

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

Assessment window: 7 September – 29 November 2017

This report contains information in relation to the external assessment from the Chief Examiner, with an emphasis on the standard of learner work within this assessment window.

The aim is to highlight where learners generally perform well as well as any areas where further development may be required.

Key points:

- administering the external assessment
- standard of learner work
- Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment- V Certs
- referencing of external assessment tasks
- evidence creation
- interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria
- planning in the external assessment.

Administering the external assessment

The external assessment (both supervised and invigilated) must be independent from the teaching and learning 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 supervised tasks must be supervised by the Teacher and can be sat in a normal classroom environment. The tasks within the supervised period do not need to be invigilated, however, must be conducted in line with the conditions set out within our Regulations for Conduct of External Assessment – V Cert. The supervised tasks must be treated independently from the teaching and learning of the unit and learners must complete all tasks independently. This means the supervised tasks must not be Teacher led.

The completion of the invigilated 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 within this document.

Standard of learner work

In the recent external assessment Examiners marked work which covered the full range of grades from NYA to Distinction and was spread across music, dance and drama. It was particularly pleasing to find that centres are providing the learners with a suitable opportunity to give their final performance on Assessment Criteria 2.1 and often the performances were given before an invited audience of friends and parents.

There were still some performances which were videoed in an office or practice room and no audience was apparent. Centres are reminded that the audience should be visible on the video.

Learners very often produced work of a good standard across several ACs but this was not consistent across all ACs in order to obtain distinction.

Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment- V Certs

Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment- V Certs

Malpractice

Examples of malpractice but it's not extensive, may include evidence of learners being provided with templates in order to respond to the Tasks within the External Assessment, identical responses to the brief and associated Tasks and feedback and questioning within evidence.

Maladministration

Examples of maladministration will include evidence whereby the centre haven't administered the external assessment in line with the Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment V Certs.

Centres are reminded of the conditions within our Regulation associated with the supervised sessions, this should not be teacher led and learners must independently approach the brief and associated Tasks.

All incidents of reported malpractice and maladministration will be investigated to ensure the integrity of the assessment.

Referencing of external assessment tasks

Learners are expected to label and reference their own evidence. There were still some centres where the teacher seemed to be taking responsibility for doing this. In some instances, video evidence was poorly referenced, creating it difficult for Examiners to identify learners and grade accordingly. It is important to remember that the Examiner knows nothing about the learners or the centre so clear referencing is essential.

There were issues where video evidence for a whole cohort was put on one CD or memory stick. If the work of one learner was missing it was not possible for the Examiner to know if the work was not produced by the learner or just not added to the disc.

On some performances the learners said their names very quietly and quickly and the Examiners were not able to hear the name. This happens frequently and is often not helped due to the sound system available on the recording facilities. It is generally best if the learner holds up a card with their name and number. Many centres adopt this method and it works well.

Learners must be clear about why they are including a piece of evidence. If two copies of the rehearsal schedule are included this needs need an explanation.

Evidence creation

Most centres have now taken advice from previous reports and avoided the use of proformas for this external assessment.

Some learners presented all their evidence electronically and some produced written work on paper and video on a disc or memory stick.

Sound quality was often very poor on some of the videos presented so that it was not possible to hear what was happening. Some Examiners found that performances had been recorded in such a way that some performers could not be seen or heard. It is important to view videos before they are submitted to ensure that all learners can be seen and heard clearly. Examiners have to grade each learner individually.

Interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria

Task 1 AC 1.1

For a Pass learners they were expected to state their performance piece and their role within it. Nearly all learners achieved this and many went on to justify their choices and describe the role in more detail. Some learners went into details of roles of others in the performance or to describe other roles they had taken such as choreographer and dancer.

The demonstration of critical understanding and some analyses that learners were able to move up to higher grades. Some learners then went on to apply this analyses to inform decisions.

Instead of naming the piece the Examiners accepted a description where learners had devised their own piece.

AC 1.2 and 1.3

Learners often presented evidence for AC1.2 and 1.3 together and researched different performance styles for their chosen piece. The most common form of research was through, "You Tube" recordings, where learners were expected to make some basic statements for a Pass. Some went on to achieve a higher grade and made critical judgements on what features they liked and how they could use some of them in their own performance. A small number of learners went into detail on lights, costumes and props to meet the requirements of AC 1.3 and included drawings and photographs. Many just gave details about the technical requirements of their piece, this was particularly noticeable where learners were offering music for their performance.

As stated in a previous report some learners seem to have included generic research into assorted styles in music or drama but these were not relevant to their chosen performance piece. General research into music, drama and dance is likely to gain little credit unless it is related to the performance piece and how it might be performed. AC1.2 quite clearly refers to the chosen performance piece.

Task 2 AC 1.4 and 1.6

Many learners combined AC1.4 and AC1.6 into the rehearsal schedule. Some learners produced very good evidence for AC1.4 and considered how they would improve their piece and what techniques they needed to develop. This was particularly good where the learners had tried to link it to the video clips in AC1.5.

For a Pass, learners were expected to produce a basic plan of rehearsals stating some requirements of the performance.

Some learners interpreted the rehearsal schedule as a diary of what had happened during the rehearsals. This schedule is intended as a plan for rehearsing the piece and how time will be allocated to overcome challenges. A diary of what occurred at rehearsals would not support learners meeting the requirements of the AC, however, using some form of evaluations within rehearsals would help learners to modify the plan as they go along.

As on previous assessments, learners generally missed the fact that this AC is related to the needs of the audience and for Distinction learners need to refer to different audiences.

This AC refers to the “needs of the audience” and this seems to have been implied by many learners but not specifically stated. Learners are encouraged to make reference to the audience needs in their rehearsal schedule.

Learners are still not showing how their rehearsals lead to a better audience experience.

Task 3 AC 1.5

In this AC Examiners are interested in seeing the process of preparing for the final performance.

The minimum requirement for a Pass for this AC is one run through of the piece but of course we would like to see more and there does need to be video evidence included for this. Some learners who gained higher grades had shown real progress through their rehearsals and devoted sessions to diction, projection, timing and various techniques. It is important to note that the AC asks learners to “rehearse the performance using technical skills”. It is these technical skills that they should be illustrating in the footage. “Before” and “after” videos tend to work well as evidence here.

Examiners often found some very poor recordings for this AC and sometimes learners were not clearly identified.

The emphasis in this AC should be on skills development but many learners devote their efforts to talking about how they are developing the material in a devised piece. Examiners are actually looking for evidence of how they improved their skills e.g. diction, projection, action, reaction etc. How the material developed cannot really gain any credit here.

The paper asks for video clips which are no more than two minutes in length and all learners observed this rule but some included between 50 and 75 two minute clips, learners should be selective in the material they include.

The best evidence occurred where learners were able to “tell a story” of the rehearsals with a commentary. In order to do this, it is important to offer the video clips in order so that the Examiner can follow this development.

Task 4 AC 2.1

Many centres provided a performance opportunity for their learners and the evidence for this AC was generally pleasing.

Examiners found some very good quality work for this AC where learners produced some accomplished performances which showed excellent concentration and engagement with the audience.

It is important to remember that to gain Distinction the performance needs to evidence creativity and fluency in the application of technical performance skills and techniques across all the areas of sustaining concentration, demonstrating projection and timing and engaging with the audience.

Task 5 AC 2.2

Low graded learners described what they saw and possibly stated one skill that could be improved. Some learners tended to give an account of what happened in the performance with very little evaluation and there were sometimes learners who did not really evaluate their own performance on the video but spoke in general terms about the performance. At the other end of the scale learners gave a very detailed review of how well the performance worked for them and the skills they had shown. They were perceptive and analytical in their review and made valid points about potential improvements of a range of skills. Some learners even included photographs at various points during the performance to underline the points they were making.

Planning in the external assessment

Centres are reminded to give due attention to the assessment windows of the external assessment. It's not advisable for learners to sit the external assessment early in their programme. It is far more appropriate to enter learners 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 learners for the external assessment following the support of an external quality assurance visit for the internally assessed units.

Chief Examiner: Derek Griffin

Date: January 2018
