

UNIT 8: TECHNICAL SUPPORT (INTERMEDIATE)

ABOUT THIS UNIT

This unit is about the skills you need to provide technical support for performances. You will be able to develop skills in a chosen area, such as lighting, sound, set construction, props, costume, masks and make-up or stage management.

You will learn about:

- the production processes used to put performance ideas into practice
- the practical skills needed for the chosen area
- relevant health and safety procedures
- reviewing your work and progress.

This unit builds on Unit 2: Skills development (Intermediate) and Unit 3: Performing work (Intermediate) by allowing you to apply practical skills in a performance context. It is also linked with Unit 6: Creating work for performance (Intermediate), in that designs created for that unit can be realised through this unit. It may also provide links with Level 2 NVQ units in Stagecraft.

This unit will be assessed through your portfolio work only. The grade awarded will be your grade for the unit.

WHAT YOU NEED TO LEARN

Production processes

Putting on a successful performance requires technical support. In identifying what technical production processes are needed it is important to consider:

- performance objectives for the event/piece
- needs of the performance
- resources available (for example in the workshop for making any sets, props and costumes; in the venue for lighting and sound).

The processes needed for your production will vary according to your chosen technical area. These could include:

- lighting – rigging and operating
- sound – setting up effects, preparing tapes, managing effects operation
- set construction – building elements of a set and scenic painting
- props – construction, buying and locating
- costume – making, wardrobe management
- masks and make-up – skin preparation, application, construction
- stage management – assisting and supporting the rehearsal process, making up a prompt copy, co-ordinating the operation of technical requirements for performances.

You should be able to use the processes and any associated materials, tools and equipment required for your chosen technical area.

Practical skills

Within your chosen area you should be able to:

- use appropriate skills to assist in the technical work required to prepare for a performance
- operate technical requirements for performances
- follow and record instructions.

Health and safety procedures

Working in performance venues and workshops can be dangerous. You need to be aware of hazards linked to the materials, tools and equipment you are using and know how to reduce risks to yourself and others by thinking and working safely.

You will need to be aware of current health and safety legislation relevant to your chosen skill area.

You should be able to:

- interpret drawings, diagrams and instructions
- assess the potential risks involved in an area of work (risk assessment)
- carry out basic safety checks on any equipment and tools used
- safely use and store any materials required.

Reviewing your work

You will need to talk to other people about your skills development. You need to use the correct terms for the materials, tools, equipment and techniques you are using when:

- drawing (for example, designs, diagrams, layouts) and keeping notes on technical requirements
- describing and commenting on your work and progress
- reflecting on your work and explaining what went well and what went badly.

You need to be able to explain your work and progress in terms of:

- strengths and weaknesses in your use of materials, techniques and technology
- possible improvements.

ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

You need to produce a portfolio showing how you developed and used skills in a chosen area of technical theatre, including:

- a report from your teacher on your safe use of relevant materials, tools and equipment to prepare for and operate technical requirements during a performance
- any supporting documentation and products you contributed to producing (for example, drawings, diagrams, artefacts)
- a report from your teacher on your contribution to team working
- a personal progress review.

Pass To achieve a pass your work must show:	Merit To achieve a merit your work must show:	Distinction To achieve a distinction your work must show:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of relevant production processes and associated materials, tools and equipment, in your chosen technical area • the application of the necessary health and safety procedures in your chosen skill area • your contribution to producing any documentation and products in your chosen skill area needed for the performance • you can follow instructions and carry out tasks accordingly • use of the accepted terms relevant to the chosen skill area of performance technology • an identification of your strengths and weaknesses in developing and applying technical craft skills to a performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skillful application of the techniques and resources in your specialist area • an effective contribution to team working through an appreciation of the requirements of production elements • a realistic appraisal of your strengths and weaknesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you can carry out your role efficiently and effectively with minimal guidance and support • a well structured informative review of your technical applications, showing how they have developed and were appropriate to a chosen performance.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Teaching strategies

The intention of this unit is for students wishing to specialise in a chosen technical area to be given the opportunity to develop their skills in, and understanding of, production processes. The unit covers lighting, sound, stage management, set construction, props, masks, make-up or costumes. There may be overlap between skills depending on the opportunities offered by the production. It is expected that students will work at the level of technical assistants and operators in the context of real, rather than simulated performance scenarios.

It is important that, wherever possible, delivery should consist of practical work towards a real performance goal. It is suggested that a number of small-scale or workshop performances for peer-group audiences is likely to permit greater flexibility of delivery (for example, by permitting rotation of production roles), than major, large-scale productions for public audiences.

Delivery may include sessions on theory, terminology, and the teaching of technical skills. However, the focus should be on students carrying out the practical processes needed to provide technical support in each student's chosen technical area. Provision should also be made for students to relate the processes in their own specialism to those of the other students' specialist areas.

Students should be encouraged to regard the successful achieving of performance objectives as the over-riding criterion to be applied to their work. However, they will also need to learn to use their own time as necessary and to work co-operatively as part of a team in pursuit of these objectives.

Links

This unit can be linked with Unit 3: Performing work (Intermediate), Unit 5: Performing arts in context (Intermediate) and Unit 6: Creating a performance (Intermediate). It may also support events developed for Unit 4: Organising an event (Intermediate). Students may create a set or costume design in Unit 6 and construct the set or costume(s) through this unit. The unit may also provide evidence to support NVQ level 2 qualifications in Sound Assistance; Stagecraft (Scenic fabrication) and Stagecraft (Flying).

Vocational relevance

The work performed for this unit should be within a vocational context. This is best achieved by targeting the work to a particular audience.

Resources

Centres will need to choose performances that take account of their resource capacity and the mix of student specialisms in a given year. This is acceptable as long as performance objectives are clearly specified and students are given the opportunity to follow the full process through, from initial planning to operation for performance.

Care should be taken, however, to ensure that technical resources:

- are adequate to the scale of planned performance
- provide the potential for sufficient technical challenge to allow students to develop their practical skills in the use and operation of equipment, consumable materials, tools/equipment and workshop/storage space.

This is particularly true in relation to lighting and sound. Lighting requires access to at least **three** different types of lantern and a minimum of **12** controllable channels. Sound requires access to at least **two** different recording media, a mixing desk and **two** types of microphone.

Assessment strategies

There are two strands to the assessment of this unit:

- assessing students' ability to select and use technical production processes and resources
- assessing students' ability to work effectively at the level of technical assistant and operator.

Health and safety risk assessment and safe working practices (even when under pressure) are of key importance in all areas of technical production and workshop activity. Therefore these issues must be constantly scrutinised during assessment.

Merit and distinction grades will be awarded on the basis of the students':

- increasing range and level of skills
- understanding of, and contribution to, technical production processes
- evaluative skills.

When grading student evidence you should consider the following general qualities that distinguish between the three grades:

- increasing depth and breadth of understanding
- increasing coherence, evaluation and analysis
- increasing independence and originality.

'P1' means the first pass bullet point in the assessment evidence on page 85, and so on.

Pass

Students demonstrate adequate skill and development, in most key aspects of the chosen area of production support.

- P1-3 Witness statement, corroborated by any documentation or products. These will vary according to the chosen specialism.
- P4-5 Should form the basis of an observation witness statement focusing on how the student applied their understanding of the technical areas to carrying out their role during the performance, and their ability to use correct technical terms.

Merit

Students demonstrate competent skill and development, in all key aspects of chosen area of production support.

- M1 Witness statement, corroborated by any documentation or products, suitable for the chosen specialism.
- M2 Witness statements focusing on skills and understanding demonstrated during the performance.

Distinction

Students demonstrate high all-round technical achievement, independence and self-motivation. A Distinction student would be working with skills and commitment that shows the potential for significant progression in a chosen area of production support.

- D1 Witness statement, corroborated by any documentation or products, suitable for the chosen specialism.

Key Skills

This guidance highlights the most relevant Key Skills opportunities in this unit. It contains suggestions only. You will need to check that students have produced all the evidence required to meet part A **and** part B of the Key Skills specifications. Students may need to develop additional evidence elsewhere to meet fully the requirements of the Key Skills specifications.

Guidance is referenced in two ways:

K – keys to attainment

These are Key Skills or aspects of Key Skills which students should achieve as they meet the vocational requirements of the units. Only part B of the Key Skill is highlighted – you will need to check that students achieve part A.

S – signposting

These are opportunities that can be incorporated naturally into the learning programme.

COMMUNICATION, LEVEL 2		Key Skills Reference
When students are:	They should be able to develop the following Key Skills evidence:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking part in a personal progress review 	C2.1a Contribute to a discussion about a straightforward subject.	K
WORKING WITH OTHERS, LEVEL 2		Key Skills Reference
When students are:	They should be able to develop the following Key Skills evidence:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preparing for a performance 	WO2.1 Plan the activity with others, identifying objectives and helping to allocate responsibilities and confirm working arrangements.	K
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preparing for, and undertaking, performance support 	WO2.2 Work with others towards achieving the identified objectives, organising tasks to meet your responsibilities, and support co-operative working.	K
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviewing their contribution to the performance 	WO2.3 Exchange information on progress and agree ways of improving work with others to help achieve objectives.	K

IMPROVING OWN LEARNING & PERFORMANCE, LEVEL 2		Key Skills Reference
When students are:	They should be able to develop the following Key Skills evidence:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discussing targets for learning and identifying opportunities within a chosen specialist area, with a tutor 	<p>LP2.1 Help set targets with an appropriate person and plan how these will be met.</p>	S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contributing to the development of an action plan for own skills development within a chosen area 	<p>LP2.2 Using plans, identifying support from others to help meet your targets, and take responsibility for some decisions about your learning.</p>	S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> taking part in a tutorial to discuss progress towards learning targets, and identifying further opportunities for improvements 	<p>LP2.3 Review progress with an appropriate person and provide examples of evidence of your achievements.</p>	S

