

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

Assessment window: Spring 2018

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 including 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
- 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 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, the supervised tasks must be treated independently from the teaching of the unit and learners must complete all tasks independently. This means the supervised 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.

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

Standard of learner work

In the recent external assessment, examiners marked work which covered the full range of grades from NYA to Distinction and performances were spread across music, dance and drama. Some learners combined singing and dance in their performance which was very pleasing and the video evidence showed good performance opportunities were being offered to the learners. Examiners felt that the standard of work presented is gradually improving in each assessment window.

Examiners reported excellent work from some learners where they were clearly working to achieve a Distinction. On the other hand, some examiners reported very low standards being presented for the qualification by a few centres, and even comments from some learners that they had been entered for the qualification as it would be easy for them. It is probably worth reminding centres that this is a Level 2 qualification and therefore equates to the higher grades at GCSE. It is a vocational qualification and therefore may suit some learners who prefer a more practical vocational approach and the opportunity to present evidence in different forms but the Level 2 standard still has to be maintained.

Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment

Centres are reminded that there are regulations published on the NCFE website for the conduct of these external assessments and it is vitally important that they are complied with. It is particularly important to study the section concerning “supervised” and “invigilated” parts of the external assessment. Teachers should not be involved in questioning learners on video during the assessment or directing the drama, music or dance performances. The learners must be working on their own and directing their own work without assistance.

Malpractice

Several examiners have reported possible malpractice and it is important that centres make themselves aware of what might constitute malpractice. Group work can often result in learners presenting one rehearsal schedule and although they may plan to rehearse together they must state in their rehearsal schedule what they are doing as individuals to develop their skills and techniques. Learners must consider their own contribution in the rehearsal and what aspects of their performance needs to be worked on.

On 1.5 there were examples again of Teachers asking questions about the rehearsals in order to encourage learners to comment; this involvement of the Teacher is not acceptable. No feedback should be given to the learners from Teachers during the external assessment. This includes giving indications of the possible grades that may be achieved.

Any issues of suspected malpractice will be investigated and may result in results being withheld.

Maladministration

As mentioned above the centre should refer to the **“Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment”** when preparing for this external assessment.

There are certain file formats that NCFE has approved for presenting electronic files and these must be adhered to. There were a number of centres where examiners were not able to access video evidence for one reason or another. Centres should check the file formats and learners need to double check their evidence to ensure that they have included all the video evidence that they intended to include. Sometimes learners referred to extracts of video which were not on the memory stick. Again, this can lead to results being withheld.

Referencing of external assessment tasks

As mentioned on previous reports, learners are expected to label and reference their own evidence and this should not be done by the Teacher. It was clear in some centres that the Teacher had been through the whole cohort and labelled the evidence. Generally the referencing of work has been clear and learners have followed instructions on the paper but there were one or two centres where presentation of evidence was poor and the examiner had to spend considerable time locating the evidence for individual ACs. On Task 1 some learners presented their work in one long piece and it was difficult to find evidence of the requirements in terms of costumes, lighting, sound and props for 1.3. For some learners the only reference to this was found in the evaluation.

There were sometimes issues where video evidence for a whole cohort was put on one CD or memory stick. This is not the best way to present the evidence and it is much better to present the evidence individually. It's important to remember that the examiner knows nothing about the learners or the centre so clear referencing is essential and learners should ensure that they have identified themselves clearly on video. On some performances the learners said their names very quietly and quickly at the start of the video and the examiners were not able to hear the name. Some centres got the learners to hold up a card with their name and number and this made identification much clearer. The camera was often at a distance from the learners and therefore did not pick up the sound easily.

Evidence creation

Some learners presented all their evidence electronically which is perfectly acceptable. Other learners produced written work on paper and videos on a disc/memory stick and this is also acceptable. Sound quality was often very poor on the videos presented, it wasn't possible to hear what was happening. It's important for the learners to view videos before they are submitted to ensure that they can be heard and seen clearly. Examiners have to grade each learner individually, so it is essential that everybody can be seen on video.

The orientation of videos was frequently wrong especially on rehearsal clips and this made the task of following these video clips quite difficult. This often happens where learners have recorded on an iPad. This needs to be checked more carefully by learners before submitting the evidence. If learners are working in groups this could be made much clearer by centres if they submit the group members' work batched together - this sometimes takes a great deal of time for the examiners to sort out, particularly if names given at the beginning of a performance are not clear or (sometimes) actually inaudible. Please remember the examiner does not know any of the people involved.

Interpretation of the tasks and associated assessment criteria

Task 1 - AC 1.1

For a Pass, learners 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. They also sometimes made links between the chosen piece and their own skills.

Examiners accepted a description of the piece rather than a name for the piece where learners had devised their own piece.

AC 1.2 and 1.3

Learners often presented evidence for 1.2 and 1.3 together. This is quite acceptable but it must be noted that the requirements in 1.3 are concerned with costumes, lighting, sound and props, and higher grades for 1.3 will be achieved through critical analysis of those areas. Some learners had included research which assisted them in selecting a suitable piece for performance but it's important to include research into the chosen performance piece to show how it might be performed or what techniques or styles might be used. Some learners did some general research into different styles but did not always show how this would influence their performance.

The most common form of research in music was through YouTube recordings where learners were able to carry out some analysis or give an opinion on the performances. In drama, learners often researched different styles of drama and some in considerable detail. The higher grade learners went on to state how their own performance was influenced by this research. It's important to note that learners are required to investigate the lighting, sound, prop and costume requirements that their chosen piece may require. Learners often failed to submit any evidence for this. A small number of learners went into detail on lights, costumes and props and included drawings and photographs. Even if the costumes, lights etc were not going to be available for the final performance the learners could still have made choices and given reasons on the sort of lights, sounds and costumes they would have liked to include. Comments such as "I am doing music so I don't need costumes or lighting" are hardly likely to attract more than a Pass for 1.3.

Task 2, AC 1.4 and 1.6

Many learners combined 1.4 and 1.6 into the rehearsal schedule. Some learners produced very good evidence for 1.4 and considered how they would improve their piece and what techniques they needed to develop. In a small number of cases the learners attempted to link the plan to the rehearsal clips on 1.5 to show particular techniques being rehearsed.

As mentioned on previous reports some learners interpreted the rehearsal schedule as a diary or log of what had happened during the rehearsals. This is a misinterpretation of what is required. This schedule is intended as a plan for rehearsing the piece and how time will be allocated to overcome challenges etc. Some learners evaluated their rehearsals and stated what they would need to work on next time and this was good practice.

Some learners did mention the needs of the audience or at least that was implied in the activities undertaken. A Distinction grade on 1.4 must have reference to more than one audience and how the rehearsal plan would be modified to include preparation for different audiences. This might be the difference between an adult audience or an audience of children.

Most learners considered safe working for 1.6 and some included good detail in their work.

Task 3 - AC 1.5

This AC is about giving the examiner an account, in video, of the process of preparing for the final performance. As mentioned earlier, examiners often encountered poor recordings for this AC and some learners went well over the 2 minutes requested for individual clips. Some rehearsal clips were 20 minutes in length, so examiners were only able to listen to the first 2 minutes. The paper asks for a number of short video clips, it's not acceptable to present audio clips. Some consideration needs to be given to the number of video clips that are being presented. More is not necessarily beautiful and therefore 30 or 40 video clips which show very little improvement are not likely to gain major credit. Learners should be selective in presenting clips for this AC and decide which clips will show the examiner how they have improved their skills.

The minimum requirement for a Pass on this AC was to show one complete run through of the piece, but examiners would like to see more than this. The learners who gained the higher grades on this AC were able to 'tell the story' of their skills development. Short clips which highlight a problem and then the actions/exercises used to solve the problem is what is required. Some learners do their rehearsals in one day so this makes it quite difficult to show improvement over time and something for centres to consider if doing the external assessment in this way.

Task 4 - AC 2.1

Distinction learners produced some excellent quality work for this AC with really engaging performances showing excellent concentration, projection and timing. It's important to remember that to achieve a 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, timing and engaging with the audience.

There were examples of performances, however, in some cases learners failed to engage the audience because of frequent errors and breaks in the performance or where projection was very poor.

Task 5 - AC 2.2

The Pass learners tended to give an account of what happened in the performance and made brief references to strengths and weaknesses. They also referred to the whole piece rather than giving an evaluation on their own performance contribution. Distinction grades were awarded to learners who gave detailed reviews of the performance and their own contribution and were perceptive and analytical in their review of how well the performance worked for them and the skills they had shown. They also were able to state where they could improve and what steps they would need to take to ensure improvements. Some learners linked their commentary to particular timed places in the video which illustrated the points they were making which was good practice.

Planning in the external assessment

Centres are reminded that they need to teach this unit before the learners complete the external assessment. It would be best to do the external assessment after the learners have completed Unit 01 which allows them to get used to similar forms of evidence.

Chief Examiner: Derek Griffin

Date: 17th June 2018
