
- interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria
- planning in the external assessment.

Administering the external assessment

It's important to note that learners 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 preparatory and timed period of the assessment must be independent of 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. Learners 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.

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 learner work

Examiners saw work in various disciplines including dance, drama and music. They marked work which covered the full range of grades from Not Yet Achieved to Distinction. As on previous assessments some learners did very well on the performance on 2.1 for a distinction but this was matched with similar grades on the other assessment criteria. It's important for learners to remember that all assessment criteria carry equal weight and they must all be evidenced for a pass.

Referencing of external assessment tasks

It's vitally important that all learners understand the importance of referencing the evidence to the relevant tasks. Teachers may give advice on referencing during the preparation time but it is the responsibility of the learners to label their own work. Some Teachers are still putting labels on DVDs and this is not appropriate. Examiners cannot make assumptions about where the evidence might be and if work is not clearly referenced, the examiner may not be able to grade the work and this may result in Not Yet Achieved being awarded. Examiners may not find the evidence or know that it was intended for a particular task or assessment criterion. On the subject of referencing and identifying evidence it's important to remember that the examiners do not know any learners and therefore in group videos all learners must be clearly identified.

Some learners presented their evidence in scrapbooks and although this provided a refreshing approach the work was generally not well referenced and tended to rely on the examiner to find appropriate evidence. It does help to have the work set out in the order of the tasks rather than have evidence for Task 1 scattered over a large scrapbook of evidence. Some learners presented more than one version of the work and this left the examiner to decide which presented the correct or most creditable evidence.

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

Evidence creation

Learners are reminded again that they should make continual reference to the assessment criteria and grading descriptors while preparing their work for the tasks.

These were printed with the tasks on the most recent paper so that learners could refer to them regularly. As mentioned earlier all assessment criteria must be evidenced in order to achieve a pass and to achieve higher grades all assessment criteria apart from 1.6 must be at Merit or Distinction for the overall grade to be above a pass. It's important that learners are aware of this when apportioning time to the various tasks.

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 learners so that learners understand them. During the teaching of the unit, centres may use stimulus materials to support the teaching of the unit but these should not be included with the final evidence.

Interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria

Task 1 AC 1.1

Learners are expected to identify their performance piece and their role within it. In general, learners performed well on this task and many gave good reasons for their choice of material and showed insight to justify their choice.

There were few distinctions for assessment criterion 1.1 as learners failed to consider the descriptor for Distinction which **says “Learners demonstrate critical judgement in describing a range of roles within the performance piece, showing insight and perception in their choices.”** This is quite difficult to address in some circumstances but a solo performer may for instance, talk about how they would direct the performance and make decisions about the performance without considering others. A dancer may also be the choreographer. In a music performance 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 learner to explain their changing role as the piece develops.

In terms of selecting the performance piece it is essential that the learners 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 and this is not likely to achieve a pass. A simple performance piece needs to be performed really well to achieve a pass.

AC 1.2 and 1.3

Examiners found some excellent research work in this task and some learners had linked this to their choice of piece in from assessment criterion 1.1. The learners in one centre all looked at the same selection of possible performance pieces and then chose the same performance piece. During the teaching of the unit Teachers should strive to suggest research methods and encourage individual research on the part of the learners.

Some learners did quite well on the research work and some showed clearly in their final performance how their research work had influenced their performance. “You tube” recordings were referred to by some learners who then went on to make critical judgments when making decisions about their own performance. The requirements may include such things as costumes, lighting etc but should also include the technical requirements which will impact on the rehearsal schedule on assessment criterion 1.4.

Task 2 AC 1.4 and 1.6

In this task learners are asked to provide a rehearsal schedule for assessment criterion 1.4 and consider safe working practices for 1.6. Generally all learners completed a rehearsal plan and included something on safe working practice.

A basic schedule stating times of rehearsals may satisfy the pass criteria but in order to receive a higher grade the learner 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 were needed. Some learners did extremely well on this and gave details of how they would improve their piece and what techniques they needed to develop. Conversely there were rehearsal schedules which consisted of no more than just a timetable of when the sessions were taking place. Some learners prepared their timetable for a group performance and while there will be similarities between rehearsal plans in this case one would expect areas where the individuals in the group will need to improve on their own part and so the plan should allow for this.

Some learners produced rehearsal plans which were identical to four other learners and this is not acceptable as there is no way of identifying which learner actually produced the work. Centres are reminded again that they should not give the learners a pro-forma for completion. The learners of course can present their own style pro-forma for the rehearsal plan and some had done this.

Centres are reminded that to achieve the distinction grade for assessment criterion 1.4 learners must ***“demonstrate critical judgment in planning a rehearsal schedule, showing insight and perception in setting the performance in context for different audiences.”*** Learners are not expected to perform the piece for different audiences but they need to think about how they might make changes to their performance piece for different audiences and how this may impact on their rehearsals. This could be something as simple as missing out a section to shorten it for a children’s performance. Very few learners managed to reach Distinction level as they had overlooked this requirement. Most learners managed to consider safe working on assessment criterion 1.6 and many included this on the rehearsal schedule. Some learners gave a very minimal response such as ***“I made the area safe”*** This does not give enough information for a Pass.

It’s important to remember that they must say how they made it safe. At the other extreme some learners went to a lot of trouble for this assessment criterion and wrote several pages. This assessment criterion is only capable of achieving a pass and therefore learners should not spend too long on this assessment criterion at the expense of the rehearsal plan which can get a distinction.

The assessment criterion for 1.6 says ***“Learners identify safe working practices during rehearsal and performances”*** so learners should mention the performance as well as the rehearsals.

Task 3 AC 1.5

This task concerns the rehearsal preparation for the performance and learners are advised to spend most of their 10 hours on this assessment criterion.

Some learners used a diary log as evidence for this assessment criterion and this provided useful evidence when it contained details of what techniques had been worked on and how successful the rehearsal had been. In some instances the learners just provided a list of things they had done such as "complete my written work" etc, this provides no evidence of the rehearsal process and therefore gains no credit.

As stated in the assessment paper the best evidence for this assessment criterion consists of short video clips showing the rehearsal process. There needs to be clear evidence of preparation for the final performance and some learners did well on this task when they talked to the camera about techniques they were using and how they were improving them. Teachers should avoid interviews with the learners where they lead the pupils in the questioning although peer work can often work well. In one centre the learners listened to each other and made comments on the rehearsal techniques.

In some cases they performed a short extract and then took it apart and explained how they would work on each section. This was followed up with short demonstrations of the sections being worked on. It's important to show that there are improvements being secured as a result of rehearsals. Some learners just recorded 2 or 3 rehearsals of their piece with no commentary and there is little value in this. Sometimes it was not even clear to the examiner in what order the video clips were created. As stated earlier the examiner should not make assumptions about the evidence and try to work out what the learner is attempting to show.

In 1 or 2 cases the rehearsals seemed to be better than the final performance in 2.2; this could have been due to nerves in the final performance.

As stated in previous reports it's much better if all learners have individual memory sticks with their own clips of video. Whole class activities are of little value especially if the learners cannot be identified. The length of the video clips was sometimes an issue where learners included very long pieces of video of an hour or more and expected the examiner to draw out from this what they were hoping to show. The emphasis should be on short clips with a commentary either on paper or possibly best on the actual video.

Task 4 AC 2.1

The standard of videos presented for the final performance was generally reported to be very good, with centres showing the audience clearly. Examiners were impressed by the efforts of most centres in setting up this performance opportunity. Unfortunately the added pressure of the audience meant that some learners did not perform as well as they had expected but they kept going in times of difficulty. Most learners did identify themselves well but it's worth mentioning again the importance of each learner being clearly identified especially if they are in costumes for a group item. As mentioned under assessment criterion 1.1 the choice of material is important and needs careful consideration. Some learners ended up with a performance piece which did not meet the standard for level 2 eg piano played with one hand or one chord played continually on the guitar.

Task 5 AC 2.2

On this final task the learners were asked to evaluate the video which they were sending in and most seemed to understand this. There were however a few cases where learners seemed to be reflecting on a performance without mentioning the video.

Most learners made mention of strengths and weaknesses and how they could improve, but some tended to just say what happened in the performance so this was not really an evaluation. It's also important to remember that this is an evaluation on the learner so it should concentrate on their contribution rather than a general comment on the whole performance eg ***"I think our show went really well and we all did our best."*** Examiners are really not going to be able to give credit for comments of that kind. It's also worth mentioning again that the evaluation on 2.2 is about the performance on video and not the whole course. Comments such as ***"I worked really hard on my written work"*** will gain no credit.

Evaluations on the rehearsals should be included under 1.5 in Task 3.

Planning in the external assessment

Centres are reminded again that they should allow time to teach this unit before the assessment takes place and it is not advisable to enter the external assessment too early in the course. It is important for the relevant teaching to take place before attempting the external assessment. Teachers are also reminded that they should not be giving any feedback on the work during the timed assessment. Most centres find it helps to have a visit from their external moderator before entering for the external assessment.

Chief Examiner:
Date:

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